

Steve Driscoll, Portage, urethane on panel, 78" x 78", 2014



AKRYLIC

COLLECTOR NEWSLETTER May 2015 — Vol. 1

Artist Profile

IN THE STUDIO WITH STEVE DRISCOLL

By Randy Gladman

For most of us, the term "Canadian Art" often equates to landscape painting. While the truth is that our nation's artists are respected globally for much more than this single genre, the long shadow cast by the Group of Seven on the Canadian psyche has resulted in a widely held idea that our art most often reflects our self-identity as a nation of wild natural wonders and resources.

Steve Driscoll is a Toronto-based artist who continues yet modernizes this tradition. Like Lawren Harris, J.E.H. MacDonald, and Tom Thomson, Driscoll departs on long, often-solo adventures into the Canadian wilderness in search of inspiration. On frequent canoe trips through our national park system or hiking explorations through the post-industrial regrowth near the Niagara escarpment, Driscoll photographs

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Art Thoughts

WHY WE COLLECT

By Randy Gladman

A vast array of analytical essays exists in the blogosphere that seeks to explain why we collect art.

Like trying to understand why we fall in love, the gamut of explanations is at once highly diverse yet difficult to nail down. The need for decorative embellishment, the expected investment value, the putting on of sophisticated airs, the desire for direct participation in culture... These certainly affect acquisition decisions and add fuel to the art market fire but they do not explain the emotional, cerebral pleasure collectors receive from their art trophies. Ask anyone who truly values the pieces they have acquired and they will describe a deep love and connection with these objects quite unlike any relationship with other inanimate things they own. What is the source of this bond?

A decade or so ago, I gradually came to the realization that, much to my disappointment and stunned

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STUDIO VISIT WITH STEVE DRISCOLL

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the landscape and uses those images back in his studio to create stunning masterworks that speak particularly well to those of us raised with a direct connection to and love of our boreal environment.

While the content of his paintings may be classic Canadiana, Driscoll's aesthetic devices are thoroughly contemporary. The unique qualities of his works derive from his use of colour. Doing away entirely with any sense of realism, he instead injects his works with a wonderful freedom of hue; not only will he casually render the water of a rushing creek in pink or purple but he dials up (way up!) the saturation of the colours as far as they will go. And while classic landscape painting is usually done with thick, globular ("impasto") dabs of oil or acrylic paint, Driscoll has developed a method of adding pigment to urethane that is nearly unique in the art world and results in gorgeous, smooth, reflective, and refined surfaces that must be seen in person to be appreciated.

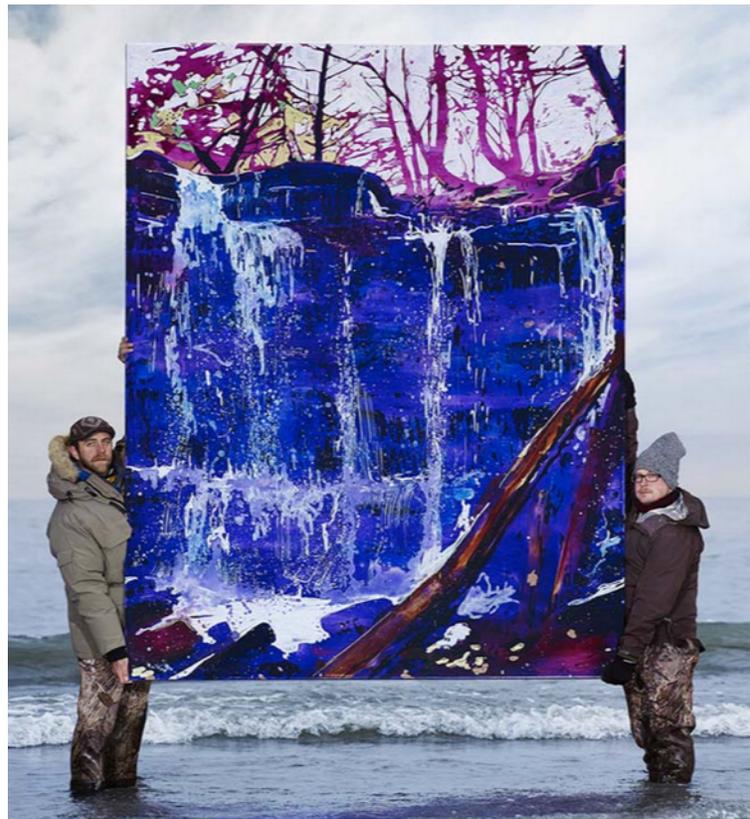
"In my memory of an experience, the colours are always more vivid. So when I'm working on a piece, I start by remembering that moment in time. I then vary the colour to set a mood — usually one that is in keeping with my own perceived experience." - Steve Driscoll

His paintings are at once ecstatic, gorgeous and approachable. They do not intimidate viewers nor require sophisticated understanding about current trends in contemporary art. For new, hesitant collectors still learning about art and their own taste, Driscoll's works are something of a gateway drug; they draw first blood and often spark an addiction to art collecting that lasts for a lifetime. The fact that he is ultra-friendly and readily offers entertaining and educational visits to his wonderful downtown Toronto studio, just makes collecting his work that much easier.

Driscoll is represented in Toronto by Angell Gallery, in Edmonton by Peter Robertson Gallery, and in Newfoundland by James Baird Gallery. Since graduating from the Ontario College of Art and Design in 2002 he has had more than 20 solo exhibitions and been reviewed in many publications including the Globe and Mail, the Toronto Star, and CBC Television. His works range in price from \$5,000 for medium sized paintings to \$20,000 for very large, wall-sized commissions. Studio visits and/or acquisitions can be arranged by contacting the editor of the Akrylic Collector Newsletter, Randy Gladman. ✨



Steve Driscoll, *White Pine*, urethane on panel, 30" x 45", 2014



Steve Driscoll, *Too Hard on the Soul*, urethane on panel, 108" x 84", 2014



Steve Driscoll, *Only Come to Leave*, urethane on panel, 96" x 72", 2014

THOUGHTS ON WHY WE COLLECT ART

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shock, I was not the artistic talent I had previously believed myself to be. Though I had the temperament, passion and desire, it turned out I had none of the vision, dedication, originality nor persistence prerequisite for a life as an artist. The realization shattered my heretofore self-identity — one I had worn like a wetsuit since my earliest teen years — and set me off on various tangents that eventually led to my current satisfactory, pleasant and lucrative life, happy yet lacking the gushing creative outlet I had once dreamed possible and naively believed to be inevitable.

As a teen, I was surrounded by highly talented kids; guitarists, artists, singers, dancers, basketball players, ski racers, championship horseback riders. A couple decades on, nearly all of these people have matured into their current slots in societal production; land developers, accountants, lawyers, doctors, moms, teachers, shrinks and saleswomen. Early expectations and ambitious desires became the standard casualties of economic demands, family pressures, and general reality. In contemporary culture, there is likely no more common story. It is one of the most pathetic if benign truths so many of us share; adolescent ideals making way for adult needs and responsibilities. How many boxes of relics of early creativity collect dust in how many garages, filled with promise but lacking follow through and commitment?

Existing as avatars, artworks promise material possession of a slice of the artistic life we once planned and expected for ourselves.

Some of our acquaintances from earlier lives escaped the numbing, grinding coil and, against all odds, managed to stay true to their earlier creative paths and found gainful employment as creative producers. Most of these people are still required to tailor their output to a market economy and toil on the commercial side of creative endeavour. In a very few cases, however, these individuals have achieved startling successes in the fine arts. Those of us caught in the grid, whose burning diamonds turned out to be chunks of coal, watch from afar, trapped in the wide ranks of normalcy, as the few real artists in our social universes blaze disjunctive paths at Escher-like angles to our own well-tread horizons. I've watched with covetous amazement as a lucky few artists from my own local community (young rising stars like Kristine Moran, Jason Gringler, Daniel Borins and Jennifer Marman) have resisted the gravitational forces of logical economic reality and thrust through the otherwise impossible barriers to

professional art ranks to achieve successful orbit in the international market.

Though inflected with sweet jealousy and watery spite, our encouragement and support for talent and artistry generally squirts forth in the form of ticket purchases, hashtagged Tweets, gossipy interest, and other forms of disconnected admiration from afar. But collecting contemporary artworks is one of the important ways in which the rest of us can participate directly in these beautiful lives. It is immediate and personal. While buying a ticket to a film or performance offers only the most detached and fleeting participation with the creative object of admiration, acquiring art offers a material, lengthy and visceral relationship. Rather than providing an ephemeral opportunity to play an insignificant part in a mass audience, collecting art offers ownership and the right to hang a pound of the artists' flesh in our homes. These objects are not mechanically-reproduced simulacra like DVDs or MP3s but actual bits of matter that were touched and enlivened by the artists, forged in their very presence, slaved over, injected with their spirit and sweat and breath. Existing as avatars, artworks promise material possession of a slice of the artistic life we once planned and expected for ourselves. Relics from the admired artists' studios, these objects are substantial vestiges from our own lives-that-might-have-been had different decisions been made along the way.

This is something that the art-collecting "one per cent" have long understood. Who are most of these one per cent, if not peers from the successful lines of our own humdrum ranks who have achieved commercial success often through the sacrifice of their own artistic sensibilities? Were many of the hedge fund traders, investment bankers, dotcom founders, management consultants, doctors and lawyers not once creative kids whose future dreams of artistic identity gave way to earthbound realities and materialistic concerns? I've been to their homes; I've seen the dusty drum kits, obsolete camera collections, and long-forgotten portfolios hiding in plain view in their basements.

Their collections of paintings by Matt Bahen or drawings by Nicholas Di Genova are loving requiems for their own cast-aside yet remembered lost ideals. They are the consolation prizes, the bitter-sweet trophies for having made the rational choices, the reminders of a more glorious life that was expected but not realised. ❁

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NOT TO BE MISSED EXHIBITIONS/ EVENTS

Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts 2015

@ National Gallery of Canada
380 Sussex Drive, Ottawa
April 9 - August 30, 2015

Stephen Andrews: POV

@ Art Gallery of Ontario
317 Dundas Street West, Toronto
April 23 - August 30, 2015

Frieze Art Fair: New York

Randall's Island, New York City
May 14 - May 17, 2015

Road to Ruin: Group Show

@ Cooper Cole
317 Dundas Street West, Toronto
June 4 - July 18, 2015

Bradley Wood: New Works

@ Angell Gallery
12 Ossington Avenue, Toronto
August 21 - September 26, 2015

Joe Fig: Inside the Artist's Studio

@ Cristin Tierney
540 West 28th Street, New York City
September 10 - October 24, 2015

Joan Linder: New Work

@ Mixed Greens Gallery
531 West 26th Street, New York City
October 15 - November 14, 2015

GETTING STARTED

MUST READ BOOKS FOR A NEW CONTEMPORARY ART COLLECTOR

By Lori Zimmer

Navigating the art world as a collector can have its share of frustration and confusion. With passion as a driving force, successful collectors need to temper their love and enthusiasm with knowledge of the landscape and the development of some personal strategy.

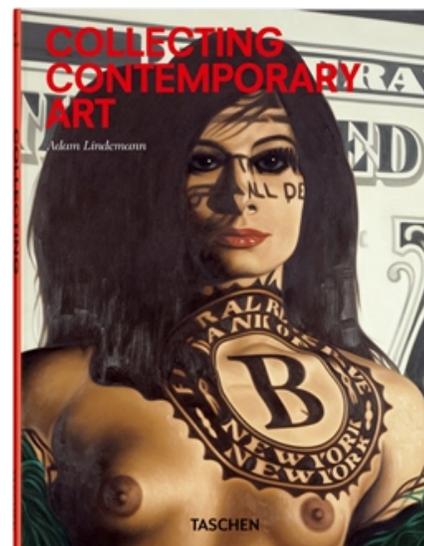
We've collected a roster of helpful books from experts and art world insiders to not only help build a collection of meaning and value, but also to help unmask the somewhat unorthodox processes and practices that buying, selling and pricing art can entail. An educated collector makes for a happy collector, who can focus on enjoying that ecstatic adrenaline rush of adding a new piece to their collection. Whether a beginner or a seasoned pro, there is something of interest on this list that will offer revelation into the inner workings of the art world, helping to keep the acquisition process about excitement, rather than the stress of negotiation.

COLLECTING CONTEMPORARY ART

by Adam Lindemann

From the pen of a top collector,

Lindemann's book is not only a great insider's guide to building your own collection, but also doubles as a small coffee table book, chock full gorgeous imagery from leading artists. Lindemann explains the essentials of collecting, from best times to buy and how to navigate art fairs, to tips on buying in the primary and secondary markets. As a bonus, the book also features exclusive insider interviews with major gallerists like Marian Boesky, Jeffrey Deitch, Larry Gagosian, as well as critics, collectors, auction houses, private consultants and museum curators.



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ON THE WEB

ESSENTIAL ARTIST INSTAGRAM FEEDS TO FOLLOW



instagram.com/jr



instagram.com/joseparla



instagram.com/jenstark



instagram.com/inkaessenhigh

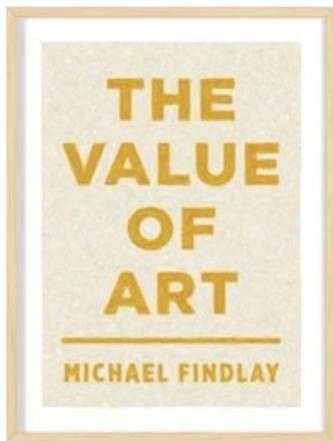
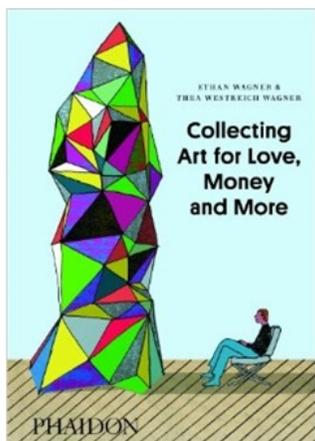
NEW COLLECTOR READS

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COLLECTING ART FOR LOVE, MONEY AND MORE

by Ethan Wagner & Thea Westreich Wagner

Penned by husband and wife, Ethan Wagner and art advisor Thea Westreich, this book is written with a focus on the love and passion of collecting art from an insider's perspective. The advice, insight and tips imparted by the Wagners allows collectors to add a layer of business-smarts to the sheer pleasure of buying art, giving educated tips for making the most out of the buying experience. For use as inspiration for your own collection the book also outlines some of history's most important collectors.



THE VALUE OF ART: MONEY, POWER, BEAUTY

By Michael Findlay

Understanding the value placed on art work helps to not only build a collection, but also to assess and enjoy what you have in a deeper way. Art dealer Michael Findlay's book breaks down the contributing elements, including commercial, social and essential qualities that determine the value of an art work. Written in a straight forward manner, the book provides armour for new collectors against scams and overpricing by reminding them that the true value of art lies outside of its commercial value.

THE 411 EDITOR'S LETTER

I have created the Akrylic Collector Newsletter in a modest attempt to provide useful, educational and entertaining information for people who are interested in starting or building collections of contemporary art. Collecting anything without knowledge can be intimidating; I hope that this newsletter helps readers develop the confidence to participate in the art market with intelligence and sophistication. I have been collecting art and working with artists in Toronto and New York City since 1999 and decided to start this initiative to share some of the things I've learned about collecting and help promote the work of my favourite artists. Thank you for taking the time to read through this document; feel free to share it widely. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me directly for any further help you may need as you build your collection of investment-grade contemporary art. You can read more of my published thoughts about art at Akrylic.com and in the next Collector Newsletter. ❁

-- Randy Gladman, Editor, Editor@Akrylic.com

THE ART OF BUYING ART: AN INSIDER'S GUIDE

by Paige West

Collecting and pricing contemporary art can be confusing, with issues like hype and controversy that can inexplicably inflate prices for newer artists. West's informative guide breaks down the process of appreciating and collecting contemporary art for varying budgets, addressing such issues as price negotiation and how to display the art you buy in your home. Geared toward a slightly more decorative skew, West helps her readers live with art, foregoing mass-produced decorative objects for fine art pieces that will appreciate in value.



ART OF THE DEAL: CONTEMPORARY ART IN GLOBAL FINANCIAL MARKETS

By Noah Horowitz

If the process of pricing living artists' work seems erratic and confusing, then Horowitz's book may shed light on the unconventional-sounding market. In the Art of the Deal, the author discusses changes in the contemporary art market since the so-called bubble burst in 2008 including in-depth analysis of new markets that have developed around Video Art and Experiential Art. The third section takes a look at the history of Art Investment Funds and analyses the cold hard facts about their financial returns and their impact on the larger market. ❁

A longer version of this article was originally published by MutualArt.com