

BA+NA+NA Q ART GALLERY

How I See Master Artist Thomas S. Nelson

by Val Zubiri

I am bad when it comes to art. Every time I look at art, I get into a compulsive mode, searching in art that feeling of excitement whenever I saw candy and comic books when I was a kid.

When I saw Master Artist Thomas S. Nelson's many works in his home, I did not just see art. I saw candy. My heart jumped and kept on jumping as I saw and photographed one work after another. I felt young again. This is a sense I want to share with everyone else. With you.

There is something else I have learned through the years. There is virtue in stepping back, sharing and letting go. So even though I would have wanted to convince him to give me all of his works, I think it is important to share them with everyone. I believe that his works should be worth a lot of money, but even though I would like to bring you to heaven with his works, Tom and I agreed that we'll fix the prices by printing them here as well. This is like a fun process. We're not cheating you, but the works are original and one of a kind. If you think and delay, and someone got something you liked, you'll have cheated yourself.

One time in 2008, I went to a suburban gallery. The manager was there. She smiled at me and went about her work. She was carefully but tediously pasting brown paper on the back of a newly-framed artwork. It took her more than an hour doing it. As usual, I was looking for my "candy fix."

At that time, I had been convinced by a friend of mine, Steve Welchon, to look into forming a nonprofit organization for the arts. It took me more than a year to get convinced that my own art projects can fit into a nonprofit setup. I found the need to make people aware of other people's art, not just mine. I thought that the only way to make other people aware of an artist is to publish their works in book form.

Books have a degree of permanence in society. Someone can buy and keep an original, but publication helps for these images to grow roots into millions of minds. If I were to establish a nonprofit for

the arts, it would be important to include publication.

So I experimented with my own works. In order for an art book to come about, there should be more than 50 images to feature. It just so happened that I had about 150 figure drawings and paintings in my portfolio. I did not care to sell them. In just three days, I was able to photograph them, edit and correct the images, and come up with a full-length book of my works. I finished compiling "a book," Valentino F. Zubiri: Nude Drawings and Paintings from 1995 to 1996, together with an acceptable but long introduction, in January 2008. I must make an official confession, however. I signed the works in January 2008, and I made the mistake of writing 1995 and 1996 on the works. When I sat down to edit and compile, I realized that a lot of my works were drawn in 1994. Oops. Well, I was training and timing myself. The game was—how short of a time can I come up with a publishable art book? The answer was three days. With indelible mistakes.

I had been going to Book Expo America—the annual publishing industry mecca which jumps from city to city—for the past 15 years, even when it used to be named something else. BEA happens around the end of May or the beginning of June, and for a week, booksellers come to check out sample books that will be released in the fall, from both big and small publishers, so that they could decide if they would order ten, a hundred or a thousand copies of a title.

So publishing has always been on my mind. In 2006, the new "in" thing was the combination of self-publishing and print-on-demand (POD). This was ironic, because the same printing machine that is used for POD has always been around and been demonstrated annually since the first year I went to the Expo. For more than a decade, the buzz was that no

one could relate to just ordering one book from any printer. Having a huge "copy" machine in the back room of each bookstore so that one single copy would be printed as it was paid for felt like a crime. The concept felt like the now extinct store, Service Merchandise, where you only saw samples on display—you simply imagined that the invisible back rooms were stacked with shiny and new things to be had. It also felt like Kinko's, where anyone can use a machine, press a few buttons, and make crappy, imperfect copies, albeit "on demand."

Something in 2005-2006 happened. Global Warming. Green is In. Why print 10,000 copies and lose money and use up storage space—and fell all those trees just to have a book? Print on demand finally got accepted. There is a self-publishing P.O.D. website, www.Lulu.com, whose sales jumped from \$1 million dollars to \$10 mil-



lion dollars in just one year.

I compiled my “book” of nude drawings to be uploaded to Lulu.com. Lulu required two files—one for the cover and another for the inside content—in pdf format. A minute after the upload, I realized that with a few resets, I could produce another single pdf file that would have images for the computer screen—a smaller memory sized e-book. I can share the entire book online, just like those millions of downloadable books I had seen.

So came the next mental exercise. Would I be willing to share my images with the rest of the world for free? I felt selfish, and bad, but I did it anyway and tried to think nothing of it—I produced an e-book of my art book, and asked bloggers to share the file with their visitors.

I discovered a website, www.scribd.com, which allows people to upload pdf documents and books. On the same day, or night, of January 31, 2008, the same day I uploaded a full publishable copy to www.Lulu.com, I uploaded my ebook, Valentino F. Zubiri: Nude Drawings and Paintings from 1995 to 1996, Internet Edition.

Scribd.com was special and worth mentioning, because the site counted how many stumbled upon my upload, and how many of them downloaded a copy for themselves. In a week, I was averaging about 30 visitors an hour. I tried to “cheat” at first, clicking my own page, and erasing the cookie Scribd.com left in my computer, and clicking again, so that the numbers would go up. I got tired of this exercise, however. Today I looked at the counter. It is September 2009, and Scribd.com has counted 30,969 visits on my own original upload.

There are now countless others who had downloaded and shared my file through the more than a year and a half of sharing. Some of these shared uploads of my file are in Scribd.com, but the majority of them are now elsewhere.

Well, I did probably “cheat” to begin with. I am a marketer after all. I used a few popular keywords: “nude,” “drawing,” “painting.”

From the beginning I thought, I could sell 60 printed copies at Lulu.com in a year, and only 60 people might see my works in a year. If I shared 60 copies in a day for free, 60 people would see it in a day! By sharing the images via a computer-resolution ebook, I continuously got my works viewed and shared all over the world!

So let me take you back to the gallery in the suburbs. A few weeks ago, I went back to the gallery in the nearby suburb.

The gallery had closed. It is no longer in business. The note on the door said nothing about where their new location would be. There was no new location.

Back to 2008, about February. I approached the lady who was neatly placing the paper backing on the newly-framed painting. I got impatient watching her work, so I decided to say hello. We talked and she was nice. I told her about my idea of publishing artists, and the theory of making the images permanent through publication in books (and coming out with magazines and newspapers where artwork could also be published).

I told her, that as a gallery, she would have so many artwork available worthy enough to be published as one volume, maybe even more. The magic number could be 50 (as in 50 works per book) or maybe even 100. The focus could be the gallery itself, and

each chapter would belong to each artist the gallery represented.

She was nice. She told me in a nice way, “That just sounds like it’s too much work.” And she went back to working on the backing of that one single painting.

Now, the gallery is closed. I’m sure she’s blaming the economy. Is there a lesson to be learned here?

And so my children, you must know that I can only play piper a few times in your lifetime and mine, before no one decides to follow. I have come again to an exercise.

My exercise is that I would like to publish Mr. Nelson’s works. I believe that with publication, his works will live on.

My gift from him is that I saw him in his house, with all the works that I endeavored to photograph and compile. I now have his art in my mind and stories to tell worthy of a movie—my interaction as a fledgling artist with a great master.

This is not so much an article as it is an endorsement. This paper will not just feature artists for the sake of filling up a newspaper’s space. There will be issues where no art will be shown. This is still a business paper. This article is for art collectors and those who want to taste candy through art.

My question, right now, is, would you collect Thomas S. Nelson’s work? Can you be responsible to keep his original works?

Please observe his strokes, and remember that his works are mostly pastel. From sticks with singular colors, come out works like Banty Rooster (pastel on illustration board, 20 inches height x 14 inches width). Even enlarged to its actual size, you will notice the detail, craft and soul he had invested. The works are final and well-balanced.

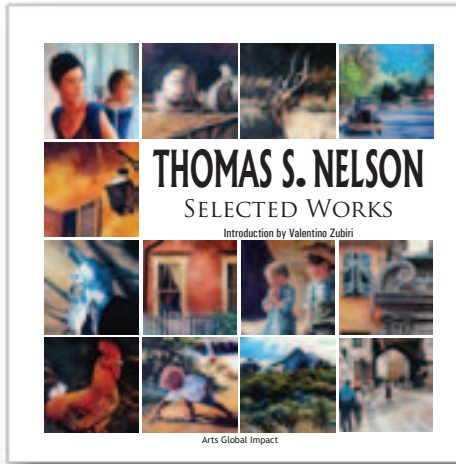
I’m working with Tom Nelson, to present his works in book form, a printed collection of his art (Thomas S. Nelson, Selected Works). All the works you see here will be included in the book. As a collector, you can choose to be mentioned as the collector in the book or not.

Original art should not just be collected. They should be published as well. If the artist has breathed life into his works, then the works are alive! We should dwell on each one of them. They should therefore be individually recognized—published! People should have the opportunity to see the works through publication. In general, galleries do not do this. They display the original, sell the original, talk about the original, convince whoever walked in through their doors about the original, but do nothing much after the original got wrapped and left the gallery. Many art buyers are left with the job of “justifying” their mysterious purchases to their smart yet clueless, enigmatic guests.

And since the torch of ownership has been passed on to the collectors, then the collectors should also be recognized. If there is a chance prior to publication, collectors should be recognized and mentioned, because the responsibility has been passed on to them.

My mission is to continue working with Mr. Nelson. I have a few projects in mind.

I hope that people begin to feel as I do. As you look at his works, and when you collect them, I hope you will become young again, and feel and taste candy and comic books.



We are working to publish a book of Mr. Nelson’s works, under a nonprofit label. However, Mr. Nelson is also agreeable to finding a commercial publisher.

Thomas S. Nelson's Thoughts



“You will notice that I’ve done a lot of landscapes in the past, but lately, I have been finding my heart in people and who they are. So, lately, my challenge has been bringing their characteristics and personalities out in the paintings. The sounds like a pretty good amount of b.s., but it’s true.

“You hear stories about the starving artists and how 75% die broke. I now understand that. Van Gogh died dead broke. Monet died broke. Unless you really wanted to be a true artist and speak out, and create what you really wanted, you ended up dying broke. At that time, unless you were in with the church, you have no chances of surviving.

“You have to be a good politician or a good p.r. person, or you’re lost. What’s weird is that such a statement applies to the artists of today as well.

“With the economy the way it is, galleries all over the country are dropping left and right. I know for a fact that people aren’t spending.

“The only people who are actually buying art today are those who have plenty of money and freedom to spend as they wish. That’s probably only 2-3% of the American public.

“It’s pretty obvious that the cost of living has gone up and the cost of everything else has gone up. However, I think the American public has outpriced itself. I think our values have been misplaced—we have become greedy. Art, like other items, has become overpriced.

“When I first noticed our country slowly and gradually getting into trouble, I thought this was horrible. What have we done to ourselves?

“Then the economy just went downwards, and for a long time, it felt like a mess.

“However, I feel now that all this is actually a good thing. It has opened my eyes, and I hope people are starting to feel the same way—I now believe that this economy and the price of art will eventually settle to where they should be.

“People are struggling to make the dollar, but because they follow others and are prone to get victimized by p.r., they don’t know the good talent from the bad.

“Now, I believe that great talent will stand the test of time and this economy. Hmm. I love Van Gogh and Monet, but I hope I don’t die broke.”

- TSN

*Thomas S. Nelson lives and works in Kansas City. Please refer to the list on the next page (page 12) for the titles, sizes and prices of the works. The works have been reduced in relation to one another on this page and the next. If you are interested in purchasing one or more of Mr. Nelson’s works, please call 312-523-8052 and talk to Val. All these works will be included in a book, **THOMAS S. NELSON, Selected Works**. The book’s draft is now available online at BananaQ.com, but it will be finalized once the works have sold. Collectors will have the option of getting credited in the final book, which will be sold in regular and online stores. email Editor@BananaQ.com*



Thomas S. Nelson
Freedom
acrylic on illustration board
21.5 in. ht. x 29.5 in. wd.

On the Cover:

Freedom, acrylic on illustration board, 21.5 in. ht. x 29.5 in. wd., \$2640

1 Kirstina and Kima, pastel on illustration board, 27 in. ht. x 39 in. wd., \$4200

2 Windows, pastel on illustration board, 20.5 in. ht. x 15.5 in. wd., \$1300

3 A Day in the Sun, watercolor on illustration board, 19.5 in. ht. x 22 in. wd., \$2000

4 Lone Buffalo, acrylic on illustration board, 10.5 in. ht. x 7.5 in. wd., \$360

5 Old Times, acrylic on illustration board, 19 in. ht. x 14 in. wd., \$1500

6 Banty Rooster, pastel on illustration board, 20 in. ht. x 14 in. wd., \$750

7 Woman in Garden, acrylic on illustration board, 7.5 in. ht. x 11 in. wd., \$370

8 Amy, watercolor on watercolor paper, 12.5 in. ht. x 9.5 in. wd., SOLD

9 Simple Life, pastel on illustration board, 20 in. ht. x 31 in. wd., \$3500

10 Quincy, acrylic on illustration board, 23 in. ht. x 31.5 in. wd., \$3000

11 Early Morning, pastel on illustration board, 29.25 in. ht. x 39.25 in. wd., \$6000

12 First Bloom, pastel on illustration board, 18 in. ht. x 26.5 in. wd., \$3200

13 Home is an Uphill Climb, pastel on illustration board, 14 in. ht. x 19 in. wd., \$1000

14 On the Outside Looking In, pastel on illustration board, 18 in. ht. x 23 in. wd., \$1700

15 Old Neighborhood, acrylic on illustration board, 6.25 in. ht. x 11.75 in. wd., \$350

16 A Spot in London, pastel on illustration board, 8.25 in. ht. x 13.5 in. wd., \$750

17 Study of Garlic Clumps, pastel on illustration board, 10 in. ht. x 15 in. wd., \$600

18 Homer and Jethro, acrylic on illustration board, 21 in. ht. x 15.5 in. wd., \$1500

19 'Round the Bend, pastel on illustration board, 27 in. ht. x 39 in. wd., \$4250

Mr. Nelson lives and works in Kansas City, Missouri. All proceeds will go to Mr. Thomas S. Nelson. The works will ship from Kansas City. Mr. Nelson plans to donate a portion of the proceeds to the establishment of an art for awareness nonprofit. Please direct inquiries to Mr. Zubiri in Chicago at 312-523-8052. Images 1-19 are approximately scaled relative to one another. The cover image (Freedom) is not scaled relative to the other works.

