



Ivan Yovanovich
JLA Baxter Street
New York, NY
March 2008

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Artist Catalogue, Ivan Yovanovich
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Introduction by Jan Larsen
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RICH FOG



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Toronto Canada

Ivan Yovanovich

We're delighted to welcome Ivan Yovanovich to the US for our first international exhibition together.

What began as a chance encounter between an artist and a studio head on a cold winter's night in New York has grown into a delightful friendship, rooted in our interest in carrying on a cross-cultural conversation in the language of contemporary art.

In Ivan's words, "art has detached itself from the experience of observing this world. There has to be a relationship posed between ourselves and that which surrounds us, no matter how abstract. The world remains a concrete idea, and I want to continue the celebration of expressing this world, be it a metaphor, be it an experience... if Spirit can't be shown, then certainly its relationship with matter can."

This assertion echoes some of what I feel has been missing from the state of popular contemporary art for some time, and what I see as our opportunity for moving it forward.

Since the era when Warhol made his detached, ironic statement about art, society, and the marketplace, popular artists working at the highest level seem to have withdrawn from society, taking a vacation of sorts from meaningful social discourse, choosing to retreat into remote fantasy, artifice or sensationalism, producing work that is by turns inscrutable, shocking or trivial, where the market becomes as much the medium as the work itself, and where any conscious intent or meaningful social statement living at the core of the work seems to have drained away.

The result is work with a hollow shell -- without a soul, or in Ivan's words, a "Spirit."

We are pleased to present this exhibition as a moment of re-engagement for art with society, a call to end this long period of estrangement, a moment to undertake creative work that speaks to where we are, and where we want to be, as a society.

This show is about our urban life. As Ivan works to "extract the poetic from the most mundane," may we find inspiration to bring about healing for our world, to grow a stronger, healthier, more functional and multi-cultural society, for ourselves, and for those we live among.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jan Larsen". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "J" and a trailing flourish.

Jan Larsen
New York, February 2008

I am a picture maker. What a calling- in the year 2008! Before me is a repository of how many centuries of artistic tendencies. What hasn't happened?! And what are 'we' left to do? Yet I am always returning to a principle inclination which drives me to make pictures: I want to reflect what I am witness to. To look at the world. To practice the discipline of seeing. Observing. Perhaps to document? And within it to discover infinite possibilities of beauty through the discourse of aesthetics.

Presently I am a 'builder' of pictures. I have turned to the depository of physical matter as my way of struggling with artistic truth. I gather objects from the world which draw my eye and arrange them into pictures - often 'pictures' they initially sprang from.

As an urban dweller I tend to reflect urbanism. These pictures are urban landscapes. They employ raw materials which 'are' the landscapes. I call them "physical landscapes".

The nature of this work is experimental. At its premise is an attempt to achieve a poetic quality through the physical reality of the subject it seeks to reflect.

Ivan Yovanovich
Toronto, February 2008



Urbanscape: Toronto 2007a.d., 2007, Toronto
115x60cm, concrete, asphalt, found objects on wooden board

L'incontro (The Encounter), 2003, London, 153x61cm, acrylic, sawdust, iron bars on wooden board



La Fusione (The Fusion), 2003, London, 153x61cm, acrylic, sawdust, iron bars on wooden board



Urbanscape: Engineering, 2007, Toronto
83x115cm, concrete, wood construction element, spray paint, found objects on wooden board



Streetscape: Portrait of a Gloveless One with Street-works markings II, 2006, Toronto
70x130cm, tar, bitumen, varnish, spray paint, lost glove on wooden board



Urbanscape: 2=2, 2007, Toronto
112x119cm, concrete, scrap metal, concrete reinforcing bars, spray paint on wooden board



Urbanscape: Architectural Arrangement, 2007, Toronto
89x114cm, concrete, wood, scrap metal, styrofoam, spray paint on wooden board



Urbanscape: An Advertisement - Live Here, 2007, Toronto
121x120cm, concrete, chalk, spray paint on wooden board



Urbanscape: Traffic Jam, 2007, Toronto
112x119cm, concrete, scrap metal, styrofoam, wood, bricks, spray paint on wooden board



Traffic Jam I, 2007, Toronto
107x121cm, concrete, wood, scrap metal, bricks, lost glove, spray paint on wooden board



Toy Factory on a Sunny Day, 2008, Toronto
86x98cm, concrete, styrofoam, brick, metal, pipe, spray paint on wooden board



Starry Night with Sky Scrapers, 2007, Toronto
83x108 cm, scrap metal, bitumen, concrete, wood, spray paint on wooden board



Urbanscape: The Hedonist, 2007, Toronto
65x75cm, cigarette butts, concrete, bitumen, spray paint on wooden board



Ivan Yovanovich

Education

1992-1996 York University, Toronto, **Bachelor of Fine Arts**

2000 studio practice with Tom Campbell and Miroslav Nesic, Toronto

2001 studio practice with Alexander Cvetkovic and Svetislav Arsic-Basara, attends Sumatovacka School of Art, Belgrade, Yugoslavia (Serbia)

Exhibition History

2007 Nuit Blanche: alley-way exhibition at 260 Carlaw, Toronto

(**two-men showing**; presented by **Headbones Gallery**)

mixed media (constructions, assemblage/relief, combines)

2007 sTReeTclTycLAsH (**solo exhibition**),

Columbine Studio Court Yard, Toronto; mixed media (constructions, assemblage/relief, combines)

2006 The Drawers- Erotic Exotic Christmas (**group showing**),

Headbones Gallery, Toronto, Carlaw Ave; drawings and sculptures

2006 the T-Show (**three-men show**),

EDAAS gallery, Toronto, Queen W; sculptures and installations

2006 Contemporary Sculpture and Furniture (**group showing**),

KOMA design Gallery, Toronto, Queen W; sculptures and furniture

2006 Paintings and Pictures (**group showing**),

O'Connor Gallery, Toronto, Queen E; paintings

2006 Columbine Studio (School of Art), Center for Community Visual Arts Education, **founder/artistic director**

2005 Still Lives (**annual group showing**),

Praxis Gallery, Toronto, Queen W; paintings

2004 Serbia to England Four years' work, (**solo exhibition**),

Centre for Culture and Arts, Parachin, Serbia; paintings, constructions and sculptures

2004 presentation of a landscape construction to the town hall of Parachin, Serbia

2004 From Another Country, (**solo exhibition**) **Rivington Gallery**,

(curated by Harold Rubin), London, U.K, paintings, constructions and sculptures

2004 **Chiltern Green Park**, London, U.K

installation of three riverbottom constructions on the park grounds

2004 temporary display of "Silos in the Field" at the **Canadian Film Center**, oil on canvas

2002 Landscapes, (**solo exhibition**), **Center for Arts and Culture**, Nis, Serbia; paintings

2001 Landscapes from the Morava valley, (**solo exhibition**),

Hermes Gallery, Zemun (Belgrade), Serbia; paintings

1999 Still Lives, **annual group exposition**, **Praxis Gallery**,

Toronto, Queen W; paintings

1996 **Café Maroc**, **Chicago International Film festival**, Certificate of Merit; short film, 33min., writer/director

Brief History

- 1974 - born in Belgrade, Yugoslavia (Serbia) to parents Vladimir and Svetlana Jovanovic
- 1984 - moves with parents and sister Ivana to Toronto, Canada
- 1988 - receives first instruction in drawing from Sergej Jovanovic at his school in Belgrade
- 1990 - travels to Amsterdam with his father to see the great centennial exhibition of Vincent van Gogh's work
- 1992 - enrolls at York University, Toronto in the Fine Arts department choosing to pursue film-making instead of painting; continues attending art classes at the university
- 1993 - first journey to Morocco
- 1996 - graduates from York University in the film-making division
- 1997 - second journey to Morocco; spends five months living in Tanger; returns to Toronto; begins regularly attending open life drawing sessions at the Toronto School of Art
- 1998 - begins painting regularly
- 1999 - journey to Ecuador; decides to seriously pursue painting again; travels to Madrid to enroll in the Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando; leaves Madrid disappointed in the school's program; third journey to Morocco; returns to Toronto; continues attending life drawing sessions at the Toronto School of Art; starts painting plain-air landscapes; discovers the work of Frank Auerbach
- 2000 - begins studying painting with Miroslav Nesic and Tom Campbell; moves to Belgrade; attends the Sumatovacka School of Art
- 2001 - meets Svetislav Arsic-Basara and Aleksandar Cvetkovic; learns from both artists; paints plain-air landscapes regularly
- 2002 - leaves Belgrade; returns temporarily to Canada; travels to Newfoundland to paint landscapes for two months; arrives in London, England; moves into his new studio in East London
- 2003 - experiments with found objects and industrial materials in riverbottom landscapes; sees the work of Frank Auerbach and Anselm Kiefer; meets Harold Rubin who later exhibits his work at the Rivington gallery
- 2004 - forced to leave the East London studio; moves into a trailer beside a wood yard; starts carving wood; travels to Berlin; sees more work by Anselm Kiefer; leaves London to go to Serbia; starts building a studio in the country side
- 2005 - leaves Serbia; returns to Toronto; moves into a house in East Toronto with Adi Halshtok and starts a studio in the garage
- 2006 - starts teaching drawing and painting out of his home; begins holding visual arts workshops in senior homes; continues work on urban landscapes
- 2007 - uses term 'physical landscape' to describe the work on urban landscapes; marries Adi Halshtok on Wards Island, Toronto

