

Artist to Collect Richard Savoie



On a Keith Jarret Paino Track, 60" x 40"



Lumière Hivernal, 36" x 48"

written by Debra Usher

As a little boy, Richard Savoie delighted in colouring pictures to brighten his mother's day. As an adult, her merry face continues to inspire him in his love affair with hue and shade.

"I have always loved colour," says Richard. "As a young boy I loved to draw with my colour crayons to make my mother laugh and I have to say she had the most beautiful smile. I like to think that this is what motivated me to always love colour."

Richard says he had a happy childhood making cheerful art. However, in adolescence music was his priority. He developed an ear for it, and then soon associated music to colour.

"Today, colour remains music to my ears."

It was not until the end of secondary studies at Laval University in Quebec City and Ste. Therese art school outside of Montreal that he began his first pastel landscapes. Strongly influenced

by the water colours of M.A. Fortin and with encouragement from collector Fernand Thibault and painter and art instructor Gabrielle Messier, Richard decided to put his career in motion as a pastellist and then as an oil painter.

Colour like a religion

Richard uses colour to capture the sounds from his childhood. Like the poet Charles Baudelaire, he is fascinated by the parallels between colour and sound and is inspired by their similarities. He talks passionately of his art and his reverence for pure colour is almost religious. He has a strong desire to master all its nuances to better serve his art.

Richard is well versed in the theories of Eugene Chevreul, a 19th century chemist whose colour theories inspired many neo-impressionist painters. He is also very familiar with the optical effects of juxtaposing colour in his paintings and the effect upon the viewer. Each application will influence the next and the final colour is determined by



Côte De La Montagne, Québec, 20" x 30"

the eye through the subtle blending of shades perceived by the optic nerve.

It is such a delight to hear him speak about complementary colours and the subtleties of his art as a pastellist. Richard appreciates the durability of both oils and pastels, which are impervious to fading over time. He can scarcely conceal his pleasure when he picks up his brush loaded with colour.

Richard was born in New Brunswick in 1969. Fifth in a brood of nine, he grew up along the shores of the Atlantic. As a toddler, his family settled in Saguenay, Lac St. Jean and the ocean and the majestic scenery of the Saguenay region still fascinate him to this day. He is inspired by the sounds of its many moods – from the gentle lapping of waves on the shore to the thundering roar of the surf whipped by a wild wind.

Developed allergy to pigmentation

Prior to developing an allergy to the pigmentation in dry pastels, the pastel crayons worked magic in his fingers to render wilderness landscapes where rivers white with foam cascade through narrow channels under the brilliant skies of the changing seasons. Whether it is the forest, rivers

teeming with fish, deserted lanes or lively streets, Richard pauses to observe and to sketch the wonders of the world around him. While working with pastels he had also been working with oils, so when it became necessary it was no problem for Richard to achieve the same mastery with oils as he had with pastels.

Each season portrayed by Richard is a brilliant composition of colour, light and sound, but for me the way that he captures the mystery and velvet depths of snow brings tears to my eyes. There is a luminous quality and as I look at his work I can feel the taste of a snowflake on my tongue and the movement of powdery snow beneath my feet as I walk the city sidewalk.



Neige Du Soir Montréal, 24" x 30"







Sous Un Épais Manteau D'hiver, 48" x 60"



Neige En Mars, Westmount, 30" x 40"



Rue Clarke Sous Une Neige Printanière, 24" x 36"

Each work by Richard reveals another fragment of the universe in a tapestry of light and colour that allows viewers to savour the finesse of his fresh and spontaneous approach.

For Richard, surroundings have little influence. He says, "I have learned to adapt to any condition, as long as I have good lighting and quality colours I am happy. In the search for light and colour, subject matters very little. I could paint non-figurative and my method would still be the same."

Music important to create colour

Richard says the only thing he can't go without, besides his colours and paint brushes, is a great sound system to listen to while he paints. He says, "Without music I would be lacking many colours."

In the summer, if Richard is not painting he can be found on his road bike. He loves to cycle and the ride is vital for him, saying it is on his bike climbing hills where he finds his balance.

"When people ask me what I feel is so

important in painting, the answer is always the same – colour. Feel the vibration of the colour, live the colour, be the colour, look at the depth of the colour, don't be afraid of the colour. It is of paramount importance in all things. I strive at finding new colour palettes, new harmony, it all has to be vibrant.

"Whether it be a landscape or cityscape it moves me, touches me. Light seduces me as I try to understand her. These images, vibrations, are in my mind for days, weeks and even years and then all of a sudden it just pops and I figure how to do it or at the very least try to do it."

Richard does not like commissions when the client tells him how and what to paint. He says, "I need my artistic liberty. For me you just can't order a painting. I paint what touches me in the moment, what comes out of my experience, images from my mind which have ripened with time."

For a list of galleries carrying the work of Richard Savoie please see the resource directory at the back of the magazine.