

PAINTER SPOTLIGHT

Kenny Harris: Cityscapes With Current Context

By Wim Van Aalst

Kenny Harris (born 1974) studied at a liberal arts school, Colorado College, where he received a well-rounded art education. After that, he went to study art history and sight-size drawing under Charles Cecil in Italy. Upon his return, his work, focusing on cityscapes and interiors, was well received in California.

When it comes to oil painting, Harris taught himself the basics but later learned the intricacies

of controlling value and temperature from veteran realist Frank Mason, to whom he fondly refers as “a great teacher.”

“I’m not about statement,” he said. “My work is about an interpretation of the world I see around me.”

He is also not intentionally trying to achieve an effect in the viewer: “If I see a light event, a space, a condition of light that I respond to, that makes me want to paint it, I’m assuming that someone else will want to look at it.”

Painting cityscapes naturally

involves plenty of traveling. “I’ve often gone to places that I find intellectually interesting,” Harris said, “like China, or Buenos Aires after the economic crisis, Cuba, wherever. ... Even though the subject matter may be mundane, for me the context is inspired, so hopefully that will also come across.” His work certainly does transport one to a different place.

“I travel to Europe a lot, to look at the oil paintings,” said Harris. “That is the best teacher for me, nowadays. When you look

at these paintings, you engage in a direct dialogue with the greatest painters that ever lived. And I learned the most from them,” adding that not all painting knowledge transmitted nowadays is historically accurate.

The painting here is a cityscape from Lijiang, a small town in China’s southwestern province of Yunnan, famous for its natural beauty and its Naxi ethnic minority—descendants of Tibetan nomads.

“All over town you had these Chinese wall paintings

in ink—some were landscapes, some had more text, some simply depicted what was in the shops inside,” Harris said.

Here, Harris gives us a treat of two worlds: “I loved the idea of dividing the painting in half, depicting a western cityscape on the left and a Chinese landscape on the right. There was originally a different wall painting there, but I needed a land-

scape so I took another one from another wall.”

To good effect, we may add.

Kenny Harris is represented by Koplín Del Rio Gallery (California) and George Billis Gallery in New York City where his show is open until Oct. 25.

Wim Van Aalst is a painter based in Belgium.



“Lijiang” by Kenny Harris. Oil on linen.

Teaching Teachers the Basics of Visual Arts

Da Vinci Initiative raising funds to promote visual literacy in public schools

By Christine Lin
Epoch Times Staff

NEW YORK—It’s no secret that art instruction in public schools is hurting—not only for funding, but also for applicable skills.

The problem often starts at the top. Students may have the desire to learn to draw, but their teachers are at a loss as to how to help them.

“On several occasions, art teachers who have taken a workshop with me have burst into tears, explaining that they always wanted to learn how to draw and paint at a high level, but didn’t know how to go about it,” art educator Mandy Hallenius wrote in an email.

“Others lament the lack of skill-based preparation during their undergraduate studies because their K-12 art students often want to know how to make something ‘look real,’ and they do not always have the appropriate training to help their students achieve these types of goals.”

Mandy Hallenius is a certified K-12 art teacher and a member of the board of education for the visual arts in the state of Washington.

Together with Kara Lysandra Ross, chief operating officer of Art Renewal Center, Hallenius has started the Da Vinci Initiative, an educational nonprofit aiming to provide skills-based visual arts curricula to primary and secondary public schools.

They’ve started a Kickstarter campaign to raise \$8,500 toward completing the teaching materials. The teaching materials include written lesson plans and video courses that educators could take for continuing education credits in their respective states.

With additional funds beyond the current target amount, initiative founders plan to produce

the complete set of lessons and promote the video course among teachers in different states. The ultimate effect would be, starting from art teachers and their students, to raise the level of visual literacy across America.

“Like teaching rhythm, tempo, and scales in music class so that a student has many tools to express themselves through music, so too is there a need for a skill-based education in the visual arts,” reads the initiative’s website.

Lesson plans are adapted from the Ani Art Academy’s Language of Drawing and Language of Painting programs, which cover draftsmanship, color theory, paint handling skills, perspective, among other topics necessary for art mastery.

The videos are taught in conversational tone by an artist at an easel, who demonstrates the skills and talks the viewer through art theory. They are practical, and easy to follow, down to hints and tricks for controlling a stick of charcoal.

Da Vinci Initiative lessons tie together the visual arts with subjects such as math, science, and literature, as appropriate for the age group.

A kindergarten lesson plan, for example, begins with marking—getting the youngster comfortable with making dots, lines, zigzags, spirals, and the like. It helps him manipulate the crayon and gives him confidence with fine motor skills. Counting lessons and the alphabet are tied in to simple connect-the-dots exercises.

you think happened before this scene? What do you think will happen next, and why?” Students are then asked to draw what they think follows the depicted scene. A peer critique challenges students to articulate how they feel about their own and their classmates’ art.

In grades six–eight, the lessons get more technical, borrowing from traditional atelier teaching techniques, specifically Charles Bargue’s method of dissecting forms. Students learn to tackle complex shapes, such as the human foot, visu-

Lessons tie together the visual arts with subjects such as math, science, and literature, as appropriate for the age group.

ally deconstructing them using geometry. They are encouraged to think about method, and the difference it makes to use a visual framework.

The curriculum for grades 9–12 expands on this idea, delving deeper into angle and line, shading, and composition.

Pledging for the Kickstarter campaign ends Oct. 25. See: kck.st/1CGmybi

For more information, see DaVinciInitiative.org

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

RESEARCH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

- I have been diagnosed with schizophrenia
- I have auditory verbal hallucinations
- I am interested in learning more about an experimental treatment at the New York State Psychiatric Institute at Columbia University Medical Center

Reimbursement for travel expenses and compensation (up to \$840) for time and effort required to do study procedures.

For more information about the study, call 646-774-8726 or studies@nyspi.columbia.edu

To Comfort Always...



Hospice of New York

Hospice of New York provides comprehensive, compassionate care to patients and their loved ones facing a wide variety of life-limiting illnesses. We serve Manhattan, The Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Nassau County.

Hospice is seeking Registered Nurses (RNs), Medical Social Workers (MSWs) and Certified Home Health Aides to be a part of our team. Qualified candidates must be bilingual English/Mandarin or English/Cantonese.

Email your resume to: judith.gayle@hospiceny.com or fax to 718.784.1413.

www.hospiceny.com



Lower the cost of your medication in 5 ½ minutes

There are ways to reduce your co-pay substantially, or even eliminate it entirely.

Aleks, the owner and Chief Pharmacist of Chelsea Royal Care Pharmacy, will find a way to lower or eliminate the co-payment of almost any prescription. This is a service that he provides as a commitment to his customers, a service that got him featured in amNY’s Business Spotlight.

This is what Aleks believe in Medication should be available to all. But his commitment to serving you doesn’t end there. By just faxing him your prescriptions, you can get them quickly delivered to your door, free of charge. Regardless of which of the five Burroughs you live in.

Currently, you can receive an additional \$10 off for any new or transferred prescription: so this is a great time to call.

Dial (212) 255-8000

and ask Aleks, “How can I lower my co-pay?”



Aleks Abdurakhmanov Pharm.D., R.Ph.



Call Now to Lower your Co-Pay: 212-255-8000

154 9th Ave. (Between West 19th & 20th St)

www.ChelseaRoyalCarePharmacy.com