

From Monet to Joseph Stella, artists throughout history have been drawn to cities, attracted by their beauty, energy and architecture. In this stunning series of cityscapes, painter Layla Fanucci joins their distinguished company in an exuberant tribute to New York city. With delicacy and passion. she conveys the essence of its most famous sights, revealing their particular character through her keen sense of color and the vitality of her brushstrokes..

Driven by a desire to evoke her experience of the city, she achieves remarkable harmony in these resonant works. A musician before becoming a painter, she captures the rhythm of the great metropolis, the lyrical splendor of its skies and the cacophony of its streets. Looking at the scenes, one understands why people return time after time to these places, like musical phrases we never tire of hearing, always finding something new in them.

In Fanucci's dream-like painting, the relationships of buildings, massed like blocks, transmit the grandeur and intensity of the urban environment, framing the crowds that swarm below them. She appreciates New York's complexity, approaching it in the same way as a portrait painter, who delves deeply to express the heart of the subject. Her reds and greens, two different aspects of the city, perhaps at dawn in winter, the other in autumn late at night, each one presents a mysterious and ghostly place, belonging as much to the sky as to the earth.

She imagines bustling Times Square under a pale blue sky, its symbolic importance as a high energy theatrical neighborhood indicated by the thick black lines that depict the jumble of the incongruent architecture. In her painting of Fifth Avenue, the expensive thoroughfare appears in all its sleek grandeur like a burnished corridor. Glamorous and full of promise. disappearing into the horizon. Using reds and pinks, she alludes to the graceful architectural detail of Soho's handsome building where art and commerce collide. And her depiction of historic, vibrant Little Italy, home to descendants of some of the city's original immigrants, could be setting for a rousing

opera. in fact, each painting has a distinctive theatricality, like a stage set for innumerable human drams.

Fanucci's imposing Wall Street look gothic in pale yellow and grays, more European than America. I beer gold and gray painting got the venerable Stock Exchange, where money connect strangers around the world, she gives the structor a brooding quality beneath the American flag unfurled on its facade. Underneath the Brooklyn Bridge, with its slender graceful supports, she paints boasts at rest, watched over by the benevolent icon, the sky fiery at sunset. Amazingly, in only 11 paintings, she is able to impart the true wonder of New York.

As inspiration for the series, she used photos from her travels to the city and postcards from friends, never sketching first but jumping right into the process, trusting her instincts, and painting layer upon layer to crete an almost sculptural effect on her canvass. Dense, deeply felt, intriguing and masterfully painted, her cityscapes draw us in because of the passion in which they were created. " I hope people will be touched by my works and gain some peace from looking at them," she says.

In addition, her luminous paintings of London, Paris and Florence will be shown in this exhibition.

By Valerie Gladstone