

MICHAEL PROVENZA



Michael Provenza (left) with his original oil painting "Secret Kingdom." ©2011 Michael Provenza. All Rights Reserved.

Born and raised in the San Francisco Bay area, Michael Provenza lived, worked, studied, taught, and painted for more than 30 years.

He recently relocated to Perrysburg, Ohio and owns an art studio named ThreeTrees Studio, LLC. Michael continues to produce original oil paintings as he expands upon his newest series, *Life's Journey*.

His body of work is often described as realistic surrealism, encompassing the subject of earth's natural beauty and glory while introducing an ethereal theme.

Visit Provenza's website for events and exhibits, art gallery affiliations and his complete portfolio including his latest body of work, biography, resume and artist statement and more at www.MichaelProvenza.com.

Artist Biography

How much can one learn by looking at his work? A review of painter Michael Joseph Provenza's latest pieces reveals a great deal about the enthusiastic artist's life and passions.

Animated trees, foliage and paths leading up and down rolling hills through the mist – from land to ocean – as far as the eye can see. Each scene conveys a sense of joy and serenity, while Michael's bold use of color and strong compositional elements convey the intense beauty he sees in the world around him. These paintings take the viewer on a journey to explore a world that lies far from the stresses of everyday life.

Michael Provenza's personal journey as an artist began in his childhood. Born in 1964 in Los Gatos, California and raised in the heart of Silicon Valley, Michael showed aptitude for art at an early age. "I've always had a strong imagination as a kid and I loved to depict my ideas on paper by copying my favorite cartoons and environments (*free-hand*) when I was in elementary school," Michael recalls.

"My grandfather lived in Chicago and was an artist working in the advertising field," Michael recollects. "He was a phenomenal oil painter and cartoonist as well. When I was nine he started reviewing my artwork and providing feedback and encouragement which became my original source of inspiration to be a professional artist." Michael's interest flourished under his grandfather's tutelage and by the time he was in his early teens, Michael was taking art classes. He exhibited his work through grade school and high school and won many local art contests.



"Three Trees" (above) by Michael Provenza 48" x 24" (oil) ©2011 Michael Provenza. All Rights Reserved.

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In high school, Michael worked as a sign painter and created hand-painted window illustrations on vans and trucks for local businesses. He continued to study art and his artistic talent developed throughout high school.

In 1983, Michael's favorite art teacher introduced him to oils and he never looked back. Michael went on to study fine arts at West Valley College earning an Associates of Arts degree. He continued pursuing his art career through teaching oil painting for three years, studying and painting with well-known artists, traveling, and exhibiting his work in regional art and wine festivals in Northern California. During this time, Michael gained additional awards and recognition including *Best of Show*, Silicon Art Convention; *Most Popular*, "The Art Spirit" Art Show, San Jose; and, *1st Place*, "Fairgoers Choice Award," Santa Clara County Art Fair.

Through the late eighties and early nineties Michael focused on his painting technique using oils. He was also passionate about developing a unique style different from any other artist. "It's important to me to have my own style so I first began to develop it through relentless practice and study of traditional styles, mainly influenced by the old masters, as a foundation," Michael explains. "I studied Seraut for his pointillistic approach and Michelangelo for his use of color, light and depth." During this period, Michael produced several traditional oil paintings – landscapes, seascapes and skyscapes – which exhibited in art galleries and shows around the country. "I was accepted into *The Art Show Gallery* in Carmel, California by loading paintings into my car and going door-to-door to as many galleries as possible in one day." Michael recalls.

Michael's career has encompassed many different fields in the art industry. In addition to oil painting, the artist has also designed a number of 3D environments for video games, illustrated book covers, painted murals and sculptures for museums as well as residential and commercial murals, and adapted his creative cityscapes to greeting cards.

In the late 1980's, Michael was recruited by a computer gaming company in Silicon Valley. By applying his artistic talent in the 2D/3D revolutionary computer games industry, he was compelled to explore and diversify his creativity. He worked as an art director on video game projects where he was free to imagine and create virtual worlds. Michael worked directly with Disney and Sony, as well as actors such as Kirk Cameron, to produce video games for XBOX and PlayStation. The games he worked on were *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Buck Rogers*, *Jurassic Park*, *The Horde*, *Walt Disney World Magical Racing Tour*, *Mad Dash Racing*, just to name a few. The process required pixel painting, hand illustration and sketching for backgrounds which were scanned in order to produce 2D/3D environments and animations. "The animated and 3D experience combined with my traditional oil painting foundation, was a tremendous jumping off point in further developing 'my style' that I am truly passionate about because it flowed naturally in sequence with my imagination to create," explains Michael. "I could not wait to start painting full-time again with my new vision for oil paintings."

By the mid 1990's, Michael sold numerous paintings, traveled to Hawaii, Japan, Italy and all across the United States. He continued to be inspired by the beauty of the lands, seas and sky. He met world-renowned artists including Robert Lyn Nelson and Eyvind Earle and collected their artwork which was



"Reach" (above) by Michael Provenza
36" x 12" (oil) ©2011 Michael Provenza. All Rights Reserved.

The style of Michael Provenza's work has been influenced by his life in California and his world travels including Italy, Israel, Hawaii, and Japan. The genuine quality of his work has been influenced through studying, teaching and painting with well-known artists, as well as his formal fine art education and career trajectory.

Michael's 18 years of experience designing and animating 3D video game environments has further developed his ability to create uncanny dimension in his oil paintings. The unique combination of elements Michael Provenza brings to his work – artistic, personal and professional – gives him the credibility of an original.

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inspirational. “I was inspired by Robert Lyn Nelson’s originality being that he created the concept of the two worlds – above and below the sea,” recalls Michael. “And I was inspired by Eyvind Earle’s environment work showcased in Disney’s animated feature films.”

In 2000, Michael began to integrate his concepts from the virtual worlds he personally created for video games into his oil paintings which was the beginning of his new series, *Life’s Journey*. “My recent body of work is often characterized as realistic surrealism,” Michael explains. *Life’s Journey* is a blend of Michael’s new vision and distinct style with his original subject matter which creates these surreal environments combined with realistic and traditional painting techniques ultimately bringing his work to life through an ethereal theme.

Even though Michael discovered his unique style later in his fine arts career, the subject of Michael’s work has not changed (*nature*) which continues to be his constant source of inspiration. “I love to be able to create scenery that I can walk into and explore after it is completed – not unlike the favorite Road Runner cartoons that I grew up with,” Michael explains. “I am continually amazed by what God has created for us and I intend to use the imagination and talent He has given me to convey a world that resembles what was originally intended with my developed style and technique that I call *the twist*.”

In 2001, an important family decision to be geographically close to his eldest son drew him to the charming, historical town of Perrysburg, Ohio at the base of the Great Lakes where he currently resides. Michael immediately established a working relationship with The Toledo Museum of Art, The Arts Commission of Greater Toledo and The Toledo Zoological Gardens to become involved in the local area arts community.

After about 18 years of creating animated art, Michael returned to painting full time in 2002. Michael and his wife started an art studio in Ohio, now called ThreeTrees Studio, LLC, to focus on expanding his *Life’s Journey* series and exhibiting in art galleries. Since moving to Perrysburg, he has exhibited his oil paintings at The Toledo Museum of Art in The Museum Store Collectors Corner as well as art galleries in Ohio, Michigan and Hawaii. He also produced exclusive oil paintings commissioned by corporations such as Walgreens and Owens Corning.

At the same time, Michael painted murals in his unique style for companies such as Lifeformations, The Toledo Zoological Gardens, Harms Flooring Center, Villa Interiors, West Wind Homes, Cedar Creek Church and more. Michael was hired by Villa Interiors and West Wind Homes to paint murals in a new home on tour for the *Parade of Homes*, where he also exhibited his oil paintings, winning the *People’s Choice Award* for best decorated home. Michael was featured in Toledo Magazine by The Toledo Blade in the article *Once Upon a Wall* in 2003.

In 2004, Michael adapted his landscapes to large scale murals for Lifeformations, Inc. He also painted murals for a theme park and sculptures for museums. He traveled to Israel for nearly a month to paint 150 feet x 20 feet murals at King’s City theme park in Eilat, Israel near the Red Sea. “The size, scope and depth of composition in the murals made me feel as if I could



“Fall” (above) by Michael Provenza
24” x 30” (oil) ©2011 Michael
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Michael Provenza captures the brilliance of simplicity of the countryside and the ocean. His scenery is remarkable for its suggestion of distances and aliveness. “My passion has always been to paint scenery that will bring viewers into my paintings and become engaged with the diverse qualities of nature – *with a twist*,” the artist says.

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walk right into the scenery which further developed my dimensional painting abilities,” the artist says.

In 2006, Michael was accepted into his first art gallery in Hawaii, on the island of Maui, where he sold original oil paintings and began creating and selling limited edition giclee prints of his work. He exhibited his traditional work as well as introduced his *Life’s Journey* series. The excitement and feedback that he received from his followers, viewers and art collectors encouraged him to continue building upon *Life’s Journey*.

Pieces from Michael’s *Life’s Journey* series have been published every year in Studio Visit magazine since 2007. Studio Visit is a series of juried artists books distributed to more than 2000 galleries and museums.

Michael’s work was also seen on television. He was honored to participate in painting a mural for the 2009 Extreme Makeover: Home Edition in Toledo, Ohio in the little boy’s train room. “It was great to be able to help people in need with the abilities I was given, especially in my local community,” explains Michael.

Michael’s passion is to create oil paintings to share his creations and the feeling of joy. “My motivation and inspiration today is that I am wired to paint and have been given the talent to do so. What better way to glorify God by painting through the very gift He has given me,” explains Michael. “I have been told by clients and collectors that my work is beautiful and vibrant and feels as if they can walk right into my paintings – they want to *be* there. This is a statement that is repeated by many viewers of my work.”

Michael Provenza has a totally original perception of landscape and seascape. He successfully merges a realistic and dimensional quality with a surreal and magical environment in a distinctive style: a style which is at once different, primitive, disciplined, joyful and ethereal. He captures the brilliance of simplicity of the countryside and the ocean. His scenery is remarkable for its suggestion of distances and aliveness. “My passion has always been to paint scenery that will bring viewers into my paintings and become engaged with the diverse qualities of nature – *with a twist*,” the artist says.

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Artist and Partner
ThreeTrees Studio, LLC
419.704.4870
mjprovenza@threetreesstudio.com

Provenza’s Gallery and Studio

www.MichaelProvenza.com
www.ThreeTreesStudio.com
