

**ART PROJECT  
for San Antonio College (TX)**

**by the Student:  
Stephanie Hanus  
2003/2004**



**Windings Atmospheres, oil on canvas, 89x89 cm., 1998**

## Art Project for San Antonio College (TX) by the student: Stephanie Hanus.

Dear Mr. Balsamo,

I am a student at San Antonio College in San Antonio TX. studying art. I have come across your work entitled "Winding Atmospheres" on the website [www.absolutearts.com](http://www.absolutearts.com) and I am very interested in talking with you about the work for an art appreciation class project. In coming across your work I became intrigued as to the meaning of your painting and the symbolism of its contents. I have always been interested in the culture of Italy and since you are an artist working there this is an added interest to me. I would really like to know more about you, your culture and what influences the work you do.

I have composed a series of questions to help me better understand how an artist creates and how much influence your culture has on the art you create. For example, What is the meaning behind your painting? I know you are probably very busy but your help would be greatly appreciated. If you are interested you can contact me at [LillyQuest@aol.com](mailto:LillyQuest@aol.com).  
I look forward to hearing from you.

God Bless,  
Stephanie

Dear Mr. Balsamo,

First of all, I would like to thank you for responding to my email. I really appreciate it. Your work is beautiful and I love the way you use light and color to express your paintings. I just had a few questions for you about your painting and the culture of Italy. I would like to start off with a short biography of yourself and then ask you a couple of questions.

### **Vincenzo Balsamo Interview**

- 1. What does your painting "Winding atmospheres" represent or symbolize?**  
Winding Atmospheres represent a special moment of my life and the colors of Rome and symbolize a sunset at Rome

## **2. Why did you chose the colors and the medium you did?**

I have lived in Rome for 35 years and in any moments of the day there are the exceptional colors, they stay into my heart and my thoughts.

## **3. What inspired you to create this painting?**

An unconscious memory of an evening at sunset with its colors, lights and special winding atmospheres, to it the title of my work.

## **4. Who and what inspired you to be an artist and is any one else in your family an artist?**

Because you could understand because I have become painter I write you a part of my biography, it is the destiny that has wanted so.

The second of seven children, he loses his father, a sailor, following a work accident. This event plunges the family into economic ruin forcing Balsamo to leave his studies and look for work. He finds employment as an assistant in the artisan studio of the painter and decorator Pietro Acquaviva. Thanks to a number of jobs within local churches, Balsamo quickly gains a strong feel for retouching, he learns to recognise primary and secondary colours and all that is central to the pictorial medium; pigments, coloured ochres etc. This becomes of fundamental importance for his artistic future. Thanks to the maestro Acquaviva he discovers how a painting is born. Thus he begins to compose his first artworks, copying postcards, painting floral subjects, country views and houses.

*There is one of my sons, Roberto, that he is a sculptor and he live in Australia.*

## **5. Who would you say is one of your favorite artists?**

Favourites artists are many, but I love in special Giotto, Piero della Francesca, Antonello da Messina, Segantini and for modern Art I love Picasso, Braque, Gorky, Mirò, the Futurism, Kandinsky and Dorazio Italian Artist.

## **6. Would you say that a lot of your work is inspired by your culture?**

Surely I has stayed influenced from the big artistic Italian culture, but also from the European. I, from young man, have begun to turn for the Europe and to visit so many museums, the big masters, like Picasso, Braque, Mirò, Gorky, Leger ect., (that I have knew many of them), have not inhaled me but made understand that I must experiment, evolve me for find my personal painting.

## **7. What are your other hobbies?**

My hobbies are music (classic, Napoletana, and modern) and I like read book, when I can.

**8. What is something about Italy that most people would not know; a belief or a saying that people in Italy have that is important to you?**

I want remain in the painting and I tell this:

time makes was told: "damned painters", because they always lived without money, the life was hard, and if a woman fell in love with a painter she did the poor life, sell a picture was difficult. Now the things have changed but a painter has always been like a particular person and perhaps a little bit crazy.

**9. What is your favorite medium to use when creating a piece of work?**

I love use oil on canvas, but I like much much watercolors, tempera on canvas and on paper, and I love work for engravings. Many of my engravings have painted , after the stamp, with watercolors.

**10. I read in your artists statement that your images are almost like images from a dream. Do you paint what you dream or are you images your emotions? Where do you get your ideas?**

Good question. You must know that when I paint there is only my canvas (or paper, wood) and I enter in symbiosis with it. I paint with my music, my thoughts, my heart, my poetries, my remembrances... and my hand paint like if driven pits from a superior will.

**11. Do think about what you are going to paint before you paint it or do paint as soon as you get an idea? How do you paint?**

I can answer you like the question 10. I don't paint because I want represent something, the work comes from oneself, it grows little for time, in the daytime in day. For a picture of big dimensions want us months because I finish it, I see it, I take back it and my world grows in him.

**12. How important do you think passion is when painting?**

The passion is very important for an Artist, without it the Artist work only for produce, for the market, I work first for myself, the painting must feel mine, if it isn't so I rejected. I work for 10-12 hours to day. I'm still living for the painting... it is my life.

**13. How important are the use of light and color to you?**

With the sign, the colors and the light are all for me. All my painting has played on them. The signs are my hypothetical net that contained the thousand little touch of colors, and the light come always to up like want to point out a road, an indication...

**14. What message were you trying to convey in this particular painting? Do all of your paintings have a message?**

The message could be a lived emotion. All my work could contain a message, but I leave to each visitors of my works to see what they prefer. It, for me, is main point create an emotion, not a particular message, when anybody tells me that a my picture has given to him an emotion I' m happy.

Sometimes happen that a my collector tells me to see in a work things that same self doesn' t see, this is wonderful for me, because my picture has created a personal world, where each enters with his thoughts.

## The Art Project

The world of art has many dimensions and many faces that is so chooses to show us if we are willing to see. What one may see as art, another may see as something entirely different; as only an object of reality. However, it is the passion in all of us that drives us as human beings to create. And it is our way of life, our culture and our experiences that are driving factors in one' s art and what is created. Culture greatly influences an artists work in many ways for it is generally the base or the foundation of what the artwork is built on; it sets the framework. This can be seen in the work titled

"Winding Atmospheres" by Vincenzo Balsamo. The artwork when viewed for the first time can be interpreted in many ways until you immerse yourself in the history of the artwork and what influenced the creation of the piece. Upon discovering the history of the artwork one can apply this knowledge to gain a better insight of what type of message the artist was trying to convey. The artist that I chose to study is Vincenzo Balsamo of Brindis Italy and his artwork titled "Winding atmospheres."

Vincenzo Balsamo was born in 1935 in Brindis Italy where he was the second of seven children. It was in 1946 that Balsamo lost his father, a sailor, to a work related accident. This unfortunate event plunged Balsamo' s family into economic hardship, forcing the eleven year old Balsamo to abandon his studies and seek work.

Soon after, Balsamo finds employment as an assistant in the artisan studio of the painter and decorator Pietro Acquaviva, where he begins laying the foundation of his future in art. Here he learns to recognize primary and secondary colors and all that is central to the pictorial medium like pigments and color. Thus he begins to

compose his first artworks and has been creating ever since. Other sources of Balsamo' s influences were when he lived in Rome with his aunt for a while where he studied for three years at the Scuola d' Arte San Giacomo in Rome. There he learned to refine his drawing techniques and has now become one of the greatest artists in abstractionism.

When looking over the website [www.absolutearts.com](http://www.absolutearts.com) I came across Vincenzo Balsamo' s artwork entitled "Winding Atmospheres". This piece first caught my eye because I was not sure of what I was looking at and I was intrigued by the way the artist was able portray light and color by simply manipulating the medium used. Here the artist used oil paint as the medium and manipulated the paint in order to express light and color to create fragmented wedge shapes. It is an abstract piece of art with slight indications of expressive lines mostly formed by brush strokes and no definite focal point. It is painted in a way as to represent a dream or a memory. The sign outlines the forms, the color connotes the emotional field and the light demonstrates the vision. It was meant to symbolize a special moment in Balsamo' s life; a sunset in Rome where he lived for 35 years. It is "an unconscious memory of an evening with its colors, lights and special winding atmospheres". The message here, according to Balsamo is not to create a particular message, but to create an emotion. Many of the works Balsamo has created over the years are based on his emotions at a particular moment in time. He is inspired greatly by his culture and his experiences within Italy and Rome.

Over the years, Balsamo has managed to create a broad range of various types of artwork. He has done everything from landscape art to his most recent abstract art. This piece is one of many began in 1987, a period called "Lyric abstraction". "He exhibited many times in national and international art fairs, galleries and museums, from figurative works of the fifties and sixties, over the seventies with the series of the first Abstraction, the Cubist period, the "Decomposition" of matter work; to the "Nebula" where the sign prevails on color; to the "Evocations" of surreal calls; to the Second Abstraction of the first eighties that closes the "Analysis and experimentations" period". However, out of all the work he has done there is always a pattern present which portrays the influence of his

culture in his artwork.

By doing this project, I have managed to gain a new perspective on the artist and his culture. I have learned that passion is a key element in creating an effective piece of art that is able to properly convey the message or emotion the artist was trying to create. I also learned that culture is a major factor in what an artist creates. It may not always be obvious but there will usually be subtle hints woven within the painting portraying the artists culture. This is because many artists paint what they know, they paint their experiences, their lives and they put their hearts into the art they create. Balsamo painted of his emotions when watching the sunset in Rome. His objective was to create the same emotion in his audience, then he would be truly happy because he would have achieved his goal as an artist.

Stephanie Hanus