

KJ Mullins-Toronto:

Ram Samocha discusses his unique metalpoint artwork

Artist Ram Samocha use of metal in his current From Scratch collection on view at the RedHead Gallery brings a new edge of excitement to an ancient, neglected drawing technique. The collection has already met with a very positive response.

Ram Samocha was born in Israel and currently lives in Guelph, Ontario. He focuses on the issues of personal and global transformation by combining drawing, video, animation, and performance.

During a phone interview Ram discussed his art, moving from Israel to Canada and how his family has changed his craft.

Ram's use of metalpoint in his current collection came from a routine trip to the art supply store. He was familiar with the metalpoint drawings of Leonardo da Vinci, Sandro Botticelli, and Albrecht Durer and after further research he knew that drawing with metal was an excellent and exciting idea. The technique is old school but using metalpoint in the large, expansive scale that Ram does is very uncommon.

"When you walk into the show it looks as though I used graphite but it is all done in metal," Ram explained that in time each work of art will take on different colour changes as the metals used oxidize. The only metal that does not change colour is gold. "I take pleasure in experimenting with drawing, making new discoveries and pushing the limits of the medium" Ram has created a series of works exploring the elasticity of time scale within contemporary drawing.



Ram used a special paper made in Montreal for his pieces. The paper is made from lime rock. When the metals are applied to the page it makes a 3-D effect. "I stretched the paper as I worked on it, playing with it while I was drawing."

Five years ago Ram left Israel to study with the Masters. In 2009 he graduated from the University of Waterloo with a Master of Fine Art (MFA) in Drawing. His life changed when he met his wife. The couple has two children, a 6-year-old and a 1-year-old. Being a full-time father while his wife finishes her PhD has changed his art. Today he is in his studio during the evening hours. "In From Scratch images came from the Hebrew words Dad and Mom. I did Dad in silverpoint and Mom in 24K gold. I am very inspired by my children," Ram said proudly as his infant laughed in the background. "My 6-year-old is bilingual in Hebrew and English. I watch as she mixes the languages in her writing. I have found that has been reflected in my own art."



Ram said that the title of his current show From Scratch is like his own life at this point. "All of the drawings start as a scratch on the page. In metalpoint there is no way back, it can't change." Ram said quietly, "Like my family and being in a new place. You can't go back and change things." Ram loves his new home in Canada enjoying how he can merge the culture of his homeland with a new way of life. "I love the combination of how we can keep the culture of where we came from and the new ways. It is a good approach to life."



Ram Samocha's From Scratch collection is showing at The Redhead Gallery from March 30 – April 23, 2011.
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