

f e a t u r e

C O S T A D V O R E Z K Y

Interview By Chancy Grain



Photograph by Chancy Grain



Gallery D'este of Montreal is space that knows how to be space in the name of art. The air of elegance to its design and breathy simplistic atmosphere leaves all things concentrated, complex and or complicated to the art. It is, in short, the ideal space to showcase the works of featured artist, Costa Dvoretzky whose work is comprised of large canvasses made radiant with free flying young bodies suspended in wild abandon.

A dashing man dressed sharply casual for his first show in Montreal, Dvoretzky speaks

with a hint of shyness that contrasts the all-out celebratory nature of his paintings.

"Painting is very addictive for me. The physical contact with paint! The smell of it!" he says, "I feel out of sorts when I'm not painting. A week away from it is fine but beyond that I begin to feel a sense of urgency inside that I'm losing time and so I need to rush back to the paints and the canvass."

Many of Dvoretzky's young subjects are engaged in the sweet liberating sensation of flight that occurs when you go lifting off with all your might from high plateaus. In these works, it

seems, it is all about that wonderful rush between leaving and arriving.

In these works we are witness to those very alive seconds when it is all simply you in the air, free falling to the summer waters below.

These paintings cause gravity to find something else to do with itself.

They are grand invitations to feel lighter by both the executed technique of Dvorezky's shapes to the masterful application of colours: there is a lightness of being to these works that parallels the sensation of hearing or feeling music; a symphony sounding out from the canvass in great life-gushing crescendos and you want to go flying yourself into the vibrant Dvorezky oranges.

"It was a lively boisterous celebration of life that shortly after had me painting that very moment, that scene. It happened really fast on the canvas and I could feel a kind of new positive energy!" he says "Very optimistic. The orange pieces were born of that moment and off I went into painting jumping bodies for two or three years."

The subject matter, style and colour application was not always like this as Dvorezky revealed in the tale of directions his work has taken over the years.

Before any of these young bodies came leaping into the public eye, work of a very different nature was pouring forth from Dvorezky's brushes. From early boyhood years to present day, he has busied his discipline with a diverse array of visual wonders.

"It was pencil drawings for me in the beginning. My grandfather was an artist and indeed my first inspiration. He loved horses and drew them always. He worked with race horses at a jockey school for children. I asked and he began to teach me how. So I started there as it was an environment I knew and was impassioned by."

Born and raised in Moscow, Dvorezky studied at a Russian art institution, during which time he engaged in applying his skills toward a means of obtaining a modest income.

"During my academy years it was very tough times in Russia. It was the 90's and I had a job working as an illustrator for children's books while I was studying. The pay was fair enough



Costa Dvorezky, *Horse Head*

but it was very hard and time consuming work.”

Through this terrain of exploration, from childhood on, Dvorezky never strayed from his passion toward the ritual of applying shape and colour to canvas. It began to seem quite obvious to his peers, that he would do well to begin painting for himself.

“Friends wondered why I was applying my energies in that direction.” he says of his illustration years “I had taken a monumental course there for large mural creations and stained glass works. I was advised to seriously consider painting something of my own chosen subject matter and selling it. I gave that a shot and it worked. Eventually galleries were putting my work up for commissions.”

The educational and government system in Russia back then was extremely supportive and nurturing toward their budding artists, in way of setting them up with both living quarters and networking on behalf of their developing creativity.

“The government supplied you with commissions. They took care of you, supplying you with paints and studios to work in. Everything was paid including the travel.”

However, this very ideal foundation eventually began to fracture when Russia underwent major political and economical upheaval. The once idyllic system was no longer intact and therefore ceased being a reliable source of support. As a result, artists were suddenly facing vulnerable circumstances.

“Then, it all stopped when the whole system became affected and I ventured off and sold works in France, Germany, Switzerland. They had private shows back then and to survive you had to sell outside of Russia.”

The Commissioned paintings were taking Dvorezky beyond Russia and well into the European art scene. Galleries situated in Germany and Switzerland were playing host to the ever expanding breadth of Dvorezky’s Oeuvre.

After a number of years working the art scene to the best of his capacity, it became clear to Dvorezky that a greater move was essential to the ongoing development and survival of his passion. Here was a young man motivated by his will to paint, whose style was heavily doused in



Costa Dvorezky, *Salsa Teacher*



Costa Dvorezky, *Red Wall*

Left: Costa Dvořezky, *Girl Pulling a Blanket* Right: Costa Dvořezky, *Captive*





Costa Dvoretzky, *Jumping Boy*



European influence, heading to Canada.

“So it seemed to me a move was essential and I headed over to Canada, settling into the city of Toronto. I was 28, 30 or so when I first arrived. In the beginning I tried to sell my old Euro style works but they would not move as they were simply too European, dark eastern European... Russian influence.”

Venturing back to present day we have an artist well into his own with regards to works that are now trademark Dvoretzky paintings, a painter whose one constant is perhaps that after a few years or more in a certain territory, dramatic shifts can be expected.

The characters and environments of this earlier period are seeped in darker tones, the figures themselves, far removed from the realm of bright wide open spaces. A less innocent world is represented - but perhaps no less playful - as we find the men and woman now sitting or kneeling in confined quarters, restrained at the wrists by ropes and the like. There we discover a world of dimly lit rooms where men and woman quietly engage in what might well be adult games. The powerful sexual tone of these works is presented again through the body language of the subjects and the colours Dvoretzky masterfully employs to communicate the emotions.

“After a certain point you have to refresh the exchange. To step back and take a shower so to speak.” he says “After a number of years engaged with the figures in captivity, I happened to see the jumping boy.”

From there, his next shift was perhaps inevitable, resulting in the show featured at Montreal’s Gallery D’este.

For a painter in his early forties, Costa has explored with great depth, a diversity of directions. His early works tell of old world European influence that perhaps will always serve as the underlying hidden foundation to his ever evolving youthful passion for change and adventures with the canvas. 🐣



Costa Dvoretzky, *Jump Brothers*

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- Costa Dvoretzky