

ED BELBRUNO

ENTROPIC IN PROCESS AND INSPIRATION by Hannah Baker

Ed Belbruno's art is entropic in process and inspiration. As Belbruno states of his own work, "I completely let go, allowing my inner-self to guide me though the creative process, which can appear to be random."¹ As he paints, he focuses on not focusing. "If I start to think, I stop painting," he explains.² Belbruno's method encapsulates creative entropy as an innovative rather than a destructive force. While his pieces seem to reference Van Gogh in style, the process is perhaps more closely related to Jackson Pollock. By letting go, channeling randomness, and letting chaos be the source of his creation, Belbruno expresses a complete lack of regard for art institutions. Belbruno creates just to create. When one takes a closer look at Belbruno's lifestyle and artwork, distinctly entropic elements come together.

As a scientist and mathematician he often uses his painting to explore the world of space that he is so fascinated with and vice versa. Chaos theory provides a perfect example of the symbiotic relationship of art and science in Belbruno's life. The theory was the subject of his book *Fly Me to the Moon: An Insider's Guide to the New Science of Space Travel*, and was used to rescue (without fuel) the Japanese rocket Hiten in its attempt to achieve orbit around the moon. The descent from order to disorder is the entropic quality present within Belbruno's work. While chaos tends to have a negative connotation, it is made beautiful and dancelike in *Chaos Orbit*. Seeing chaos anew contributes to the way the painting draws you in.

Chaos is not always what we associate with space, as it seems to be a vast darkness full of forces of which we have little understanding. Anyone who has truly looked at the night sky understands the feeling of smallness that envelops the mind and body. Belbruno has created a different relationship with space. The scientific understanding he has lends a

1 Ed Belbruno, "Statement," *artslant.com*, <http://www.artslant.com/global/artists/show/60047-edward-belbruno> (accessed August 24, 2014).

2 "Art Statement." Belbruno Art RSS. <http://www.belbrunoart.com/about/art-statement/#sthash.3qERO3Oqdpbs> (accessed August 24, 2014).

new perspective on chaos. He envelops chaos in paint just as space can envelope us. *Chaos Orbit* is a perfect example of Belbruno's complete relinquishing to chaos and creative entropy. As Belbruno simply stated in an interview "I had this deep sense that everything was taken care of."³ While this was in reference to his education payments, it reflects on his approach to life. Belbruno believes that things tend to end up the way they should, without our influence.

When we think of entropy as a lack of order or predictability, Belbruno's work becomes entropy incarnate. *Chaos Orbit* combines incomplete strokes and mysteriously curving lines to represent what looks like the solar system. With a simplicity that mimics our first exposure to the planets (think tiny elementary school diorama) Belbruno is able to create a scene that calms within the disorder. Nothing in *Chaos Orbit* seems threatening; in fact the piece invites the viewer to look with ease at space as interpreted by Belbruno.

Another definition of entropy resides in information theory. This type of entropy is defined as measuring the rate of transfer of information from one language to another. In our world today art and science often seem to speak entirely different languages. Belbruno, through his ability to speak both of these complex languages, has created a symbiotic relationship between the two worlds in which he is a professional. From this symbiotic relationship has come a transfer of information. The chaos of space meets canvas and creates accessibility to chaos we would have otherwise been without.

Beyond embodying entropy as chaos, Belbruno has become a translator. He is able to take the world he feels and put it on canvas and then again take from the canvas to solve a problem. Belbruno thinks in new realms, making him an innovator of both space travel and painting. By using entropic ideas positively, Belbruno has made space more accessible artistically and scientifically.

3 "Wild River Review." Wild River Review. http://www.wildriverreview.com/3/3-spotlight_belbruno.php (accessed August 24, 2014).