

Pierre Bellemare

Painting the Ardour and Energy of U2's Music



Ocean, 40 x 30 in.

The man is calm, serene and level headed. The artist is rather fiery, passionate and audacious. Two different personalities Pierre Bellemare totally embraces, with conviction and without compromise. This duality is to him a natural way of being which is manifest in

his art, as he creates at times aerial works that incite a sense of well-being and at other times flamboyant pieces from which emanates raw energy – portrait of an artist inspired by the music of U2.

The importance of music and strange coincidences surrounding the number 2 are often mentioned during our pleas-

ant meeting which takes place in the artist's studio, located in proximity to the Québec Bridge and the majestic St. Lawrence River, starting with the rock group that has drastically transformed Pierre Bellemare's artistic approach. The artist was in fact renowned for his representative landscapes and floral compositions,



Another World, 36 x 60 in.

but that was before year 2009, when his true artistic nature revealed itself.

"I had been leading dual careers for many years, working as a graphic designer as well as being a painter," says the artist. "Everything was going well and I participated in many group exhibitions such as in France and Italy, but I constantly felt limited in space and time. Since my heart was no longer in it, I stopped everything and took a three month sabbatical. I did move to a new more airy studio, but... nothing. Then, one day, I attended a U2 concert in Boston. Upon return from that trip, abstract art revealed itself to me. I started painting while listening to the group's music and the experience was extremely pleasurable. I hadn't felt such positive energy in years."

Pierre Bellemare would not call himself a "groupie", but he has been following the career of the Dublin group since its first successes. He claims to be channelling their powerful committed music as he paints his large canvasses using a "splashing" technique. He will be attending another one of the group's concerts in Montréal this summer.

A COLOURED UNIVERSE

The artist's creative environment appears chaotic with its walls ceiling and floor stained with acrylic paint, but in fact reflects the energetic character of his creative process as well as the intensity of his approach.

"One has to be in good shape to paint in such a manner, one needs to be athletic even," insists the artist. "I always begin with the application of structural mortar on the canvas to achieve some texture and relief. Then, as soon as I put on my headphones, the colours start to fight for their place on the canvas or join together to share a spot."

In the manner of a conductor directing a symphony, with ample movements the artist brings his canvases to life. Often energetic, at times more subdued, the painter's movements indeed resemble those of maestros who are likewise able to command great emotions albeit through a very different mode of expression.

"I've always painted while listening to music. As my artistic approach evolved from a representative style to abstrac-

tion, the music that accompanied my creative process shifted from classical to U2's energetic rock. One thing that hasn't changed though: my paintings are as vivacious and colourful as ever," he explains.

No poster featuring Bono's band adorns the walls of his workshop, they are rather loaded with his travel photos, including many snapshots taken in Japan which was his most recent destination. In fact he visited Japan last fall to attend courses in calligraphy, an art form mastered by the Japanese that is forcefully expressed with gracious and confident gestures.

It should be said that his work is also influenced by the education he received, having obtained a bachelor's degree in graphic communication from Université Laval, as well as guidance from renowned artists such as Claude A. Simard, Antoine Dumas, Milos Reindl and Normand Boisvert. Heading 'Bellemare Graphic Design' since 1991, the artist has realized numerous national and international projects. He has also given us the famed First Ministers Promenade, near the Parliament Building in Québec.



Fudji, 36 x 60 in.

"Japan is a country of contrasts, where thousands year old temples cohabit with futuristic buildings. I was greatly impressed with Tokyo. That voyage has definitely marked my creative universe. I literally felt more Zen when I came back home," says Bellemare.

STRAIGHT TO THE HEART

Since his return from the land of the rising sun, Pierre Bellemare has been transposing the sharp effervescent colours of Tokyo onto his canvases. He has notably been using more red than ever before, while his work now reveals two distinct universes: Yin, as in his more aerial pieces, and Yang, as in his definitive flamboyant works.

"This duality, this contrast, is me: fire and water, sun and moon. I have a passion for great cities. I am most happy when I am randomly lost in a city. The same principle is at work as I paint and I let myself be carried by the creative process. It's an adventure each and every time, which feeds on emotion, movement and energy. I think people are moved by my works because they were created with

heart and sincerity. It's always a good way to reach someone, somewhere," states the artist, who also says he needs to paint each and every day.

In abstract art, it appears Pierre Bellemare has definitely found his style. His painting is in constant progression, and the artist himself ignores where he is headed exactly but is convinced his work will forever breathe authenticity, more assumed than ever before.

"In my studio there is a citation well in view, from Albert Einstein, saying that: Logic will bring you from point A to point B, but imagination will take you anywhere. The beauty of abstract art is that it has no boundaries. Everyone, whatever their culture or origin, can relate to it and react with emotions that are entirely their own. I have always worked in institutionalized communication. Finally I don't have a precise message to deliver. My only goal is to communicate a positive emotion. But the line is often very thin. A single brushstroke may be superfluous. Rules of construction, aesthetics, rhythm, equilibrium and harmony must be followed. The work must hold its own on the visual plane," says the artist.

AN ARTIST OF HIS TIME

Contemporary and urban, Pierre Bellemare's works are actual and timely, as is the artist himself. He doesn't hesitate to use social media, notably YouTube and Facebook, to keep the art lovers abreast of his projects, exhibits and other new endeavours. He has created on his personal website modern virtual decors into which he features his paintings as well as indicating a thousand and one ways they can be integrated into the home or office. The effect is absolutely striking: www.pierrebellemare.net.

"I also have a video showing what happens in studio. People are intrigued with my technique. Many visit my site and leave positive comments. It is an unfiltered way to remain in direct contact with customers and the public at large. I perceive stirrings of excitement about my work. People are very receptive and enthused about my projects however removed from the normal framework of a painter artist they may appear to be."

The current year marks an important career move for the artist. Indeed, Pierre Bellemare is from now on giving himself



Kowloon, tryptique, 36 x 108 in.



Life Line, 24 x 72 in.



Salon Sinfonia, 24 x 72 in.

the means to promote his work overseas, thanks in part to new original partnerships. His works are presently shown in a collective exhibition at the Metro Toronto Convention Center. They are also part of corporate and private collections all over the world. **I**

In Canada, the artist is represented by the Beauchamp Art Galleries in Québec City and Baie-Saint-Paul; Galerie d'art Émeraude, Montréal; Koyman Galleries in Ottawa. He is listed in the *Biennial Guide to Canadian Artists in Galleries* published by MAGAZIN'ART.



Dancing, 60 x 36 in.