



Above: Richard Maury captures an intimate moment—and bare feet on a terra-cotta tile floor—in *Three Way Conversation* (2003). **Right:** Florida-based artist Stephen Scott Young is known for his watercolorist skills, seen here in *Easter Bonnet* (1995).

women and a raw, bloody turkey in a strange, unsettling tableau of dysfunctional human relationships. Provocative painter Lisa Yuskavage's unforgettable nudes are about society's obsession with sex—not about the light and shadows that play expertly over their thrusting breasts and perky behinds. “A lot of today’s contemporary art has an ironic stance,” says Chelsea gallerist Valerie McKenzie, who handles both Stephen Hannock and non-Realist painters. “It’s about youth culture, celebrity, consumerism, and sexuality, not about atmosphere and light.”

In contrast, Realist Simon Parkes is all about atmosphere and light. His land and seascapes, painted in Eastern summer places like Maine and Long Island, are often compared to those of Corot, Boudin, and William Merritt Chase. You can almost feel the wind and smell the sea air. “I’m unabashedly traditional,” says Parkes. “I paint en plein air, as painters have done for hundreds of years, recording the time of day, the effects of light, making a picture out of a particular moment in nature. There is nothing ‘hot’ about my work. In fact, it’s quite an old-fashioned taste.”

Parkes comes by it honestly. Apprenticed to a London painting restorer at age 17 and now one of the leading restorers ▶

CONTEMPORARY REALISM AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Clyde Aspevig: Billings, Montana (406/294-5677; www.clydeaspevig.com)

Janet Fish: DC Moore Gallery, New York (212/247-2111; dcmooregallery.com)

Linden Fredericks: Forum Gallery, New York (212/355-4545; forumgallery.com)

Duncan Hannah and David Fertig: James Graham and Sons, New York (212/535-5767; jamesgrahamandsons.com)

Stephen Hannock: John Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco (415/781-4629; berggruen.com), and McKenzie Fine Art, New York (212/989-5457; mckenziefineart.com)

Clarke Hulings: Bartfield Galleries, New York (212/245-8890; www.bartfield.com)

Richard Maury: Forum Gallery, New York (212/355-4545; forumgallery.com)

Simon Parkes: W.M. Brady & Co. Gallery, New York (212/249-7212)

Stone Roberts: Salander-O'Reilly Galleries, New York (212/879-6606; salander.com)

Stephen Scott Young: John H. Surovek Gallery, Palm Beach (561/832-0422; surovekgallery.com)



in New York City, he has worked on 18th- and 19th-century art all of his life. When, in 1995, he began to create his own paintings, it was with a keen awareness of all that had gone before him. Collectors responded enthusiastically: Parkes's shows at W.M. Brady & Co. Gallery in New York sold out so fast that director Laura Bennett recalls, “People clamored to buy in advance before everything was gone.” Collectors include such society names as reclusive millionaire Louis Bacon of Moore Capital, Robin Duke (widow of Angier Biddle Duke, the American tobacco heir and diplomat), plus art mavens like Sotheby's Old Master expert George Wächter and James Dicke, who as chairman of the board of commissioners of the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., knows his way around a W.M. Chase painting. “Simon's facility to portray light is remarkable,” says Dicke. “He conveys atmosphere as much as subject matter, continuing in the tradition of American Impressionism, yet very much of this century.”

What price such glory? Cost of Contemporary Realist works ranges widely—from \$2,500 for a small painting by Parkes to more than \$250,000 for important works by Hannock or Scott Young. Since many of these artists don't create a lot of works, waiting lists are common. Investment-wise, don't expect to cash in at auction—at least for a few decades. Only when a painter dies, and

CONTEMPORARY REALISM



the rarity factor kicks in, do bidders take notice. (Important works by John Koch now sell for as much as \$600,000.) Meanwhile, although retail values rarely spike, they rarely tumble either. As dealer Bennett points out, “This isn't the kind of art that goes out of style.”

“Prices for these painters have advanced in an orderly fashion,” says Robert Fishko, director of New York's Forum Gallery. “If you buy works by established artists from established dealers, they will never be worth less than you paid and many will be worth more.” ■

Above: Stephen Hannock's atmospheric *Flooded River, Golden Dawn* (2006) shimmers, an effect he achieves by sanding and polishing his oil paints. **Below:** A-list art collectors line up to buy works like *Harbour Island* (2004) by Brit-born Simon Parkes.



POLYSHADES® GIVE DURABLE POLYUR

Think of Polyshades® as the provides beautiful color along everyday wear and tear, so you Available in 12 rich wood tones every time. So get started. And



ROBE SPONK