

Forum Gallery

A watercolor painting of a statue of a Native American man, likely a Minuteman, standing on a pedestal. He is holding an eagle in his right hand, which is raised high. The statue is set against a backdrop of bare, leafless trees. The overall color palette is muted, with soft purples, pinks, and browns. The statue is the central focus, and the background is filled with the intricate, branching patterns of the trees.

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New Paintings in Watercolor

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OCTOBER 23, 1997 – NOVEMBER 29, 1997

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FREDERICK BROSEN

FREDERICK BROSEN is a contemporary romantic. Equipped with formidable technique, he ventures forth into the urban landscape ready and willing to fall in love. When he sees a square, a park, a street corner or a bridge that speaks volumes about the lives that have traversed its length and breadth, he tumbles, head over heels. This act of commitment embodies all of the complexities of a human relationship, and its proximate cause is probably beyond the Artist's control; it is simply a devotional engagement that is necessary for Frederick Brosen before he can begin a painting. This engagement and the reverence it inspires are at the starting gate of Brosen's experience. He "falls" for the subject, revisits it at different times of the day and night to immerse himself in its essence. He sketches, photographs, sketches again, visits again. And once he can see beyond the windows, under the cobblestones, above the clouds and inside the structures, he begins to draw, to set down the skeletal underpinning of what eventually appears. When we look at a Frederick Brosen watercolor, a portrait, perhaps, of a part of the city we know and recognize, we can see that he hasn't selected it

as much as it has seduced and selected him, made him paint it, somehow told him to communicate its life and its history.

His unique relationship to the subject is definitely at the heart of what makes Frederick Brosen a special artist. And from there, the news gets better, because Frederick Brosen can paint with the confidence and dexterity of the greatest masters of his chosen medium. He is unafraid of challenge. In fact, he may just be inspired by extraordinary difficulty. There may be countless bricks or cobblestones in one of Brosen's subjects. He doesn't worry or try to count, he just paints all of them. Often, when buildings are his subjects, they have settled and shifted over time so that their faces are like vast networks of complex angles. Again, Frederick Brosen marches forward, drawing first and then painting, building from the core, never simplifying, always secure in the knowledge that something about that amazing complexity is at the center of the attraction he feels for the place. And there are literally hundreds of gradations of color, "color changes" as Brosen calls them, subtle or dramatic as the subject dictates. Brosen builds his colors, starting with light washes

and adding layer after layer of built-up color, different numbers of layers and different colors in each tiny area of the painting. The crystalline result has a beauty of its own, but its focus and his greatest success is to find and convey the beauty in the subject. There is a special excitement in discovering a new clarity in a recognizable image, and Brosen's technical mastery lead us to this discovery in every painting.

In *Gansevoort Street*, Frederick Brosen takes us to a part of New York we may know, but haven't seen as he sees it. During the business day, this area is rendered impassable by delivery trucks and meat market workers, constantly engaged in frenetic activity. And that's how it has been for decades. Brosen shows us the scene in early morning light, perhaps on Sunday, no traffic, no businesses open, nothing happening. But he reveals all of the character of the neighborhood, its age, its residential/commercial mix, and its feeling of small village in the big city. His intimacy with the subject leads to ours, to our intuitive understanding, from looking at the painting, of the nature of the place, its strength, solidarity and lasting quality. And he has found and revealed its beauty as well, the outline of the structures against the sky, the colors of the buildings illuminated by the light reflected by the pavement.

In a very different painting, *The Falconer*, Brosen shows a piece of Central Park that

many of us have seen hundreds of times. His choices, the cropping, color, framing, inclusion of the legend; all of his choices convey the spirit of the piece. Looking at this painting for the first time is a return to innocence, to never having seen the subject before. It takes an artist like Frederick Brosen to discover this inanimate statue, animate it for us and give us the chance to discover it anew through his work.

For this exhibition, Frederick Brosen has painted watercolors ranging in size from very small, closely focused views of Venice, to large-scale panoramic pictures of New York and Paris. In the smaller works, scale is the only reduction the Artist will permit; each painting is infused with the same deep personal commitment he makes to his subjects, and the exquisite detail is ever-present. Each of these little watercolors could be a section of a larger work by Brosen, they are that distinctive and special. And the full-scale paintings envelop us in the history, character and personality of their subjects.

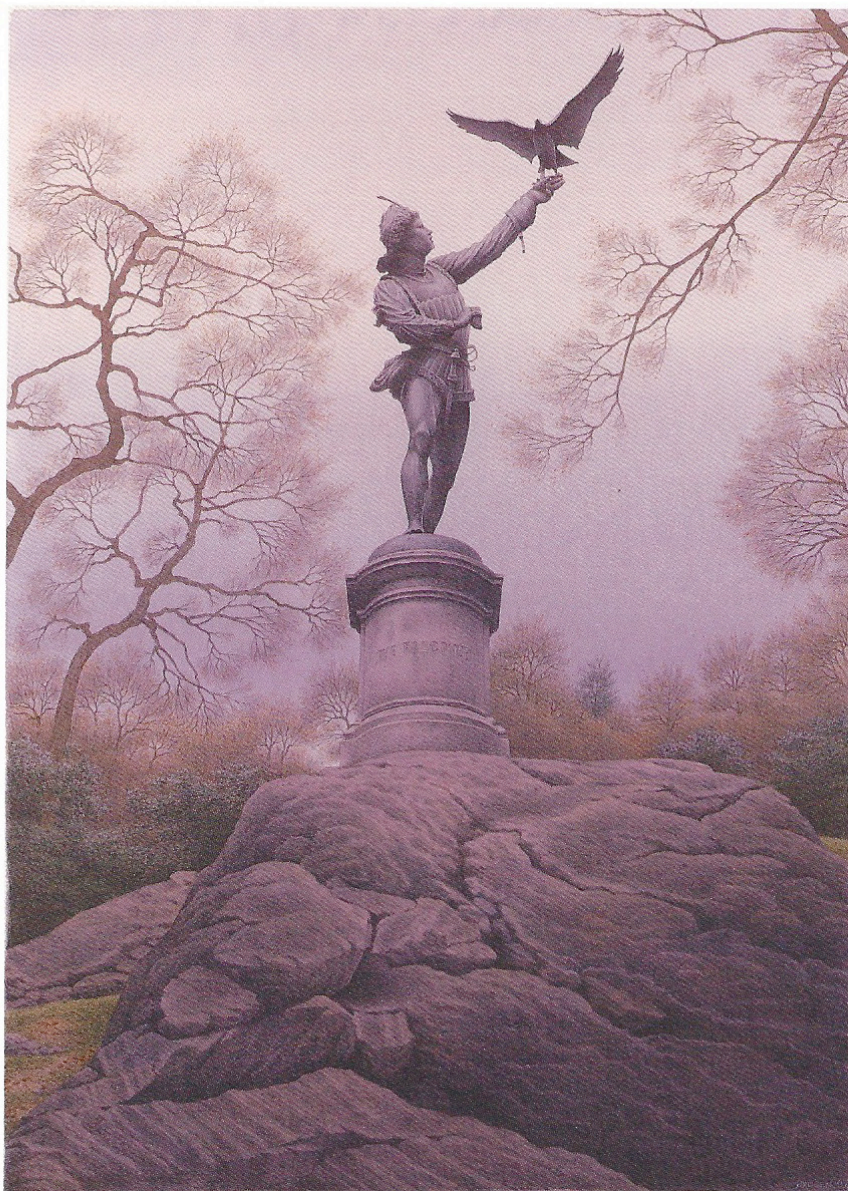
This is Frederick Brosen's first exhibition at Forum Gallery, a gallery in the humanist tradition showing figurative art throughout its thirty-five year history. Frederick Brosen is a superb artist who exemplifies the inclusive nature of figurative art. Every painting is full of life and Frederick Brosen's landscapes are lifescapes as well.

— ROBERT FISHKO



25th Street, Manhattan, 1996

32 x 46"



The Falconer, Central Park, 1997

35 x 25"



Saint Germain des Pres, Paris 1995

29.5 x 47.5"



Bethesda Fountain, Central Park, 1996

35 x 23.5"



Gansevoort Street, Manhattan 1997

28 x 48"



Paris Fountain

16 x 22"



Mulberry and Prince Streets (Old St. Patrick's), Manhattan 1997

33 x 45"



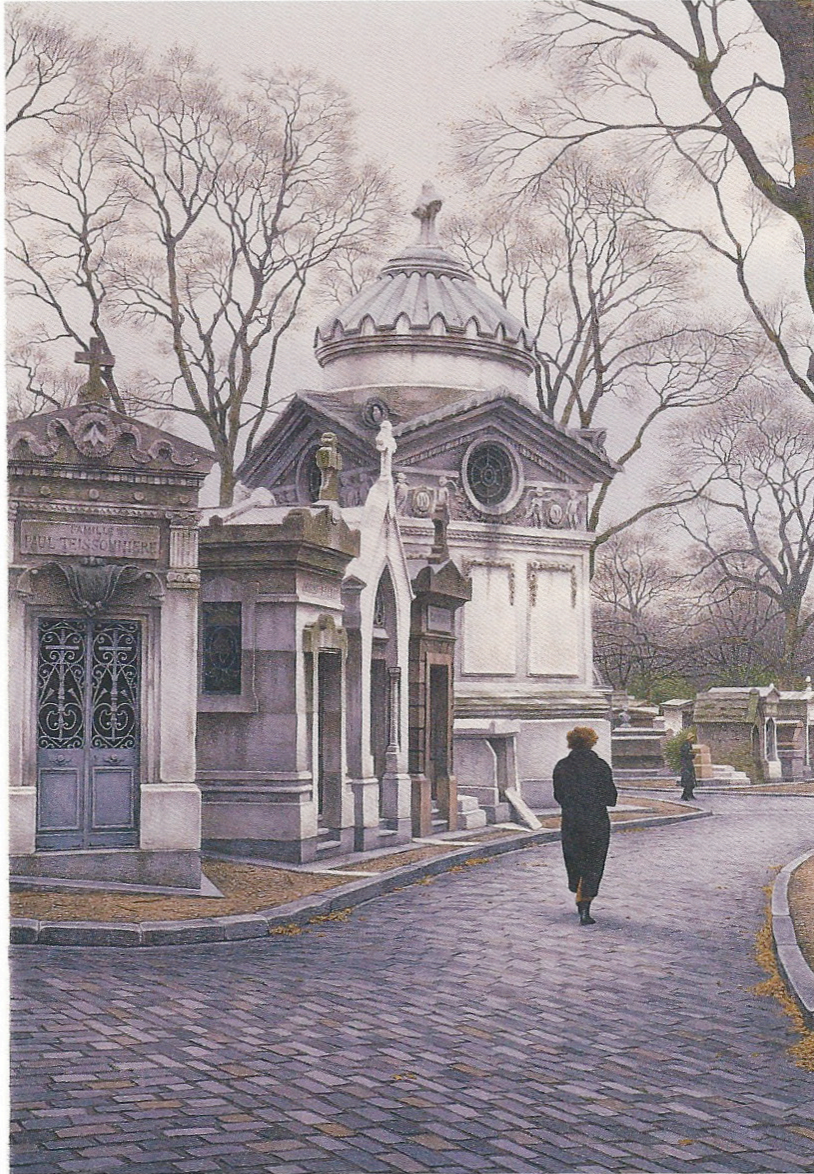
Washington Street, Manhattan, 1995

31 x 25"



Bond Street, Manhattan, 1997

35 x 51"



Pere Lachaise, Paris, 1996

34 x 23.5"



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