

DESIGN DECODED 2021 : ART EXHIBITION



*Decrypt your
visual creativity*

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Anna Dominique L. Cunanan

The First Step (in Making Art)

“The First Step (in Making Art)” or simply, “The First Step”, is a 2021 oil painting on canvas that depicts the magic of having the courage to finally do the “first step” in creating art – whether it be picking up a brush, sketching a study, putting up a canvas on one’s easel, or, specific to the scenario in the artwork, opening a bucket of paint.

The room in the scene is spacious, cluttered with stretched canvases and painting materials – an art studio – where the main subject in view is a woman opening a bucket of paint. The immediate scene is an attempt to capture a quiet, hot afternoon which is visually set by the bright rays of sunlight coming from the outside, depicting windows that are beyond the view of the painting, and the quietness depicted by the neutral color palette and the use of large spaces.

Beyond symbolism, and before the discussion of that, the visual elements and techniques used in this artwork include the play on perspective, immersing the audience into the story through elements that seem to “come closer” – such as the butterflies that seem bigger and closer to the viewer, as well as the blurred and bigger part of the grass which is supposedly closest to the audience (contrasting the more defined weeds farther into the picture, on the ground). The use of shadows and lighting also creates the illusion of realism, as well as sets the visual tone of the scenario. In addition to its symbolism, the play of color (vibrant and vivid colors against neutrals and muted colors) also creates visual contrast in the artwork. The centerpiece of the painting would be the freshly opened paint bucket and the simultaneous activities happening around it. Rooted from the

bucket are several major storytelling elements of the painting which carries the heaviest symbolism in the artwork. This centerpiece attempts to bring “magic”, color (both literally and figuratively), and a hint of surrealism to the imagery without completely leaving the realistic approach of the painting by softly juxtaposing the indoor scenario with the following nature elements:

- (1) butterflies immediately flying out of the bucket’s opening with colors that are bright and vivid against the otherwise dull room – distracting our main character in awe; and
- (2) weeds and grass growing out from the cracks of the floor, originating from a drop of mystically-colored paint (a mix of soft blues and purples, deviating from the common paint colors in suggestion of “magic”) from the bucket, and gradually populating beyond the painting’s perspective.

The First Step (2021) tells a story of these nature elements coming from the opened bucket – with the butterflies directly coming from inside it and the grass suddenly growing from a drop of mystical paint. Although seemingly simple – and even almost boring – to a lot of people, the first step is the hardest step to take. This story that the artwork tells is a metaphor for the abundance of creative possibilities that can come from a practically small step... even as small as opening a bucket of paint!



ANNA DOMINIQUE L. CUNANAN
The First Step (in Making Art)

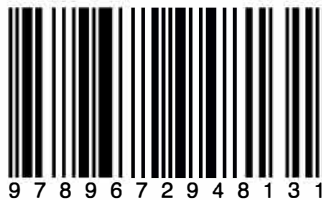
Oil on canvas
16 in x 20 in
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