



THE VIEW FINDER

Tom Matt captures 'the spirit' of New York

BY NOAH ROSENBERG

With his oils, pastels and carbon pencils, Tom Matt captures a world in which streetlights dangle above crowded intersections, skyscrapers pierce colorful clouds, and boats chug across vivid New York waterways.

The Long Island City artist – who has worked across New York City and in Paris – focuses on the unique cityscapes, or “views,” as he calls them, that “capture the spirit of a city and the grandeur of it.”

“From my experience, people are so busy and rushing around that they forget to look up,” explained Matt, who said his pieces are the result of a visceral response to views that make him “stop in my tracks.”

Three and a half years ago, Matt joined an exodus of Lower East Side artists making their way across the East River. He now enjoys admiring Manhattan from afar, he said, while cherishing what he considers a small but rich community in western Queens.

Originally from Connecticut, Matt, 43, was born to a painter-sculptor and a crafter of fabric wall hangings. He jokes that he grew up thinking everyone had artists for parents and access to a studio.

But, as he got older, reality hit and Matt, trained as a painter, found employment as a social worker and then as a graphic designer in the book publishing industry.

Through hard work and a word of mouth “ripple effect,” Matt has worked fulltime as an artist for the past nine years. His signature works – pastel cityscapes atop front pages of major newspapers – can be traced back to an interest in typography and a passion for underappreciated or overlooked urban scenes.

It was such a scene that Matt painted exclusively for the cover of LIC Courier Magazine's premiere issue. The silhouette of an old riverside crane in Gantry Plaza State Park, set against Manhattan's skyline and partially hidden by foliage, literally made Matt stop in the tracks of an old railroad line.

He was captivated by the spectrum of colors and the motion of the river before him.

“It captures the essence of space, celebrates the vastness of Long Island City,” he said of the view. “There's that whisper of industrial New York and how it's been transformed into this beautiful waterfront that we can appreciate.”



Some of Tom Matt's other oil paintings include (top and bottom on left) “Union Square” (9” x 14”) and “View from the Pulaski Bridge” (8” x 10”). Other works, from his signature series of pastels on newsprint, include (left to right) “NY Skyline from the Pulaski Bridge” (13” x 22”) and “Queensborough Bridge & Tramway” (13” x 22”).

To see more of Matt's work, visit www.tommatt.com.

