

Art for the Animals

*Highlighting the works of
AWLA Artist-in-Residence*

Ricasso



Items for Sale

All items are available for viewing at the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria through Thursday, December 5. Items will be presented and bid upon in numerical order. During the auction, if you would like to bid for any item, please raise your Ricasso-shaped paddle and state your bid. After the final bid has been placed, the auctioneer will give the audience in attendance three final chances to place bids. If you have any questions, please speak with the event staff.

Thank you for supporting the AWLA and animals in your community!



Item 1 - Vibrant Dreams

Painted during Ricasso's "Broad Strokes" period, *Vibrant Dreams* pairs a collection of disparate colors with a yearning for the warm water of the AWLA's paddle pool. "In even the coldest of seasons, *Vibrant Dreams* makes you recall the days of summer, and the hope that wherever you travel, you can keep the warmth of the pool inside."



Item 2 - Watermelon Sunset

"What is a watermelon? What would it be in a dry land?"

Filled with temperate imagery, *Watermelon Sunset* pairs bold swipes of color with a cool, monochromatic backdrop, bringing the brightness of a summer day to everyone who beholds this masterpiece.



Item 3 - Lending a Paw

Loaning his expertise to a raft of AWLA assistants, Ricasso brings community to life with *Lending a Paw*, a declaration that no artist stands alone, and no piece of art exists without an audience. "While all artists may not have paws, every artist has an inner paw, and with it, he or she may achieve greatness."



Item 4 - Memories of Darkness

"If light is the opposite of darkness, then what is the opposite of heaviness?"

Brave streaks of red slash the shadows in *Memories of Darkness*, reminiscent of times when the leash fell upon the dusty ground but refused to be dimmed by its gritty filth.



Item 5 - Leaves of Gray

"Is a painting merely a poem, made of paint?"

Defying description, *Leaves of Gray* tells the audience once and for all the proper spelling of the word "gray."



Item 6 - Shards of Sun

Nearly monochromatic with only the lightest hints of the bold, sweeping brushstrokes seen in so many of Ricasso's works, *Shards of Sun* answers the question, "Can you contain a star in a frame?"



Item 7 - Alexandrine

"Each color is a jewel, and each jewel is worth its price in actual jewels that are made of valuable compressed carbon."

While all colors of the spectrum may not be visible to a dog's eye, the play on reds in *Alexandrine* explores what red would be if the audience could see it as Ricasso does, at the end of his tail after another busy day being an artistic innovator.



Item 8 - Vertical Aspirations

Great art doesn't need description, and the evocations of each masterwork speak to the audience differently than the artist. "You may see a novel of the mind, while I see only a limerick in grayscale. Does that make a fool of either of us?"



Item 9 - July August September

The tale told by the white space is as important as the use of color in *July August September*. Spanning the summer season and into the fall, this work focuses on growth as well as change. "After September comes October, but who knows what may follow that?"



Item 10 - Dysmorphic

Ricasso once said, "World is gonna roll me, I want all of the treats in the shed." Never before has he so clearly illustrated that existence of a dog in a human's world and the uncertainty hidden in the wag of a tail. *Dysmorphic* reminds us all that with four feet, Ricasso still has no thumbs, and must rely on people for treats.



Item 11 - Blue Monday

Who is a good boy? An utter deconstruction of the "good dog" trope, *Blue Monday* demands that we question who is good in the dog-person relationship. Striking blues and greens are barely contained by the canvas, and the borders are imposed from without. "Who decided that it is Art? Who decides that the Art, much like the Dog, is good?"



Item 12 - Overhaul

To chomp or not to chomp? To rend the toy, and thus end the squeak and thereby the fun, or allow the squeak to continue and suffer the slings and arrows of dog shaming? *Overhaul* exists entirely in the space between squeak and chomp. Each individual stroke belies the utter finality that here, in this moment, there is only toy, and perhaps, even deeper, destruction.



Item 13 - Bold Enough?

"SQUIRREL!!!"



Item 14 - Silent Orchestra

More muted than some of Ricasso's other masterpieces, *Silent Orchestra* shows Ricasso during a period of introspection. "The tip of my tail is the last point of Me. But when I curl, the tip is at my nose, the first part of Me. Am I Canis Mobius?"



Item 15 - Pinny in Technicolor

Inspired by Ricasso's first muse, "Pinny," this piece shows his playful feelings toward the subject, defining his partner in blue as an ode to Picasso himself. "Even when Pinny is not with me, I hold her close. Pinny is me and you and we and all of us. Pinny is the sun and the sky. Pinny is."



Item 16 - Papa's Shoe

"What is a shoe, but a stinky covering for a paw?"

Inspired by his time in foster care, *Papa's Shoe* playfully questions, Can one have too many shoes, snuck from around the house and hidden under the bed while Papa is not looking? And is a shoe meant to be worn, or sniffed?



Item 17 - Evening Explosion

The multitude of colors harken to classic "human" art and subvert the genre. By taking up the gauntlet of color, form and purpose, Ricasso forces us to review what we look for in paintings, and subsequently consider the demands of belly rubs.



Item 18 - Minimal

The token use of color in Minimal shows that Ricasso is not afraid to say a lot while showing very little. Conflicting hues question the origin of the color wheel and ask the audience what happens when opposing views collide. "I need no paint to tell the Truth, but do you need to see the paint to realize what is right in front of you?"



Item 19 - Kiwi at Midnight

Ricasso demands attention. The colors bold are a loud "bork!" brush strokes demanding attention like a "mlem", and an overall undeniable of a "blop". With our attention fully secured, Ricasso will not relinquish it. As though your attention were a rope in a game of tug-of-war, Ricasso's legs are dug in and he will not allow us to stop. There is no looking away from this piece, and you must anticipate that there will be treats in the near future.



Item 20 - The Mountains of the Mind

Bold strikes and minimal colors define Ricasso's final masterpiece of the evening. "What is a mountain but a very, very big hill? If we can walk over a hill, can we not surpass any mountain?"

About the Artist

Ricasso began his residency at the AWLA in the fall of 2018. In the summer of 2019, after having perfected his Sit and Shake, Ricasso began to look towards things more aesthetically and determined to try his hand, or tail, at painting. His skill and style showed itself immediately, with broad brush strokes and instinctive color choices becoming an early highlight of his work. While assisted by a team of AWLA assistants, each piece tells a different story in Ricasso's own life, from his passion for his muse Pinny to the smell of a treasured shoe once worn by a foster caregiver.

"If time is not linear, then today might be my first day as an artist, and each day, I need to bring that naivete not only to the canvas but also to my every step. Also, my adoption fees have already been paid, so I'm ready to go home with you today!"



About the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria is a local 501(c)(3) organization. Operating the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, which is Alexandria's only open-access animal shelter, the AWLA touches the lives of more than 6,000 animals every year, including strays, lost pets, local wildlife, rescued animals and animals surrendered by their owners. The AWLA is committed to addressing animal homelessness, promoting animal welfare and serving as an educational resource for the community. More information can be found at AlexandriaAnimals.org.

