Alfred Phillips: Narratives of His Artworks

1.  "New Truck"

2.  "Kenny's Dock"

The inspiration for "**New Truck**" began with a scene I witnessed in Kentucky at a farm near my mom's house outside Louisville.  It was late evening and a storm was coming in as a shiny truck drove into a gravel drive towards a farmhouse where only one light was on inside.  I did not take any photos for reference.  When I got home to Florida, I used my memory to paint the sky and create the house and all the surroundings.  However, I found reference materials for the old truck near the house and the new truck in the driveway for accuracy.

I imagined a man coming home with his shiny new truck to show off to his family, maybe just a wife.  The sense of foreboding in the darkness could imply that she is not happy he is buying another truck which they can't afford, or that he has been gone a long time and dinner is getting cold and she is worried, with a storm coming.  Never the less, I wanted a sense of anticipation and darkness, whatever the scenario.

The best part to me is how I forced the viewer to look through the barbed wire like they are snooping.

**Painting Technique:**
Both paintings are acrylic with no special mediums, etc.  Just water.  I start with very large brushes and finish with small brushes for details, scrubbing in a basic mix of blacks (purple, blue, black) to shape my composition.  (On "New Truck", I created some texture in advance with white gesso.)  After the composition is blocked in, I come back with all my main colors.  Then I generally use thin coats of paint in transparent washes over those colors to get more luminescent colors.  I work fast and dry each layer sometimes using a hair dryer before moving to the next color.  I rarely work alla prima – I'm not generally a fan of wet on wet – preferring to come back sometimes with a dry brush technique.  Over and over working on the entire painting, moving around, shaping, refining, adding detail, and stepping back and forth endlessly.  I only work in the studio.  I don't care for plein aire unless I have time to do a quick watercolor study to take back with me to the studio.  I work from memory, mostly, but will use reference photos if I have them and also depending on the subject.  I always use live models when I paint the figure.

"**Kenny's Dock**" came from a scene I encountered on a trip to the Eastern Shore of Virginia.  I was with Kenny and some other friends on the deck of the main house enjoying the dramatic weather.  The friend's nephew was visiting with his girlfriend and the two of them walked down to the dock and sat together to work out some issues they were having as a couple.  A group of us watched from the deck hoping the couple would work things out.  I dramatized the scene with the dangerous black cloud and the "hope" of blue sky for later.

This painting won Best in Show at the Turner Center for the Arts Spring into Arts Exhibit in April.