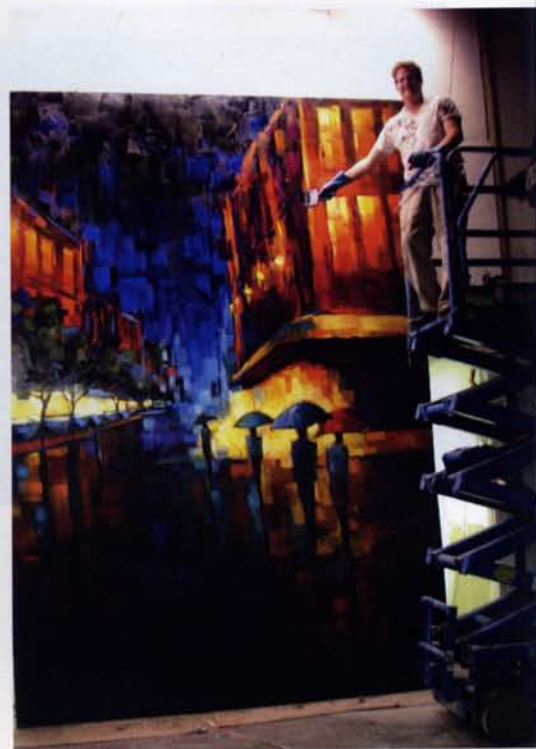


# MICHAEL FLOHR

TODAY'S  
**TOP**  
ARTISTS  
**P**

At an early age, Michael Flohr had an affinity for art and an aversion to spelling, which turned out to be dyslexia. But his tutor quickly learned how to motivate the young artist. "After one hour of tutoring, my reward would be to paint," Flohr says, adding that this regimen continued until he was a sophomore in high school. "I still can't spell, but it was great to be exposed to oil painting at such a young age."

Encouragement from his family and teachers (he still remembers a kindergarten teacher predicting that he'd become an artist one day) led Flohr to pursue his passion and eventually enroll at the Academy of Art College in San Francisco. There, he studied classical works and developed fundamental technical skills, which allowed him to feel free to develop his own inimitable style. "After the first couple years of art school, when I got the traditional stuff down, I started experimenting with looser, squarer brush strokes—work that was more impressionistic," he says. Flohr remembers a teacher in a drawing class at the academy reprimanding him for having "too much expression, too much feeling" in his work. This wasn't



▲ Michael Flohr paints "Southern Rain."

exactly bad news for Flohr.

Flohr's technique has become a unique marriage of Impressionism and Abstract Expressionism. A master of capturing the ephemeral, he uses square brush strokes and a patchwork of color to evoke the movement and life of the cityscapes he paints. "I try to say the most with the least amount of brush strokes"—an approach inspired by one of his favorite painters, American artist John Singer Sargent.



▲ "Uptown," a limited edition on canvas sized at 16 x 50 inches in an edition of 195



▲ "Crystal Café," a limited edition on canvas sized at 30 x 22 inches in an edition of 195

Like many accomplished artists, Flohr has created much of his own success, but there's an element of good fortune he can't ignore. Near the end of his tenure at the academy, he and his wife, Melissa, stopped for lunch at a little restaurant in San Diego's La Jolla neighborhood. Melissa mentioned her husband's work to the chef, who flipped through the small, ragged portfolio the Flohrs presented. Impressed, the chef walked next door to the art gallery owned by his friends Ruth-Ann and James Thorn. Ruth-Ann Thorn invited Flohr to visit the gallery with some of his work after he graduated from the academy, and a year later, he did. Eventually, the Thorns began publishing Flohr's work through their company, Crown Thorn Publishing.

Today, Flohr paints between 60 and 70 original pieces each year, which are already sold out for the next two years. Crown Thorn publishes five or six prints of his work in editions of 225, including 25 artist's proofs and 10 printer's proofs. The prints also sell out quickly within about six to nine months.

Flohr says he's always working to stay ahead of the curve to keep his work

feeling fresh. For example, in his latest show, Flohr presented a new take on his cityscapes: a view from above. "I was sneaking up on top of buildings, taking photos and doing sketches," Flohr says, all for the sake of giving viewers a new perspective on the work they've come to expect from him. "Above and Beyond" opened June 23 at Exclusive Collections Fine Art Gallery in San Diego.

Given his success, what does Flohr consider his greatest accomplishment? It's simple. "Being able to do this for a living and support my family," he says. "Sometimes I'll sit back with my wife and son in the backyard, and I'll look around and just be amazed by what art has brought me."

**Flohr remembers a teacher in a drawing class at the academy reprimanding him for having "too much expression, too much feeling" in his work. This wasn't exactly bad news for Flohr.**

## AWARDS/ RECOGNITIONS:

Inducted into New York's Society of Illustrators, 1999; artwork chosen as part of an exhibit in San Francisco's de Young Museum, 2000; awarded a public installation painting titled "Southern Rain" for the Southern Power Corporation, 2006



▲ "Bon Appétit," a limited edition on canvas sized at 30 x 20 inches in an edition of 195