



ROBERT NEFFSON

# Lively cityscapes



Robert Neffson bases his almost photographic paintings on what it feels like to walk and live in the great cities of Europe and the United States. In his search for scenes, the Manhattan-based artist spends weeks choosing from thousands of photos—searching for a cityscape that is “full of life and inherently vital”—and revisits his chosen location more than once.

“Once I decide on a site, I try to imagine how it will look as a painting and hold it in my mind,” Neffson explains. “I draw and take many photos on the first visit and get a sense of the possibilities. I repeatedly go back to look, draw and photograph; often over different seasons, weather conditions and times of day. I try to get the feeling of looking at reality, not the photos, though perhaps today the most interesting visions combine both.”

Neffson’s second solo exhibition at Bernarducci.Meisel.Gallery, which runs April 7 through 30, features works such as *NYC Apple*, in which the

1

1  
*Metropolitan Museum*, oil on linen, 56 x 79"

2  
*Columbus*, oil on linen, 52 x 86"

3  
*NYC Apple*, oil on linen, 56 x 86"

4  
*Grand Central Window*, oil on linen, 62 x 98"

5  
*Venice*, oil on linen, 52 x 74"



2





3



4



5

flagship New York City Apple Store is the architectural focus of a bustling cross section of Midtown Manhattan. Looking south at the intersection of Fifth Avenue and 59<sup>th</sup> Street, the painting captures everyday pedestrians and reflections of light off nearby buildings.

NYC Apple “is a culmination of various qualities which I wanted to capture in a painting. It is something about the play of light and shadows and the choreography of the people, cars, buildings and clouds. I like how it is a collaboration of past, present and future,” says Neffson.

Neffson, who worked on the painting

exclusively for months, says his sites must evoke for him an emotional and intellectual response.

“They become physical metaphors for me,” he explains. “Such emotions may be related to past experiences or represent future aspirations, but need to be present throughout the creation of these images in order to fulfill their mission.”

Once the source photos are taken, Neffson reviews each photo in detail and begins drawing. The details are so miniscule that it can take weeks. “I try to construct the image almost like making a

building, from the inside out,” he remarks. The actual creation of the image requires several steps, which may include charcoal sketching, fine pencil renderings and the final application of oil marks to canvas. Each painting takes about three to four months to complete. States Neffson, “Each individual piece of my work—either here in this exhibition or elsewhere—represents a vision which I felt compelled to present at a particular time and circumstances. In other words, each of my paintings stands on its own regarding significance or importance—there are no favorites.” ●