

Madrona Gallery presents
David Antonides
in the *Colours of Summer XIV* group show.

July 2 - August 8, 2023

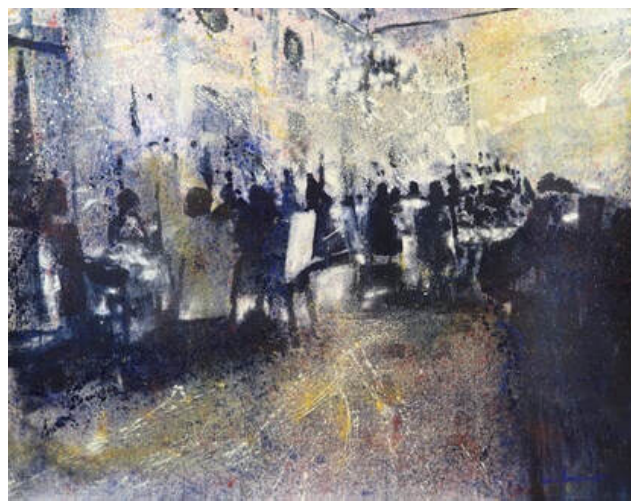


Detail: "Harbour, Late-evening", mixed-media, by David Antonides.

Once in a while, in the course of our lives, there comes an event worth recording and remembering. So it was for artist David Antonides, in Berlin, on the eve of October 18, 2021. He had just ascended the palatial steps of the Official Residence of the President of Germany. At the top of the stairs, he turned around and took out his cell phone to video. "I wanted to be able to remember this moment," he recalls. Antonides filmed the 100 soldiers holding burning torches along the winding driveway. His chauffeur-driven limousine had just passed through this fiery spectacle. Then he swept his cell phone across the grand front steps, filming a 30-piece orchestra. Moments before, the entire orchestra had risen from their seats and played as he mounted the staircase alone. Antonides was one of 60 guests invited by the German President to a state dinner in honour of Canada's newly-appointed Governor General Mary May Simon. Simon is an Inuk woman and the guest list included several members of cultural minorities.



"Progressions and Conciliations, Arrival," Watercolour on Paper, 44 x 58 in.
(Available)



"Progressions and Conciliations, Interior," Watercolour on Paper, 44 x 58 in.
(SOLD)

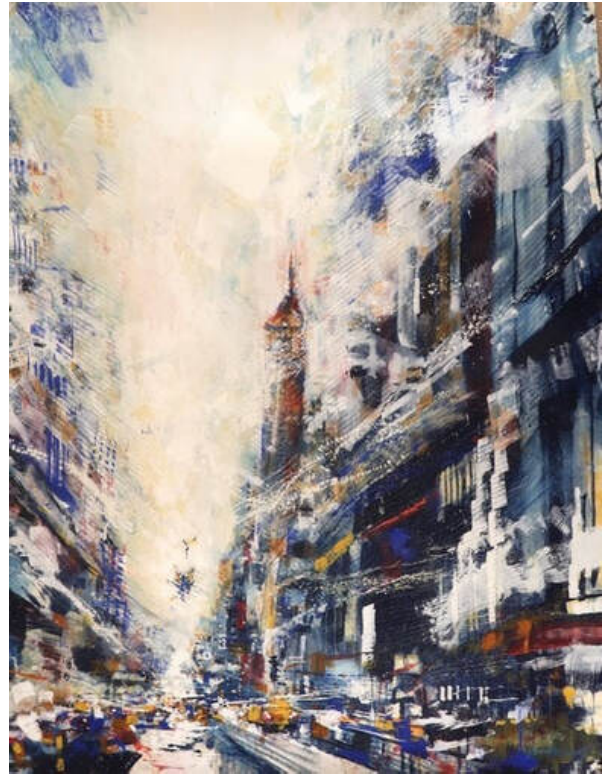
"I was aesthetically struck and intellectually taunted by this momentary confluence of music, protocol and architecture reflecting the growth of the post-colonial recognition of "the other" and a growing respect of diversity," says the artist.

Antonides completed two paintings about the event, titled *Progressions and Conciliations (Interior and Arrival)*. One of the paintings (*Arrival*) is still available at Madrona Gallery. Owner Michael Warren is happy to include Antonides in the summer show. He describes Antonides as a unique and multi-talented artist. Clients are intrigued by this artist, notes Warren, because he was born in Canada's north (Whitehorse) and is now based in Europe with an international clientele. Often, clients have viewed his work in major cities such as New York, Berlin and Vancouver. "Madrona does very well with David's high-energy abstracts," Warren says. "We have a good working relationship and respect for this artist."

Mutual respect is evident, as Antonides praises Madrona as being a high-profile professional gallery, known across Canada. Antonides finds the staff excellent, with a good academic knowledge of the international art market, both historical and contemporary. "They are super partners, high-calibre people with business savvy," he says, "who readily introduce my latest paintings."



Glide, Watercolour on Paper, 36 x 23 in.



59th St. N.Y., Watercolour on Paper, 58 x 44 in.

Antonides' latest paintings include several cityscapes like *Glide* and *59th St. N.Y.* These cityscapes evolved from his own life experiences and are influenced by the unconscious realm, spontaneity and chance. Widely travelled and well-educated, Antonides studied for three years at the Art Students League of New York. This influential school produced abstract expressionist painters like Willem de Kooning and Franz Kline - artists admired by Antonides.

The artist explains that his approach to abstract painting involves building up the composition with layers of pigment, then reducing and deconstructing details. In *59th St. N.Y.* for example, the whooshing energy of a busy street is perceivable, but the tall buildings and clock tower are more imagined than substantial. The blue-gray shapes, which suggest exterior walls and windows, form a grid-like structure that holds in counterpoint the meteoric light cascading skyward into the ether. "I know this corner well," says the artist, "it's near the Students League and Central Park. I have often walked this area."



Worlds, Watercolour on Paper, 45.5 x 27 in.



Parallel, Watercolour on Paper, 45.5 x 27 in.

A mysterious narrative is part of the Antonides magic, along with artistic process. Antonides creates large paintings, using vivid water-based pigments on sturdy cotton paper. Working with generous dollops of paint and washes of water, he attacks with vigour and delight, scratching and marring the surface as evidence of process. Not traditional watercolours, these are "artifacts" according to the artist, physical statements with deckled edges and scarred surfaces.

The artist has extensive training in Asian brushwork and composition. Following the practice of lyrical abstraction painters like Chu Teh Chun, his markmaking varies from precise to expansive. In *Parallel* for example, expressive brushwork is used to blend in and scabble paint on the thick paper ground. In contrast, bright dashes of yellow, green and mauve are carefully placed accents. Like musical notes in a composition, these accents highlight and enliven the mood of the busy street. "A lyrical story is unfolding," says the artist, "told by the energetic placement of contrasting shapes - some moving, some still."



Day's Edge, Watercolour on Paper, 44.5 x 58.5 in.



Harbour, Late-evening, mixed-media, 29.5 x 38 in.

Antonides is an experienced printmaker who makes his own inks. *Harbour, Late Evening* uses a variety of mediums and techniques to produce an evocative image of the BC coastline. He used a combination of oil-based inks on plexiglass and water-soluble pigments on paper to produce this atmospheric work. The scene was inspired by Vancouver's English Bay in the evening, explains the artist: "We see boats floating motionless on the horizon line, sunset orange reflected in the calm water, and perhaps a seal, moving elegantly through the bull kelp."

Madrona Gallery, 606 View Street, Victoria, B.C. V8W 1J4
Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10:00-5:30. 1-250-380-4660.
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