

CHRIS LANGSTROTH

ARTIST STATEMENT / BIO

Langstroth's energetic impasto technique dances between abstraction and figuration. Foreground and background flirt for power as figures and forms morph from multi-colour slabs of paint and claim their shape, inviting the viewer to participate. Rich and vibrant layers of purple, black, red, and creamy white combine to create a distinct energy. The artist combines photographic perspectives with palette knife painting in acrylic on large format canvases. The abstracted images, mostly recognizable street scenes with figures, hover on the cusp between unformed pigment and representation. "In each painting," Chris writes, "I'm searching for the most compelling combination of imagery and abstract paint quality." The physicality of the paint is prominent. Photographic foreshortening and oblique angles, together with the shifting planes of the subject matter, give an intriguing sense of urgency and motion to his work. The images, painted with low-key colours in a Futurist style, are disquieting. They share a forceful sense of diagonal movement in space, an emotional ambience linking the exterior scenes to interior emotions, and a sense of simultaneity that appears to combine memories, present impressions and anticipation of future events.

Chris Langstroth (b.1959, Toronto, ON) attended the Ontario College of Art between 1978-1980 and earned a BAA in Film and Photography at Ryerson University in 1985. He has shown extensively in Toronto, with 16 shows at the Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition since 1991. He was the winner of the 2002 Artist for Artists Award and won First Prize in the 1997 Praxis Group Show, Toronto. He has participated in numerous solo, group and juried exhibitions. His work can be found in many corporate and private collections.

"I have been concentrating, increasingly, on ways of representing the human figure (in whole or part). I enjoy the physicality of thick paint and use knives to smear on one wet layer over another or to excavate through existing layers. Although I strive for a certain 'visual plausibility' in my work, representational accuracy is not my prime objective. The most enigmatic and interesting qualities particular to painting, have to do with the transformation of pigment in a paste to an image on canvas. I am, therefore seeking to retain some visual evidence of the process used in making the image as a subtext for reading or interpreting it. In each painting, I'm searching for the most compelling combination of imagery and abstract paint quality."

EXCERPT FROM REVIEWS

"...the accidents Langstroth curates could be read as vestiges of lives: those found jostling about in contemporary cities or, more touchingly, in the haze of memory, where abstraction and figuration have always found perfect marriage." David Balzer, art critic.

"From a distance, Chris Langstroth's works are stunning abstract paintings, but look closer and you'll see distinct human shapes. By using thick paint and knives to apply multiple wet layers or dig through existing layers, he leaves evidence of his process in the finished product". by Alison Malone. "WHERE" magazine.