



GENERATIONS: MARCO SASSONE

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In my conversation with Marco Sassone in his San Francisco studio, he remarked that art would survive if it “filters through from generation to generation.” *Il Maestro e L’Allievo* (Master and Pupil): Oskar Kokoschka, Silvio Loffredo, Marco Sassone is an exhibition that celebrates these three internationally acclaimed painters, connected by a student-teacher relationship. Their works will be shown together for the very first time at the Museo ItaloAmericano from May 10 through July 8, 2001.

Sassone was born in Campi Bisenzio, a Tuscan village in 1942. He left his architectural studies after three years and later studied with Silvio Loffredo at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence. Loffredo was a student of the Austrian painter, Oskar Kokoschka. In 1967, Sassone travelled to Southern California and in 1981, he moved to San Francisco.



Sassone’s paintings explode with color and light. His passion for architecture and water is obvious. From his scenes of Venice canals to the streets of San Francisco, Sassone uses his cities not as a subject but rather as the canvas. He paints over the city with his interpretation of the pace and mood he sees. It is pure expressionism.

Never one to paint only the surfaces of the city, Sassone makes an effort to be part of it. While in Los Angeles and San Francisco, he could not overlook the population of homeless people. He met the homeless. He sat with them and drew them. The lines etched on their faces would never escape Sassone. Those lines became poignant portraits in his studio as in “Man with Blue Eyes.” Sassone began his journey towards assimilation, not of culture but of the human spirit.

In our conversation, Sassone spoke about Europe, America, architecture, art and all the hypocrisy there is in the world:

Sassone: The architectural element/I found it in Venice/the ensemble of water and architecture/I like that/architecture is the structure and water is the freedom/it is always a magnet for me/even when I don’t paint Venice, my paintings still assume the same technical ways of Venice/I like Richard Diebenkorn and the California landscape/some more realistic and some more abstract.

Mill: What are your thoughts on American architecture?

Sassone: I love American architecture/the skyscrapers are the pyramids of today/every time I go

to New York, I love to paint it/they are the canyons with an element of perspective/on the edge/
whether or not you can find your way out/like the canals of Venice/to see the perspective without
knowing where is the end/the mystery of not knowing what is at the end/a little bit of mystery is
good/knowing everything is not nice/something must be left to the imagination.

Mill: With information so readily available today, there is little that is still a mystery. In that context, what is the role of the artist today?

Sassone: The role of the artist today is to hold tight the ground/to make the ground fertile for
your beliefs/it is not the same world anymore/with the technological information/we have either
progressed or regressed/I don't know if it is for me/the world is passing me by/not wanting to
comply/but I think that is the case in many generations/nothing is sacred/information travels fast/
there is no mystery/it takes away respect.

The human being has gotten out of control/the balance of things leave little to be desired/there
is no time/I feel sorry for people who get up in the morning and drive two hours to work/it is
fortunate to be an artist because they are working with themselves/but there is pain working with
yourself/a different pain that is self-imposed/best way to deal with that is to go through with it/
because if you don't it will come back to haunt you.