

Christopher M.

“The Painter of Chefs”



Dedication. Diligence. Passion. Such are the ingredients that have brought artist Christopher M.'s striking chef renderings into the limelight among both fine art and culinary circles. Known as “The Painter of Chefs,” his expressive, celebratory paintings go beyond literal depiction to honor the most prolific chefs of our time by painting them and preserving them historically on canvas.

Christopher M.'s superior technique has garnered much attention. He was named the official Poster Artist of the 2008 International Artexpo Las Vegas after having painted “Savor the Moment,” a clever depiction of a chef enjoying the fruits of his labor. He has also been honored as the Celebrity Artist & Poster Artist for the San Diego Bay Wine & Food Festival, Poster Artist for the Oregon Food & Wine Festival, among other honors.

Christopher's paintings are grounded in a traditional Realist style with a contemporary twist, which reveals hints of Impressionism and other subtleties

that make the pieces truly his own. The artist pulls inspiration from life itself, often visiting the kitchens of some of today's premier restaurants to observe and speak with the chefs who are artistic masters in their own right. Many times, Christopher M. sketches and takes photos on-site, which he then pieces together as the basis of his inspiration once returning to the studio. His imagination and the emotions he feels when working among his culinary muses provide the backbone for his imagery. “I believe that art should be an extension and expression of the artist's personality. I also want to create paintings that address things that are important in my life – not just paint pretty pictures. My work is a celebration of food, life and relationships - it feeds me spiritually,” he explains. The romantic, luxurious brushstrokes filled with saturated, yet subtle color, fill the artist's culinary renderings with a powerful energy that's fitting for the vibrant chefs he portrays. The fluid motion of the dynamic collection captures the stream of consciousness that stems from the artist's appreciation for the hard work and creativity that go into any art form.

The course of Christopher M.'s career has had everything to do with faith. Each time he was unsure of his path as an artist, he would look for a sign, and every time he would receive it. His initial artistic inclination came from his father, an amateur photographer who kept a darkroom in their Oakland, California home. Things got serious when a highschool teacher encouraged him to apply for an advanced art class that offered one student a college scholarship at the end of the school year. “For me, the class was the beginning of a test period to see how good I really was at art,” Christopher M. explains. “I didn't ever think I would be famous; I just did it because it was fun.” But the true sign came when the student who was originally awarded the scholarship decided not to take it, and second-place artist Christopher M. was bestowed the honor. This serendipitous twist of fate further confirmed his artistic aspirations, and he headed to the prestigious Academy of Art University of San Francisco.

His first semester at the University erased doubts he had about a career in art. He can still remember painting from a live model for the first time and realizing there was nothing else in the world he'd rather do. Studies of the Old Masters and 19th-century artists such as John Singer Sargent and Edgar Degas greatly influenced his initial paintings and drawings, which were intensely focused and methodical, as he continued honing his craft. His works moved into a grittier, edgier mentality when he was preparing for his senior gallery exhibition and was spending lots of time in downtown San Francisco. The cityscape became his new focus, and with it came the first glimpse of Christopher M.'s inspiring character and charisma, as a person and an artist.

His first gallery show in Oakland, California was a complete sell-out. About four years later, the artist was approached by Crown Thorn Publishing for representation, an event he deems the biggest opportunity of his career. Christopher M. credits his next big step, in part, to the professional freedom Crown Thorn Publishing encouraged. When experimenting with miniature still-life images of food for an upcoming gallery event, he discovered his true and undying passion for culinary arts. “My paintings of food transformed into an admiration and respect for the chefs who create ‘masterpieces’ on a plate, and the process started revealing other truths; I saw the parallels between the art of making food and painting, and it became an amazing celebration of both crafts,” he explains. “Chefs work like artists to create an experience that will hopefully affect someone's life in a positive way. They have a passion for their craft just as I do.”

To date, Christopher M. has worked with an impressive roster of chefs including: “Iron Chef” Kevin Rathbun of Blue Plate Kitchen in Atlanta, Gavin Kaysen of Café Boulud in New York City, Chef Ludo Lefebvre of LudoBites, a variety of Kimpton Hotel Executive Chefs and “Bravo's Top Chef Finalists” Kevin Gillespie and Brian Malarkey. As an extension beyond his chef paintings, the artist recently embarked on a tour of the Napa Valley, where he had the honor of working with a selection of legendary winemakers.

Christopher M.'s work can be found in galleries across the country and also internationally.