

# HAPPENINGS

## CHRISTOPHER M. Refining His Palette February 4 & 5, 2012

Seaport Village Gallery • RSVP to [pr@ecgallery.com](mailto:pr@ecgallery.com) • (619) 238-0320



"Cooking with Wine" Fine Art Limited Edition, 22" x 30"

Not many emerging artists are given the opportunity to complete their day of work by enjoying one of the best meals of their entire life. Yet for contemporary artist Christopher M., this practice has become a familiar reality – and more of the rule than an exception.

"I recently had the honor of visiting Chef Charlie Trotter's restaurant in Chicago. As one of our most celebrated chefs who has won numerous awards, including a James Beard Award and being named America's Greatest Chef by *Wine Spectator* magazine, I was amazed at his energy, enthusiasm, charm and zest for life. He seated me at the chef's kitchen table and proceeded to send a seven-course lunch menu, each dish with an accompanying wine pairing. Truthfully, it's difficult to single out one course as my favorite, as there were so many amazing flavor profiles and contrasts. What really struck me was that each course alternated between sweet and savory, each meat and pasta course being off-set by ice cream, fresh fruits and chocolates in a dizzying progression of culinary opulence that challenged the entire concept of what a luncheon can be."

In just a few short years, Christopher M. has embarked on a whirlwind culinary adventure – playing paparazzo to some of today's most celebrated chefs in their refined kitchens and restaurants across the country. From observing chefs

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as they tend to their bubbling-over copper pots, to the precise procedural routine of prep work on chopping blocks, to the final touch of sauce on a plate that makes an ordinary dish extraordinary – the “Painter of Chefs” has perhaps completed a crash course in the fine art of cooking, while mastering his own fine art skills on canvas.

Known for his expressive, charming and celebratory paintings that depict some of the most prolific chefs of our time, Christopher’s art is 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, as he participates in the overall sensory experience of what occurs inside a professional kitchen. The sights, sounds, movement, and of course smells and tastes become the colors and textures he expresses on each canvas – depicting an original culinary masterpiece, forever preserved in time.

Throughout his career, Christopher M. has collected endless references from his time in kitchens. From sketching to photography, the moments of great craftsmanship are captured by his eyes and hands as a silent observer – from which he later uses to bring his remarkable paintings to life. While many Christopher’s works depict the specific chefs themselves, many more of his paintings reflect the craftsmanship of cooking itself. In fact, many of his chefs remain nameless – and the emphasis lies in their dedication, intensity, skill and the overall creative process taking place. Exploring the possibilities from serious moments to whimsical gestures, the artist has experimented with portraying the

complexities of the culinary world to the more light-hearted, jovial moments that are also often experienced by masters of the kitchen.

“Sometimes it’s difficult to see the progression of your own style, but I feel that my recent work has gained a higher degree of sophistication in color, a more natural and personal brush stroke, and a deeper appreciation for the craft and the stories of my subjects, our cultural treasure, the great chefs of our time,” says the artist.

The undeniable connection between the kitchen, food and relationships has created an additional avenue for Christopher to further explore his talents, through personal commissions at the request of his collectors. From painting a family member who is also a chef by trade, to capturing the joy of a wife preparing her husband’s favorite meal, to a couple enjoying a rare bottle of wine together – the artist is preserving some of the most familiar and beautiful moments of our lives through his work.

In San Diego alone, Christopher is regarded and respected within the culinary community – having worked closely with local Chefs including Chef William Bradley of Addison at The Grand Del Mar, Chef Bernard Guillas of The Marine Room, Chef Christian Graves of Jsix Restaurant, Chef Paul McCabe of Delicias Restaurant, and many others.

Of his subjects, Christopher reflects, “The reputations of the chefs I’m working with are truly staggering, and that feels amazing knowing that such a lofty goal of mine has become a reality. One of my greatest accomplishments so far, that I also find very humbling, is that I’ve been able to translate a modern and contemporary aspect of life into a medium that



Christopher’s talents have also allowed him the opportunity to study, sketch and paint a broad range of exceptional, world-renowned chefs, including:

- Chef Thomas Keller, of The French Laundry in the Napa Valley
- Pop-up Pioneer, Chef Ludo Lefebvre of LudoBites Los Angeles
- Culinary and Philanthropic Legend, Chef Charlie Trotter in Chicago
- Chef Gavin Kaysen of Café Boulud in New York City
- “Iron Chef” Kevin Rathbun of Blue Plate Kitchen in Atlanta
- Finalists from the popular Bravo TV series, *Top Chef*: Kevin Gillespie and Brian Malarkey

can join the continuity of art history. But to me it’s only the beginning... I know that the future will reveal so much more.”

In fact, this year Christopher M. has been invited to paint two iconic and critically-acclaimed chefs in their own kitchens: Chef Emeril Lagasse and Chef Mario Batali.

Christopher’s wish list of future subjects? “This list is extensive – but lately I’ve been thinking a lot about Anthony Bourdain, who seems like a very interesting person above and beyond his many accomplishments, Jamie Oliver (The Naked Chef), Wolfgang Puck, and Ferran Adria, a very exciting chef I’ve read about recently in Barcelona, who is famous for his playful deconstructions of known dishes.”

How’s that for tempting your appetite for art? At EC Galleries, we hope you’ll join us as we continue to follow this artist’s exciting career.