

Michael Flohr

RECLAIMING “THE GOLDEN AGE”

June 24, 25 & 26, 2011

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Glistening lights, bright red dresses, the energy of a bustling urban landscape—each of these images recall the electrifying grandeur of the Roaring Twenties. Reverie imposes upon more pressing matters in response to a city’s sensory impressions, and we recall Nick Carraway’s observation from *The Great Gatsby*: “I began to like New York, the racy, adventurous feel of it at night and the satisfaction that the constant flicker of men and women and machines gives to the restless eye” (Fitzgerald 61).

Michael Flohr’s paintings illustrate that similar rush of unfiltered emotion. Although Flohr’s works speak so well for themselves, we try to understand why we find his work impacting. A professor once explained “epiphany” as this: “a feeling of a moment, complete, though passed. We need this to live; the ideal and the actual coincide.” Indeed, one cannot deny that we experience “a feeling of a moment” as we gaze upon San Diego artist Michael Flohr’s latest series, “The Golden Age”.

Referring to the term used for this period in Hollywood, “The Golden Age” spans the late 1920s to the early 1950s in America. It was an era that challenged and matured American identity. The arts flourished even in uncertain social, political, and economic times. The art deco movement and artistic photography lent a new creative voice. Jazz, blues, and swing pervaded city nightlife. Radio and cinema delivered accessible entertainment to the masses as movie theaters such as the Fox Theatre in Atlanta grew in popularity. The theatre still stands today, and in Michael Flohr’s painting, “Night at the Fox,” we come to realize that the past has a subtle message for the twenty-first century.

“The Golden Age” endures as people today recognize the way in which it has influenced the growth of modern life. Institutions and pastimes

that we take for granted were considered radical and risqué. Gambling and drinking were driven underground to secretive speakeasies. Dancing flappers and Jazz Age music proclaimed their divergence from Victorian social practices. These amusements may seem common now, but the adamant public had to challenge the rules of their day in order to take delight in such entertainment. We look to artists, such as Michael Flohr, to interpret the facts and extract the important lessons of the past. It is difficult to explain just why we glorify the old gangsters and bootleggers, but they call to mind that “The Golden Age” required a fighting spirit. Ultimately, that spirit carried them through the Great Depression and drove the war effort in World War II and made the arts an enduring staple to modern life.

When Michael Flohr decided to paint a collection based upon “The Golden Age”, he looked to his grandfather, David Flohr. “You could say that he has been my inspiration for this project,” he affirms. David’s adventurous life as a Navy pilot, treasure hunter, and busi-



“The Bank”

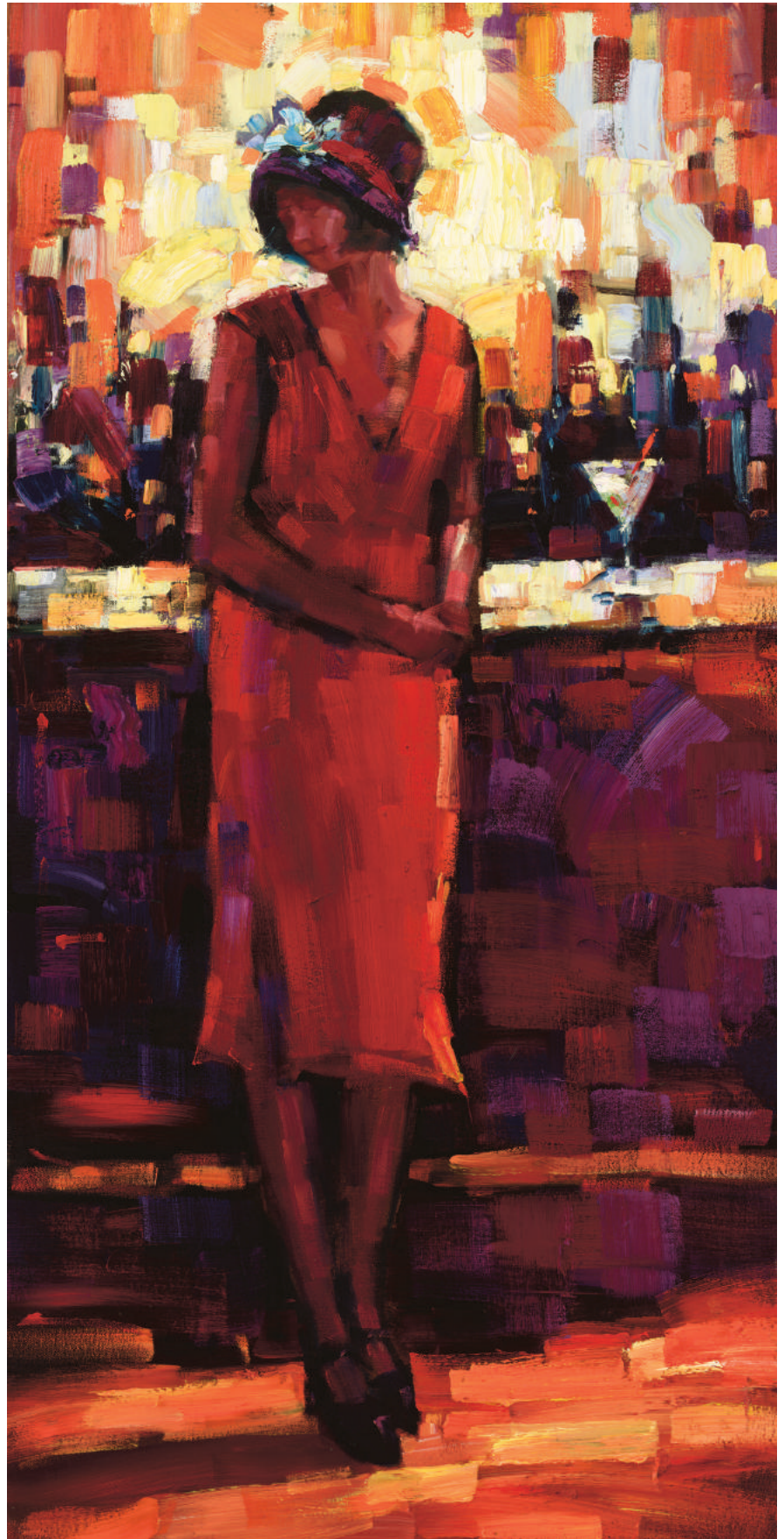
Fine Art Limited Edition

30" x 40"

ness entrepreneur has contributed an everlasting impression upon his grandson's San Diego. David helped to bring the U.S.S. Midway to San Diego Bay, where the iconic aircraft carrier now resides as a museum. The U.S.S. Midway and other reminders of one's family legacies build up a romantic nostalgia that paintings such as "Timeless Moment" portray so well. Flohr chooses locations like Market Street in San Francisco because they intertwine the years and generations. They act as a reminder to give credit to those who strove to make their lives successful and fulfilling—an inspiration to us all.

Flohr's Impressionist style, using square brushstrokes that obscure superfluous details, focuses on classical architecture, figures, and institutions. Consequently, he illustrates the way in which modern times venerate "The Golden Age" style. He explains, "I'm attracted to the visuals, the shape of the hats. Back then, they would take a little extra time. Every single person wore a suit." Although less common today, these visuals take on a more idealized and romantic beauty than we are used to. His paintings do justice to one's whimsical memory of a place or a person, and so Michael Flohr embellishes reality with his interpretive eye. In this way, Flohr composes a disjointed excitement in the viewer's recognizing a familiar location. He juxtaposes the past and the present, the abstract and the material. Indeed, because what we see and what we want to see appear as one as "the ideal and the actual coincide".

Join Artist Michael Flohr as he unveils his newest series of paintings that celebrate America's "Golden Age". Michael will appear at Exclusive Collections Gallery at Seaport Village on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, June 24th–26th, 2011. You won't want to miss this exciting event!



"The Muse"

Original Oil on Canvas

30" x 15"