

# Bridging Italian and Canadian Art with Fluid Energy, and Motion

by Richard Dellamorte



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For many North Americans, travelling abroad in search of a dream is an intimidating, if not precarious venture into the unknown. Separated from home through land and sea, emerging Vancouver-based artist, Mark Boyko toured across many continents, including Europe; living and working abroad as an artist, he found himself inspired by the surrounding panorama of rich history, art, and culture.

Though excitedly nervous about his solitary excursion, Mark found his reception a welcome one: “I met so many incredible, warm and inviting people who really took me in and made me part of their families - some of my best experiences and memories were just hanging out with friends I met, doing normal day to day things.” Of all the places he’s been, Boyko remarks that Italy remains his most favourite. Having travelled to Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and Central America, Mark possesses an intense fondness for Italy: “If I could hop on a plane tomorrow to anywhere, including places I haven’t been, I would choose to return to Italy.” When asked what it was about his experience in Italy that stirred such passion, Mark responded “There is no more beautiful place in the world to be inspired by art and culture than Italy. Life in Italy seems so much more vibrant and rich to me – I love it there and cannot wait to return.” Boyko continued to reveal the stark difference between research and experience; with any foreign country and culture, one must undertake a complete and intimate immersion in order to ensure absolute awareness and appreciation. Boyko touches on this theme while reminiscing about the Sistine Chapel: “The true experience is in not only how it looks, but how



it smells and feels and sounds, as well as the experience leading up to and after visiting the place, and how all those sensations blend together.”

With respect to the craft, Boyko’s most prominent influence is renowned Italian artist Alessandro Papetti, an “icon of contemporary Italian painting.” Mark first became aware of Papetti’s work 15 years ago at a Buschlen Mowatt Gallery exhibition in Vancouver. Boyko became enamoured with Papetti’s work, and had continued following him, until finally chancing a meeting: “It was in Vancouver that I first met Alessandro – I like to say we became good friends and cherished the time we spent together at dinner, art openings, attending various events, and working together. Alessandro’s feedback and criticism about my work was invaluable.” Upon close observation of Boyko’s work – his perspective and composition – Papetti’s influence is clearly prevalent. Mark articulates his study of Papetti’s work: “I came to appreciate the beauty in being aware of the details without relying on them; I learned to not let the describing of the details within a scene or moment in time, become what the painting is about, but instead, focus on the more ephemeral information that falls between the lines. Papetti describes it as capturing that moment between frames, as in a filmstrip – that split-second between, that the camera doesn’t capture.”

Boyko draws inspiration from places: the memories of places he’s lived (Toronto and Vancouver), and of course, visited. Where some artists work from photos, Mark gives his memories life – an extension from brain to brush. Though Boyko’s style may be formally considered expressionism, he describes it as contemporary, blending different styles and influences: “In terms of describing the style visually, I might say it’s urban landscape – monochromatic, and fluid with a focus on energy and flow.” It is this fluidity; this energy and flow that gives Boyko’s art its dynamic vitality. Amidst such vibrantly detailed revelations of modern life, Boyko reflects upon the themes within his work: “I’m interested in working with scenes we see every day – walking or driving down a street on your way to work for example –and then creating, visually, that place our minds take us to, beyond that pedestrian space: a spiritual place where all the objects (the cars and building and trees etc.) all blend into one, and the energy flows through them; a place where the city, the street, and our day-to-day lives sink away and we connect spiritually to something deeper.”

Mark Boyko’s work is currently on display at De Luca Fine Art Gallery, and was featured at the gallery’s “Art Salon” exhibition in Toronto this past August. In October, Boyko will be officially introduced to Ontario through the Toronto International Art Festival (TIAF), which takes place October 26th through to the 29th.

**For more information about Mark Boyko and De Luca Fine Art Gallery, visit <http://www.delucafineart.com>. For more information about the Toronto International Art Festival, check out <http://www.tiafair.com>.**



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