

UPPERCASE



7

*a magazine for
the creative and curious*

LUCKY
SEVEN

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about Chris
on page 32.*

PAINTING BY
CHRISTOPHER STOTT

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ART & DESIGN

ILLUSTRATION,
PHOTOGRAPHY, DESIGN
& TYPOGRAPHY



christopher stott



by Alanna Cavanagh



Q Do you have a formal education in painting?

A I went to the University of Saskatchewan and studied painting along with photography and art history. At the time my plan was to become a graphic designer!

Q Who were some of your major influences at school?

A I was really drawn to the Dutch Masters. I loved how they documented domestic life and the world around them. Nowadays I am still very influenced by them, particularly Vermeer and Chardin, as well as the American artist Wayne Thiebaud.

Q After graduating you worked as a technician in a photography department. How did that experience affect your painting?

A At the time, the department was transitioning from analogue to digital photography which meant I spent most of my time dealing with equipment, demonstrations and discussing dpi (dots per inch). It was a fantastic place to work, but after being around technology all day I found myself craving to be quiet and alone with my paints and brushes. That's when I really started painting.

Q In the beginning, how did you go about selling your work?

A I set up a store on eBay and when I received good feedback and made sales right away it encouraged me to keep going.

It is increasingly rare to encounter art that is rooted in tradition and mastery of technique. Christopher Stott's elegant still life paintings are a sophisticated shock to the system.





Beautiful objects from times past transport the viewer away from our noisy world, to the world of memory.

There is a saying amongst painters that you must finish one hundred paintings before you've really mastered your craft and that's exactly what I set out to do. I feel I was being paid to learn. By the time I finished my hundredth painting my work had caught the eye of gallery owner Elliot Fouts in Sacramento, California. He offered to represent me at his gallery as well as two others in California and we've been working together ever since. I just finished a solo exhibition in June and am happy to report that it was almost sold out.

Q *The art critic Charley Parker suggested that much of the drama in your paintings comes from the light. He suggested it was a key player in your work. Would you agree?*

A Yes, definitely. And in that regard, I am very inspired by the Dutch masters who loved to explore natural light and to observe the patterns it made as it fell across objects.

Q *Almost all your work contains vintage objects such as typewriters, old clocks and books. These are things that UPPERCASE magazine and our readers love. Can you ex-*



plain why you like to depict these objects in your paintings?

A More than one reason. On one level, I feel that presenting these regular everyday subjects in paintings translates them into iconic symbols of the not-so-distant past. On another level, each object can be seen to represent an important theme. The typewriters, when painted along with books, paper, and pencils represent ideas and stories being shared. Clocks represent the passage of time, while telephones symbolize talking and listening i.e. communication. Cameras

are important because they are image-makers, and as a painter, I too make images. However while cameras capture instant moments, I capture cameras in slow, close observation.


I am most drawn to painting vintage objects because they give me an opportunity for thoughtfulness which I then hope to pass on to my viewers. I feel beautiful objects from times past transport the viewer away from our noisy world, to the world of memory.

Q Speaking of noisy... nowadays artists are expected to build a strong

online presence and market themselves constantly using the tools of social media. What are your thoughts on combining the quiet life of an artist with the very buzzy world of twitter and facebook?

A I'm concerned that a lot of artists are spending way too much time packaging and promoting themselves online and not enough time on their actual work! It's important to have a web presence—and I do maintain a blog as well as a facebook page—but I make sure that the balance of my time is spent on the actual painting.

If I could give one piece of advice to young painters it would be: 'Remember to turn off your computer, put your head down and hone your craft!'

That's fantastic advice for all of us, Chris and a good way to end our interview. Thanks very much. 

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