

Island Paradise



Arcadia Contemporary is hard to miss at *LA Art Show*. “We have eight booths. I’m not sure if we’re the largest but it sure feels like we’re the largest,” says gallery owner Steven Diamant. “It’s a big space and when you walk in you feel like you’re on this island. It’s a huge undertaking, but it pays off otherwise we wouldn’t do it year after year—17 in total.”

At this year’s *LA Art Show*, which takes place February 5 through 9 at the Los Angeles Convention Center, Arcadia will be showing more than 100 new paintings and drawings from some of the most popular and successful realist artists working today. Artists include **Malcolm Liepke, Tim Rees, Daniel Billes, John Brosio, Katie Whipple, Casey Childs, Shaun Downey, Alex Venezia, Aron Wiesenfeld** and many others.

“This is the largest presence we have at any art fair across the country. The response always seems to be terrific, and I think it’s because of the quality of the work. There’s an influx of flashier or glossier things—works that need to be plugged into a wall or cartoon characters—at many of these fairs. So people really respond to the fine art of painting when they come upon our booth,” Diamant says. “They come in surprised because it’s work they’ve never seen before. Some galleries put up older inventory, but everything we put up is new for the show.”

He adds that each artist is given a little salon, which creates inter-





1
Michael Chapman,
City Sunlight, oil on
 canvas, 30 x 46"

2
Alex Venezia, *At Rest*,
 oil on panel, 26 x 28"

3
Patrick Kramer, *The Ex*,
 oil on panel, 60 x 48"

3

esting groupings of paintings. And make no mistake, it's all paintings: "We stand out because we don't do sculpture, anything three-dimensional or mixed media. Just paintings because paintings are timeless."

Works at this year's Arcadia booth at *LA Art Show* includes **Jeff Bartels'** *Glass*, *Silent Movie Camera* and *Downey's The Voyage*, a 16-by-48-inch work showing a red-headed woman staring intently from the window of a bus as reflections of nature can be seen on the bus windows. **Michael Chapman** will be showing *City Sunlight*, a painting that pays tribute to the work of Edward Hopper, while **Patrick Kramer** will be showing *The Ex*, a work that features a riff off of Grant Wood's masterpiece *American Gothic*. "Patrick

uses a Trompe l'Oeil effect to show how the painting has been scraped away," Diamant says. "It's a masterful work, but with an incredible sense of humor. And it's all painting. People are going to be blown away at his technique."

Another artist he's looking forward to showing to collectors is Venezia. "He's become our superstar in the last year. He's 24 years old and from North Carolina. His paintings look as though he's lived three lifetimes," the gallery owners says. "His work could hang at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and no one would even question it—he's that good." Venezia will be showing *At Rest*, an image of a girl resting in a field with her head against her hand. The work is reminiscent of the paintings

of William-Adolphe Bouguereau, whose delicate touch for light, skin and hands can be seen in every work he completed.

Diamant will also be debuting the work New Zealand painter **Simon Richardson**, who paints in egg tempera. "It's flawless painting," he says. "And beautifully executed and wonderfully detailed. It's his first time showing in the United States. He's bringing some nocturnes, some images of young people draped in blankets and watching fireworks...they are moody paintings, but also very sentimental." ●

Arcadia Contemporary at LA Art Show
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