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HOW INTERNATIONAL REALIST ARTISTS CREATE THEIR ART



Pursuing an Artist's Life Behind the Easel
PART 3

NEW DANIEL GREENE SERIES

How White Dictates
Your Painting Style

STARTS PAGE 34

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international artist



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The International Guild of Realism

The World of Realism Spans the Globe

by **Lorena Kloosterboer**

It's one thing to join a neighborhood painting club for the occasional group session, but when your organization's artists hail from 26 countries, it takes more than a passport to get everyone involved.

For starters, the **International Guild of Realism** is the first global organization to specialize in juried Realism gallery shows, museum exhibitions and workshops. With nearly 200 current members, a typical exhibition will represent a snapshot of what's happening in the Realism genre in China, Norway, India and France.

"The Guild is a great opportunity for artists from all over the world to come together and have their paintings exhibited in premier galleries and museums in all the top markets," says Vala Ola of Iceland. "These are great opportunities I otherwise wouldn't have access to. And since gallery owners are always looking for new talent, one of these group shows can lead to representation in an entirely new art market."

The International Guild of Realism was founded by eight museum-level charter members in 2002 with a mission to advance Realism as an art form. In this case, "Realism" ranges from **Classical Realism** (based upon the traditional, academic-style painting techniques) to **Contemporary Realism** (where cutting edge techniques and subject matter are used to comment on today's

world). Trompe l'oeil, photorealism, surrealism, and super-realism are also some of the genres included within the range of Realism choices for modern artists.

The Guild has four goals:

- 1 **To recognize the best realists working today**
- 2 **to create exhibition opportunities**
- 3 **provide technical and promotional support**
- 4 **to offer a bridge between art collectors and the highest-quality realist art around the world.**

It's all based upon the proven belief that the more access art lovers have to high-quality Realism, the greater the value these paintings will be. Value not just in monetary terms, but in appreciation, understanding and international attention, according to the Guild's vision statement.

By showcasing a panorama of international work in this field in one exhibition, the museum curators and art collectors can have a wider view of the art form and its evolution in styles.

To become a member of the Guild, artists submit photographs of their artwork to a panel of charter-member judges. If selected, they then can enter the juried competitions for displaying their paintings in galleries from Santa Fe, New Mexico to Scottsdale, Arizona to Massachusetts. Likewise, traveling museum exhibitions are organized from juried artwork centered around a core theme. For example, "**The New Reality**" museum exhibition

touring the United States in 2008 and 2009 compares today's Realism masterpieces with examples from the Old Masters.

According to Dutch artist Lorena Kloosterboer, "There's no need to defend my choice of style against those mindless critics who accuse Realist artists of being old-fashioned or unevolved. Members of the Guild all share a fundamental respect and admiration for each other's meticulous technical skills, as well as the creative insight necessary to translate what we envision into fine art. For me, it satisfies a void in the international art market by giving artists a place to gather, exhibit their work and promote their careers."

That opportunity to expand one's career path is not lost on its members. For Kolbjørn Håseth of Norway, "The Guild has given me an important leap in my artistic career, increased the media attention on my artwork, and has helped to increase my sales."

One reason is the strength in numbers when so many top-ranked Realists exhibit together. "There is added strength when belonging to a group of like-minded individuals," says Angus McEwan of Scotland. "When the common aim is truth, that strength is multiplied tenfold."

Chinese painter Ning Lee saw the Guild as a door-opener to the American market. "Based on my experience with the Guild, I think the Guild has provided me, an artist from China who has received



strict training in realistic painting, with opportunities to show my art to a wider community of art lovers through magazine ads, gallery shows and the Guild's website."

While all the Guild members are Realists, the art forms are as varied as their nationalities. Still life, portraiture, landscapes and narrative works are equally represented in most of the Guild's shows in order to provide a better cross-section of the latest developments. Typically the gallery owner hosting the newest exhibition will make the final decision on which paintings will provide the right balance for that market. The results are measured by

sales figures and publicity features.

In a typical year, the Guild will hold one or two juried exhibitions in galleries that will sell the members' artwork. About every three years, the Guild organizes a museum exhibition, either for a specific museum venue or as a traveling show that visits up to ten cities in a multi-year roadshow. In between these exhibitions, various members conduct Realism workshops for both members and the public in order to showcase the behind-the-scenes aspects of the Realism painting process or to educate emerging artists about specialized techniques.

"I think it is not easy to belong to

the Realism Guild due to the high-quality artists that are part of it," explains Mexico's Benjamín Orozco López. "That's why I feel honored to be part of it. For me, to be part of the Realism Guild is a wonderful opportunity to know artists who live in different countries, and know the amazing works they are producing. The most important thing about the Guild is that we are a big group of artists who glorify the values of craftsmanship, which has almost been lost in modern painting." □

More information about the International Guild of Realism can be found on the internet at www.RealismGuild.com



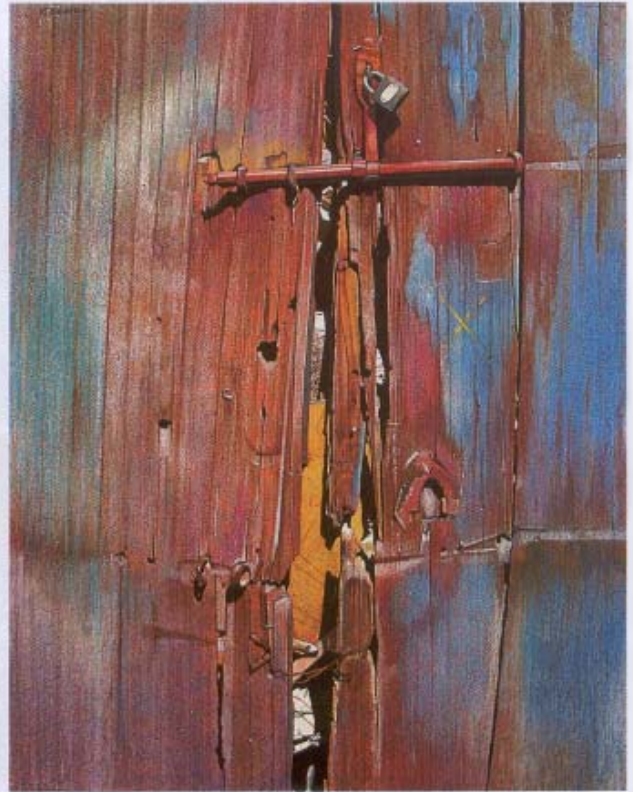
SCOTLAND

MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF REALISM

Angus McEwan

Standing Firm, 2007, watercolour on paper, 31 x 25" (78 x 65cm)

This painting started life as a demonstration for the Stirling Art Society, in Scotland. This is a close-up of a door which I came across in Marrakech whilst on my travels to Morocco. The door is barely containing the rubble of the demolished building pressing up against the "interior" of the door. It also has a map of the souks of Marrakesh outlined in gold acrylic (buried under layers of watercolour) and can be seen occasionally if the light reflects off of the surface at the correct angle. It has the effect of being like a gold vein running through the wood, but it is not obvious at first glance, it only reveals itself through time. I have a particularly unique technique to building up surface texture, which requires "printing" with watercolour to recreate texture. It's a very messy and unpredictable technique, which I believe isn't used very much, but it's the unpredictable nature that appeals to me.



watercolour on paper, 28 x 36" (72 x 92cm)

This painting is a close-up of a lock from Lucca, Italy. It is fairly large and I decided to use watercolour paper which has an irregular (deckled) edge to it. Occasionally I like to produce an image which is rather surprising, in either its content, size, or technical application. The lock shown in this painting in reality is not very large, but I wanted to emphasize its unique design and colour by enlarging it and really playing on the tromp l'oeil aspect. I use watercolour by applying layers of pure colour one on top of the other, this is called optical mixing and hinges on the artists ability to predict the final result. It allows the painting to stay fresh even though there might be quite a few layers of colour applied.



Divine Light, 2006,
oil on canvas,
24 x 32" (60 x 80cm)

This is a religious painting. I tried to develop the idea that even in the darkness there is always a light to show us the way. The woman in the painting (my wife) is reflecting on the words of the Bible. As always,

I really enjoyed all the processes of the painting. I usually paint with many transparent layers because this technique gives me the best chance to create a very realistic sensation of a third dimension.



Michoacan's Artisan, 2005,
oil on canvas, 19 x 15" (50 x 40cm)

I wanted to paint this Mexican artisan surrounded by his pottery and reading the newspaper because it seemed to me that he lives immersed in his own world. The newspaper brings him news from other worlds far away. I enjoyed painting all the similarities between the man's face and hands and the pottery he makes to earn a living. The layer-after-layer technique allows me to create textures of objects in detail, such as the shirt, old newspapers, pottery, and cardboard.





USA

MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF REALISM

David M. Bowers

***Mysteries of Medusa*, oil on linen, 24 x 16" (40 x 66cm)**

How individuals fit into the culture and societies that surround them has always fascinated me. Public perception is usually quite different than the reality one finds behind closed doors. My painting titled "Mysteries of Medusa" symbolizes female wisdom and the primordial power of the Earth Goddess. Young and beautiful, she is a symbol of changing life forces. The forces of creativity and destruction are in her realm and her ability to destroy men must not be ignored.



***Suburban Taboo*, oil on linen, 16 x 26" (40 x 66cm)**

The public images that all people project may be worn like a mask. My painting titled "Suburban Taboo" points out that forbidden desires may tempt individuals or couples to abandon accepted values for a chance to taste forbidden fruit.





Two Liquor Stores 002, 2007, oil on canvas, 84 x 14" (33 x 35cm)

When I came across this corner in Pasadena, California while attending Art Center College of Design (1993-1996), little did I realize that this would become the genesis of my vision and message. Looking back, this image was the epitome of the urban scene of then and now: population sprawl, capitalism, addictions and loneliness. These are dark topics, however, I know it is these spaces that continue to intrigue me. I grew up on a tiny island in Hawaii, and Los Angeles would quickly expand my vocabulary

and 'broadened my horizons', so to speak. I once painted this scene in 1996, and by popular demand my gallery asked me to paint it again. The wide-angled compositions originated, for me, in the early 1990s as a sarcastic attempt to capture the then trend of cropped, panoramic photography and film developing. The panoramic format stuck as I continued my interest for urbanscape paintings, in which it eventually and suitably evoked the subject of population sprawl and mass-communities I was after.



Wild Oats 009, 2007, oil on canvas, 72 x 14" (28 x 35cm)

Supermarkets and other urban-sized stores become my subjects every now and again. This painting depicts the fresh meat section of Wild Oats, a popular American supermarket in which the interiors are continually explored through my paintings. The store itself is well designed and beautifully lit. It doesn't evoke the

darker themes I have for my exteriors. Perhaps it is my humble attempt to depict a modern, urbanized version of Chaim Soutine's dead animal paintings, "Hanging Hare," "Carcass of Beef" and "Hen and Tomatoes."





KOREA

MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF REALISM

Grace Kim

Harmony, Oil, 24 x 30" (61 x 76cm)

In my work I try to capture the beauty I see in natural objects, their color and the play of light upon them. There is a certain satisfaction I find in making permanent on the canvases these often fleeting images of nature. Although my subjects are often what appears to be simple flowers and fruit, I always see something unique and beautifully complex and intricate in all that exists in this world. Noticing and bringing these nuances to life is what I enjoy and take pride in accomplishing. To focus on these intricacies and the complex beauty of a subject is essential for any artist.

As an artist, my desire to share my interpretation and vision of the world's beauty with others is an honor and a gift I cherish everyday. My paintings are the legacy of what I leave behind, a vision of the splendor I see in this world.

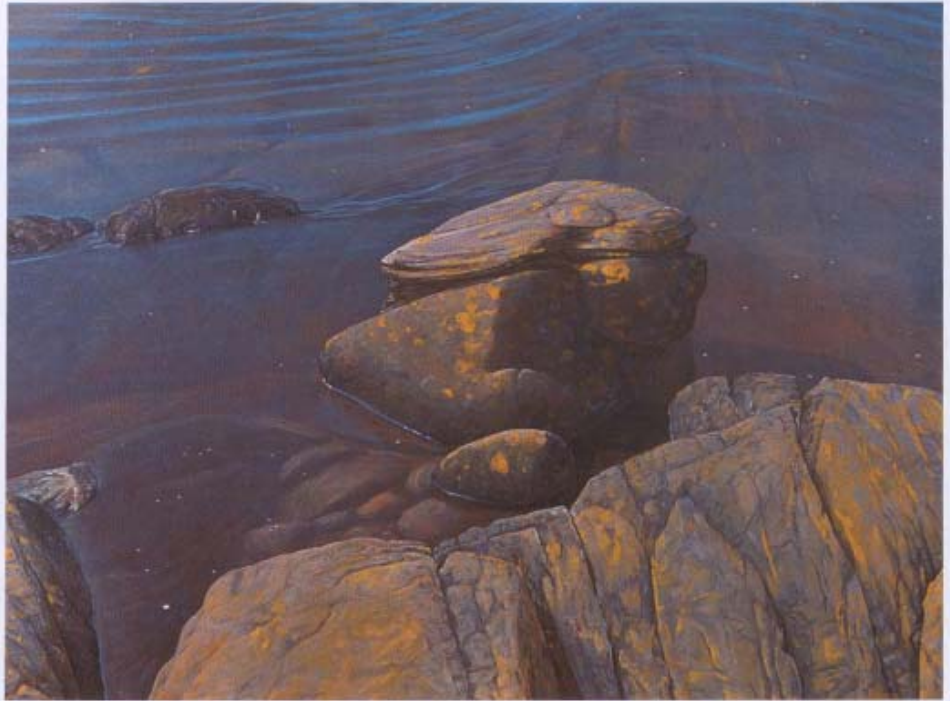


Persimmon's Branch, Oil, 10 x 18" (25 x 45cm)



Gently Touched, 2007,
acrylic,
30 x 40" (75 x 100cm)

I was drawn to this scene by the sculptural look of the main rock, the movement of water, the light and shadow and the complementary colours. It is a detail from the shore. Most of our Norwegian coastline consists of rock; you will find less sandy beaches. This is a tidal pond where the water from the sea comes in very gently and the rock is bathed in sunshine. Thus we have both a shadow and a reflection to consider, and to the right of the main rock there is a combination of both. The depth of water varies, and we must not forget the surface of the water. The waves help us in that sense, but in the quiet areas the small dots of foam are helpful as to define the surface. The yellow on the rocks is lichen.



The Colour Grey, 2007,
acrylic,
30 x 40" (75 x 100cm)

On the Norwegian coast we have far more cloudy days than sunny days, but even though the predominant colour might be grey, it is not necessarily boring. In this scene dark clouds are coming in from the sea, but we can still guess about the sunshine above our heads, and in the distance. The waves from the sea do not reach the pond where the wind creates its own system of tiny waves. The massive rock on the right meets us like an abstract image, and had to be balanced with a more interesting area to the far left; generally I would not put it so far to the side of a painting. I want the viewer to feel the solitude, therefore I do not include any ships or other activity.





NETHERLANDS

MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF REALISM

Lorena Kloosterboer



Bric-a-brac, 2005,
acrylic on cradled panel,
16 x 20" (40 x 50cm)

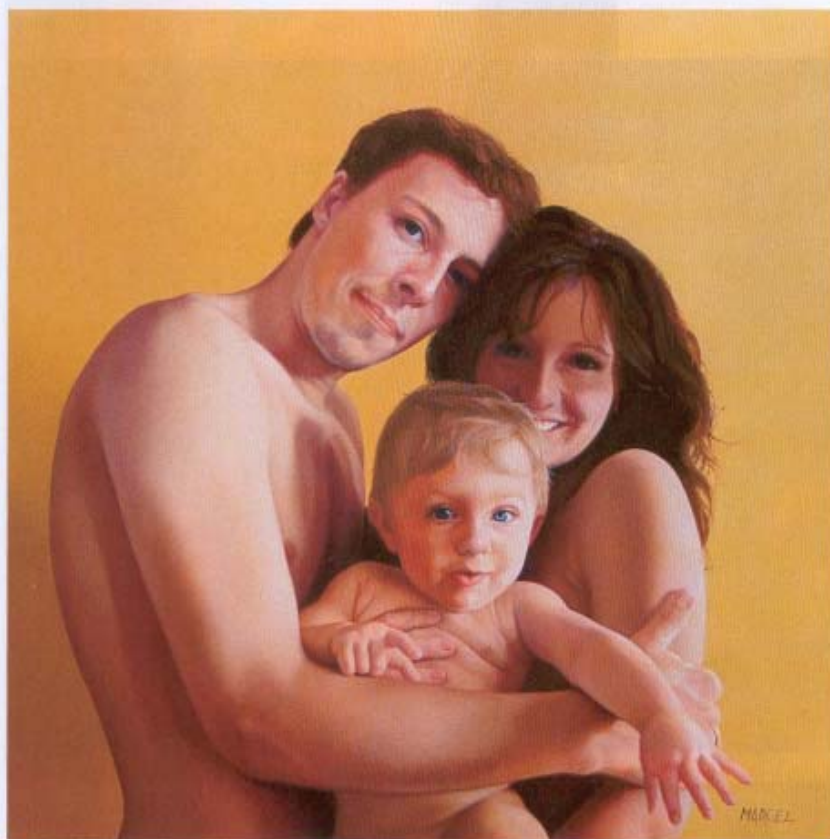
This trompe l'oeil painting titled "Bric-a-brac" shows a lively collection of some of my favorite knick-knacks, together creating a deceptively realistic still life. One of my favorite genres in Realism, trompe l'oeil (French for Fool the Eye) is one of the most meticulous of the fine art styles.



Constellation, 2007,
acrylic on cradled panel,
12 x 16" (30 x 40.5 cm)

This painting depicts a playful and vibrant close-up of marbles arranged into a spiral. The bright light playing through these spheres captures the colors of the glass and projects the most intriguing shadows. This composition reminds me of the dazzling constellations seen in the celestial spheres of our Universe.

As an artist, I feel an irresistible attraction towards Realism. The challenge to paint with great precision and tightly executed details seduces me into continuously reaching into myself, conquering new boundaries, and mastering new skills. By infusing my still life compositions with symbolism, my art gains an additional, and to me, essential creative freedom of expression. This allows me to convey my thoughts and beliefs, while still implementing the delicate but exact techniques and skills of realism.



**Nous, 2006, oil on canvas,
28 x 28" (71 x 71cm)**

This portrait titled "Nous" was commissioned by Mr. and Mrs Merelle from France. Nous is French for us or we. Translating the closeness of this new family was key for this painting, executed in a traditional manner. My working method involves starting with a sepia and color wash, followed by two successive coats of paint and glazing. A first coat of paint is mixed with turpentine, and a second coat of paint is mixed with linseed oil.

**Lust, 2005, oil on canvas,
20 x 16" (50 x 40cm)**

My painting titled "Lust" is part of a series on the seven sins. Even quite detailed and realistic, the painting leaves room for the viewer's interpretation and imagination. My work method is the same as the painting above.





CHINA

MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF REALISM

Ning Lee

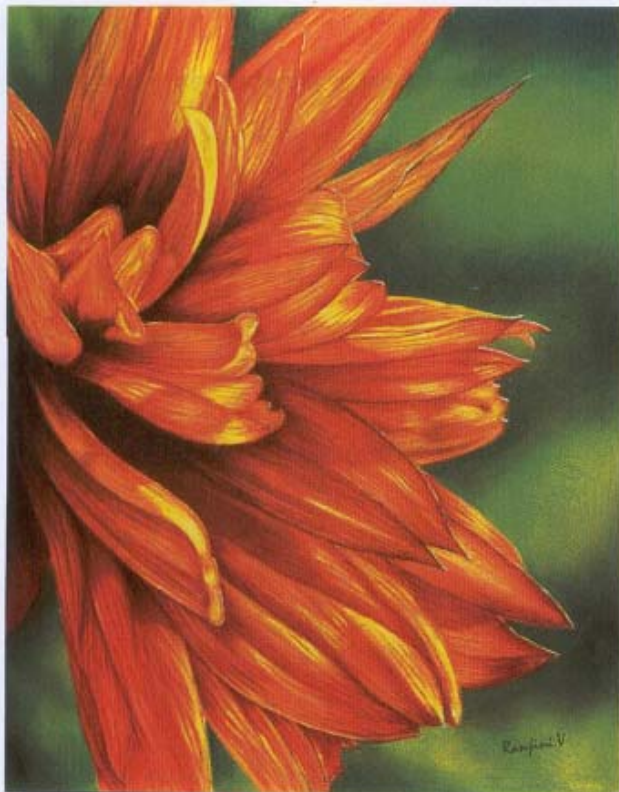
Apples & Bamboo Pail, 2007,
oil on panel,
12 x 16" (30 x 40cm)

I enjoy playing with lights to obtain different effects in my still life paintings. Similar to the effect that backlighting produces, the light coming from the lower side helps lengthen the reflection and brings a sense of drama. I like the harmonious warm color of the red apples and the bamboo pail standing out against the dark background. The significant highlights on the bamboo pail guide the viewers' eyes from the center of the painting throughout the imagery.



Paper & Eggs, 2006,
oil on panel,
11 x 14" (27 x 35cm)

This painting is one of a series of paintings that I created with eggs and paper as the main subject. I was greatly fascinated by the various possible combinations of eggs and paper, the frailty of both suggests vulnerability and instantaneity. The smooth and round surface of the eggs form a sharp contrast with the wrinkly paper, while the monochromatic colors and minimal objects within the painting move the viewer into a mysterious atmosphere.

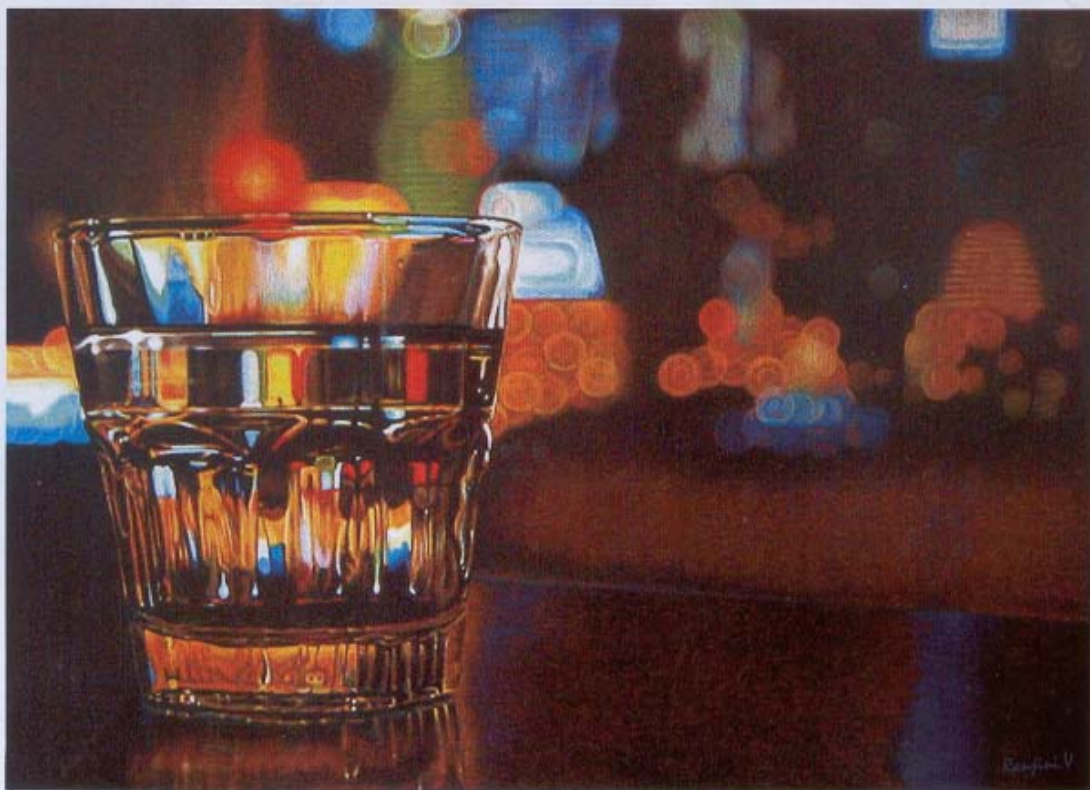


***Glorious, colored pencil and water soluble
crayons on board, 11 x 14" (27 x 35cm)***

Flowers are one of the most vivid creations of nature. I wanted to portray an everyday subject in a fresh and interesting perspective. This painting is a perfect example on how a fragile flower can make a bold expression up close. I was attracted to the colors and the intricate pattern on the petals, which set the rhythm for this composition. To create this piece I used a unique technique of combining water soluble crayons and colored pencil on a pastel board.

***Carnival Glass,
colored pencil on pastel paper, 16 x 20" (40 x 50cm)***

Light, texture and mood are the key elements I use to compose my works. The play of light in the background along with the texture of the glass set the stage for the perfect drama in the creation of this painting. I chose a toned pastel paper to bring out the rich colors and vibrancy of the subject.





RUSSIA

MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF REALISM

Vadim Dolgov

Two Cocks, oil on canvas, 24 x 30" (61 x 76cm)

I found it very interesting to paint these birds while watching them at a nearby farm. They have their own world, behavior and character. Rendering them on canvas, I enjoyed playing with their different cool and warm colors. I accomplished the feeling of a nice sunny day by making a deep contrast between the background and the light colors of the roosters.



Winter Stable, oil on canvas, 24 x 48" (61 x 122cm)

Watching a stable one day during the winter, I could not turn down the opportunity to paint these horses. I have loved these animals since my childhood. The beautiful winter weather, the melting snow, the horses walking and bathing in the warmth of the sun made me create this painting titled "Winter Stable." The horse figures are painted as a contrast against the light, cool and warm vibrating colors of snow in the foreground, and the trees in the background. I think everything looks great surrounded by the snow.



**Vermeer's Voice,
oil on canvas,
8 x 10" (20 x 25cm)**

This painting is about tuning into the ones that have gone before. Learning from them and then finding your own voice. A few times through my career I have given myself the freedom to reinvent myself so to speak. To let go of the old and embrace uncertainty. As a realist I hold on to academic knowledge and yet I move on, embracing my own journey. I painted this painting after years of being booked in advance for commissioned portraits. It took time and a few attempts to figure out where my interest really lies. When there are no clients or galleries lined up expecting a certain type of work, what do I really want to focus on? It actually can take a lot of digging to figure that out.



**Self Portrait with Onions,
oil on canvas, 20 x 24" (50 x 61cm)**

This painting started as a still life and ended up as a "Self Portrait with Onions." There was a mirror behind my still life set up and I kept catching a glimpse of my own reflection while focusing on the onions. I gave in and there I am, the onions took a back seat and the figure takes over. I do love the figure in art, hence I aborted my plan to paint a series of still lifes.

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