

Gulf Connoisseur



Essence of Luxury

Middle East Edition
Published from Dubai Media City

Art & Design



Lexington Home

Aaron Westerberg



There are signs that the global economy is slowly recovering after the upheavals felt in the past few quarters. "Dubai too seems to be returning to normalcy with the usual traffic jams and the shopping malls back in business.

The hospitality sector is evidently doing well. We speak to some of the leaders in the business like Simon Cooper, the President and COO of The Ritz Carlton Hotel Company and Marc Dardenne, CEO of the Emaar Hospitality Group and Emaar Hotels + Resorts.

In the motoring section we look at the sheer beauty and elegance of the new Ferrari 458 Italia, designed for owners expecting uncompromising on-road performance with sports-car capabilities; and the Range Rover Sport, with extensive engineering and design changes for the 2010 model year, reaffirming its position as the most exciting and assertively sporty member of the Land Rover range. We also review Nissan's stylish 2010 Infiniti G Convertible, which enters its second year with interior refinements, new navigation functions, enhanced performance and safety features.

Beautiful art has never ceased to amaze. We talk to American artist, Aaron Westerberg, whose realistic works woo viewers from all around the world.

Travelling to Goa in India, a land of old-world charm, with sun-kissed beaches and lush greenery is like a dream. Staying at the Zuri White Sands, Goa Resort & Casino makes the holiday even more special.

As you plan your summer break we hope you will enjoy this issue as much as you did the ones before. ☺

Painting by Aaron Westerberg





Inspired Interpretations

Upcoming contemporary artist, Aaron Westerberg, prefers realistic art but in each painting he deliberately leaves areas that are completely abstract, which he wants the viewers to interpret

Young artist, Aaron Westerberg, calls himself a representational artist. Inspired by 19th and 20th century legends such as John Singer Sargent, Velasquez and Rembrandt, he paints in oils. As an upcoming artist, he has already shown his works in galleries and exhibitions across the United States and his best paintings can be found in the homes of well-known and respected collectors, who tell Westerberg that his paintings enrich both their homes and their lives – a compliment that he fully appreciates.

Westerberg prefers to paint in a style that is more towards realism but he maintains that his paintings also have areas that are completely abstract, thus allowing viewers to interpret his works.

◀ 'Introspection,' Anna with Smirk ▶

His preferred medium is oil. "Oil has the largest number of effects," explains Westerberg. "You can use it thick, thin or somewhere in the middle. Oil paint can look like water-colour, charcoal or acrylic. There are limitless opportunities."

Westerberg particularly admires Sargent – "for his painting style and his guts; he was a portrait painter but he transcended the sitter each time he painted one," says Westerberg, adding that "there are several people who paint or have painted portraits over time, but very few have the same outcome as Sargent or Velasquez. They could paint the soul of the sitter and did it in a technically beautiful and simplistic way. Sargent could say more with one brush stroke than most could say with fifty."

Despite being so hugely influenced by Sargent and other realist-artists, Westerberg only encountered their works by chance, when he was in college and found a local artist teaching traditional drawing. Until then Westerberg had wanted to be an editorial cartoonist: he had been drawing mainly from comic books and cartoons and never considered drawing portraits or real life scenes as a way of making a living.

However, in this extra-curricular class he took, Westerberg discovered the 19th century masters, who he thinks have become his greatest inspiration: "I began seeking out their work in museums and galleries across the country – these masters shaped everything about how I paint today," he



◀ 'Vanity,' 'Green Silos,' 'Cafe,' (opposite page) 'Blue Kimono,' 'Admiration' ▶

says. Since he discovered them by chance, in a private drawing class, and not as part of school curriculum, Westerberg became all the more determined to learn everything that he could about them and their style.

Even today he frequents museums and galleries eager to see art up front, however far he needs to travel in order to do this, and asserts that this is a major source of inspiration for him. "If there is one thing I would like to see changed," he says, "it would be to have more 19th and 20th century representational artists talked about in the schools and universities."

As a full-time artist working from a home studio, Westerberg displays his works regularly in galleries in California and around the USA. He teaches at the Los Angeles Academy of Figurative Art in Los Angeles in California as well, and asserts that being an artist is not just about skill but also about life experiences, which influence the art – therefore sitting in your studio all day and perfecting techniques will not, in Westerberg's view, make you a better artist. Instead, it is being exposed to the works of both legendary and contemporary artists, painting with

other artists and painting from life that leads to artistic growth.

It is not surprising, then, that he spends a good part of his day painting or planning for painting. Of course, it is not always possible to prioritise painting or even to paint everyday: "I have to do the same things that other people do," he reminds us, and these include mundane things such as painting the house or receiving visitors.

Although he has always painted and been drawn to figures, he sold drawings and still life paintings when he first began exhibiting his works in galleries. Now, however, Westerberg primarily paints figures.

Westerberg's painting style involves finishing one area of a painting at a time rather than working in layers: he finds that this kind of work-style keeps the painting fresh and he does not lose his concentration about the overall look of the painting. He usually works on one painting at a time, occasionally putting away a difficult piece of work in order to return to it later, but generally attempting to finish one piece at a time. This allows him to retain his initial inspiration and focus,

especially if the painting is a large one. "It's very easy for me to lose my inspiration if I have too many things going on at one time," he confesses.

Once a painting is done, it is coated with Damar varnish until the painting is absolutely dry – and that could take up to three months. Painting itself can take him anywhere from a week to a month depending on the size and complexity of the composition. "I don't like to rush a painting," he says, "every brush stroke tells a story and I do not want any hurried or tentative strokes. Just like music, everything matters. You build to the conclusion or focal point and if those contributing notes are not played correctly, it takes away from the overall meaning and effect of the piece. In this way I can spend hours or days just on the supporting elements of my paintings."

In terms of a certain central spirit to his paintings, he says that his positive outlook on life is reflected in his paintings. One of the things that he loves about painting is the fact that he can create something beautiful that will be around long after he is gone. ☺

www.westerberg-fineart.com



