

Panorama - UT-Pan American 2002

Kirk Clark's experience with UTPA goes back some thirty years. The Charles and Dorothy Clark Gallery, located in the Fine Arts Building, was named for his parents, who were very much involved in the contemporary art scene through collecting, writing, and lecturing. In addition to financial gifts, the Clark family has donated part of its extensive art collection to the university.

Kirk Clark is not only a successful businessman, but he is also an accomplished artist. He holds a dual degree in social psychology and studio art from the University of New Mexico. In March he opened an exhibit in Taos entitled "Atomic Jesus."

"I became fascinated not only with the exact moment of Christ's death on the cross, but also with the compression of time between life and the hereafter. There must have been a burst of light as the Spirit departed the dead body. These dots represent photons of light. Red represents the suffering on the cross, black is the exact moment of death, and yellow is the ascension of the spirit into heaven."

His goal as an artist

"A search for answers. It is also a way for me to express the joy of this life. The images coming out of my head are little pieces of me- they're celebrations. It's just a lifetime of discovery."

"Excellence from my standpoint as an artist is an alchemy of the visual and the spiritual. Excellence also speaks to the need for simplicity and clarity. I try to convey a message which is very complex in the simplest form possible."

"I see diversity as a tremendous opportunity for a variety of people to express themselves. No matter who it is or what culture, it crosses boundaries. I've had a remarkable experience with diversity, being an Anglo growing up in a Hispanic community and learning to enjoy the beauty of the culture. If you're not exposed to new ideas, then you don't know what's latent within you."

Do you consider yourself a patron?

"I would say that a patron is a person that encourages others in their artistic pursuits. From a philosophical and emotional standpoint, and also from a financial standpoint. From that definition I would like to consider myself an emerging patron. Everything that I have is a gift from God, and He expects me to be a good steward."