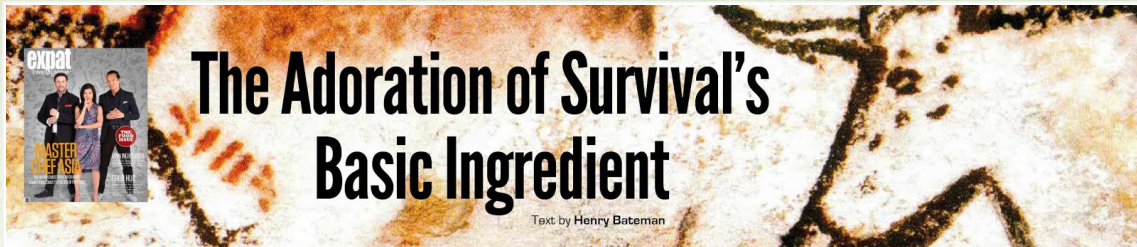


The Ex Expat

Unwrapping the world of art - one artist at a time



My article in the current print edition of The Expat Travel & Lifestyle Magazine

Friday, February 26, 2016

Realism as an Emotional Truth



Paul Fenniak
Offshore
2011
Courtesy of the artist & Forum Gallery

"It's not so much what you depict but how you depict it."
Paul Fenniak

The Canadian artist [Paul Fenniak](#) takes the inspiration for his paintings from movies, books and newspaper stories which he re-interprets as imagined narrative portraits that explore overlapping realities.

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The expat



[Henry Bateman](#)

Henry Bateman is an artist and writer living in Australia. The Expat, is his blog about the arts (often) and politics (sometimes). His writing has

been published by Crikey.com (Australia), Artslant (US), The Expat Travel & Lifestyle Magazine & The Expat Newspaper (both in the Philippines) and The Western Review (Australia). He has also had seven solo exhibitions and has had his work shown in 15 group exhibitions as well as 35 theater commissions as a set designer and/or lighting designer.

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 - [Realism as an Emotional Truth](#)
 - [Mapping as Identity](#)
 - [Context Matters](#)
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 - [Abstracted Landscapes](#)
 - [The Magic of Art](#)
 - [Pop Noir with a Dash of Drama](#)
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As he explained in a [Laguna College of Art + Design lecture](#) it is imperative “that you can keep a space open for the intimate and personal in this mass media dominated world.”

In his dream like pictures, Fenniak paints in a realistic style imbued with symbolic meaning.

As he has said “one needs to balance realism’s wealth of experience and symbolism’s depth of feeling – you have to look in two directions at once.”

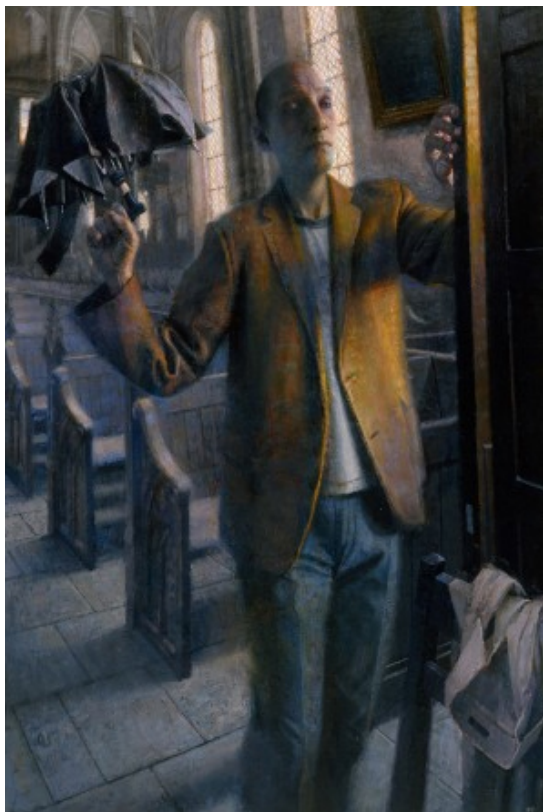
With Bachelor of Fine Art from Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario and a Master’s from Concordia University in Montreal, Fenniak contends that “Art can make you feel less alone... Increasingly it struck me that painting of this kind had a particular capacity for creating an intimate encounter of a kind that lent itself to exploring the mystery of another person and thereby enhancing empathy.”

As New York’s Forum Gallery says about his work “Fenniak’s paintings have luminous surfaces and compelling images that offer a combination of disquiet, uncertainty, urgency, calm, and spirituality. His painting style contains a contrast of inner light with his attention to detail, texture and atmosphere.”

In his complex narratives, Fenniak combines autobiography, dreams, art historical references and the implications of contemporary life to explore the hidden recesses of the human psyche.

And about which he freely admits he is “Sacrificing the documentary realism of external fact to get to an emotional truth.”

Fenniak’s current exhibition of *New Paintings* is on show at New York’s [Forum Gallery](#) until the 19th of March.



Paul Fenniak
Man with Collapsible Umbrella
2012-2013
Courtesy of the artist & Forum Gallery

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▶ [2015](#) (314)

▶ [2014](#) (69)

▶ [2013](#) (6)

▶ [2012](#) (3)

▶ [2011](#) (2)

▶ [2010](#) (9)

▶ [2009](#) (80)

▶ [2008](#) (170)

▶ [2007](#) (121)

▶ [2006](#) (96)

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