Creative Loafing Atlanta

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Allan Eddy

by Felicia Feaster

Behind the Scenes

Artists have to deal with change. They change galleries. Their work changes. The economy changes. Adaptation and an ability to reinvent oneself are virtually job requirements.

Allan Eddy learned about the necessity of adapting to unforeseen circumstances the hard way. A 1988 graduate of the Atlanta College of Art, Eddy had enjoyed a successful run as an artist, regularly showing his work in solo exhibitions at Anthony Ardavin Gallery.

But in 2000, everything changed.

Eddy spent an agonizing six weeks in the hospital with meningitis, drifting in and out of consciousness. After two days in the hospital, he lost his vision entirely. His doctors told Eddy he would be blind for life. For a painter known for his rich color palette, it could have spelled the end of his career.

But over time, despite his doctors' grim prognosis, Eddy recovered a sliver of his sight. He can now discern some colors and some shapes, though he will never be able to peruse art history books the way he used to, soaking up the technique of his favorite artists.

He has trained himself to paint all over again.

And his work has changed. The dark pigments and tight, intense abstractions that characterized his early work have given way to something brighter. His strokes are thicker and his colors are the bright yellows, greens and reds that he can discern more clearly when he is applying paint to the canvas. There is something looser, lighter, freer in the work.

Eddy figures himself lucky. In the years before the onset of meningitis, death seemed close. He lost many friends: to cancer, to AIDS.

But Eddy can still paint. He has a show coming up. He has a lot to be grateful for.

Allan Eddy's work will be on view at Mason Murer Fine Art Nov. 18-Dec. 31. www.masonmurer.com.