

The art collection of Thomas Diego Armonia is instantly recognisable and fast growing in popularity with art collectors and novices alike. *MillionaireAsia's* Joann Chia meets the artist with a taste for opulent beauties, classic oil painting and flakes of gold that glitters.

For Art That Shimmers



Above: Ritratto-dama I

For Thomas Diego Armonia, jewellery and art seems to be the winning combination. His figurative art pieces of black and white oil

paintings embellished with gold is for men, a seductively alluring visual feast; while for women, it is a tease of the innate femininity and glamour.

Beginnings Of An Artist

Born in the old city of Genoa, Italy, Armonia grew up studying fashion design and subsequently started specialising in art in Venice. The city of light, he recalled, offered many opportunities to live “inside of history”, given the city’s many unique and famous ateliers. At that time, he was attracted by the glass works of Murano to which he dedicated his first art exhibit to in 1993. However, what truly catapulted him as an international artist was when his travels opened his horizons to the world. “Through my travels, I understood the richness of the humankind and devoted myself to figurative art,” he continues, “When I go back to my atelier, I let time sediment emotions and melt in my mind. What marks my inspiration is the panorama, architecture, and above all, the people.”

Armonia spent several years in the research of what beauty is; mixing emotions and science through personal involvements with the subjects he painted. Many of his collections were named *Carnet de voyage*, which means trip in French, transferring the emotions he felt when he explored a country into works of art that are very cosmopolitan and intercultural. He adds that living in Paris makes the feeling of a “global human flow” even stronger.

The artist also reflects his heritage in his art by trying to fashion classic art from Italy through a personal reinterpretation. The opulent women he portrays following the same beauty criteria of Michelangelo and Tiepolo and their languid eyes are the same as that of Veronese and Titian.

The Collection

This year, artists celebrate the 500th anniversary of the major Italian Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio. As an artist himself, Armonia says, he feels obliged to pay homage to the magnificent and luxurious splendour of the artistic current. The painting called “The Eight Wonder of the World: the Woman”, is the masterpiece of Armonia’s Renaissance collection.



Thomas Diego Armonia

Photo Credit: Cipriani

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“I am convinced that today we live in a new renaissance time. During the Renaissance, the wealth generated by trade and international commerce had given the opportunity for artists to create and realise eternal and sublime artworks. Now, within Asia, China in particular, there is a rediscovery of its power and richness both in culture and business.”

The intentional use of only black and white oil colours mixed with gold leaf has become a trademark of Armonia’s works. “Using oil colours bring me back to classic techniques and it is also an arrogance of expecting my works to last at least 500 years,” he quips. The use of gold pays tribute to a material, which Armonia describes, “seduced the whole humankind since thousands of years ago”.

Armonia explains that the use of oil colours and application of gold foils are extremely long and tedious processes, usually taking several months to complete depending on the quantity of materials used. As a general estimation, Armonia says that for a masterpiece which takes one year to complete, he would have used 25sqm of oil on canvas and over 1000 gold leaf.

Presently, the 37-year-old artist is also working on including real mother of pearls and diamonds directly in his art pieces.

Taking The World By Storm

Armonia’s art pieces are priced from S\$10,000 onwards and fast gaining in international recognition. “I like the heterogeneity and wide appreciation of my work. Art is universal and escapes boundaries, this is the magic of the emotions and luckily, all humankind feels the same,” says Armonia.

In the next few months, he will continue to leave his mark with personal exhibitions from Bruxelles, Düsseldorf, Verona, Paris, Hamburg, Bologna, to Shanghai and Beijing. However, with so much of accomplishment under his belt, this Parisian-based artist with dreams beyond the canvas is still unsatisfied. He concludes, “I am waiting for my exhibition at the Louvre!” ■

Thomas Diego Armonia’s debut exhibition was held at the *Singapore International Jewellery Fair 2008*. For more information of his art collection, please visit odetoart.com