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CHRIS YOUNG

American, b. 1963

CODA Gallery has represented Chris since its beginnings in the late 1980s.

"I was finishing up my BFA show [at Brigham Young University] and [CODA Gallery founders Connie and David Katz] were representing some of my professors. A couple of professors said, 'Go take a look at Chris' show; you may like his work,'" Chris recalls. They did. "David said, 'I will give you a year to put a show together.' And the next thing I knew, we were up and running."

"For my first show at CODA, I painted some dried roses. I'm going full circle and doing dried roses again. I also have started redoing figurative work; I am painting some winged figures for the show. It is a new direction I am excited about." In addition to still lifes and figurative work, Chris is bringing a large landscape inspired by a trip he made last summer into Italy's Tuscan hillsides.

People have called his paintings "ultra-realistic." They have exclaimed that the oils on panel look like photographs. But neither description fits his aim or the way he views his work. Rather, he considers himself a "contemporary realist."

"I paint in a very traditional method but try to obtain more of a contemporary sensibility," he says. "I try to enhance reality — to enhance the tactile illusion without pushing it to the point where it is not believable. If I paint a rose, I want to paint the ultimate, symbolic rose of all roses."

Chris' studio includes an area where he stages still-life setups with items stored in drawers (e.g., bones and bird nests) and those he goes out to buy (e.g., fresh flowers and figs). He photographs the arrangements, because fresh flowers and fruit would change throughout his "deliberate" process of rendering them in oil. After photographing a staged arrangement, he makes a detailed drawing on the panel before applying paint.

"Because oil takes so long to dry, I have 15 wet paintings in my studio now and just rotate them," he says. "Also, I like to come at them fresh. It takes so much time that you can get lost in the forest, and you need to get away from them for a bit."

Holding the belief that artists are "visual philosophers," Chris hopes to reignite the state of wonder we experienced when we saw something for the first time.

“I think we lose that as we get older,” he says. “The role of an artist may be to recapture some of that freshness of life — to seize those moments where you had a sense of awe.”



Stanza
Oil on canvas
36 x 49 inches



Braid
Oil on Panel
18 x 24 inches



Civita
Oil on panel
18 x 43 inches