



JAMES VERBICKY with Pressure IV

A proud recipient of the rarely issued 'Extraordinary Ability (US) Green Card' since March 2008, thirty-five year-old Verbicky has lived and worked on his highly praised creations in Laguna Beach, California, for the last six years.

But in the early years of the last decade, he was one of the youngest artists-in-residence at The Old School House Arts Centre (TOSH) on Fern Road West in Qualicum Beach. This station was a natural progression in a blossoming career built on a seemingly inborn talent. The signs were there very early that Verbicky was blessed in the field of visual arts, his schoolteachers being quick to encourage him in this direction.

"In my early school days I always seemed to form a stronger kinship with my art teachers," Verbicky told me recently.

"Most kids considered the art portion of school to be a perfect time to mess around, but I somehow interested the teachers enough to go so far as to buy me art books in order to expose me more to art and the work of successful artists."

"One of my earliest memories of childhood is searching my parent's house for blank paper," he continued, digging deeper.

"I remember using so much paper to draw on that my mother had to ask where it all went! I was probably only about five. She ended up buying me a desk with a giant built-in spool of blank paper, to keep me occupied for a while!"

Although now a permanent US resident, Edmonton-born Verbicky still retains strong ties with this area, through family, and in the form of a converted garage studio in Qualicum Beach, where he works

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## NEXT STOP – THE LOUVRE

BY DAVID MORRISON

Hailing from England, I'm fortunate enough to have made many trips to the incredible city of Paris. Three of my jaunts were aimed solely at spending time gawping at the dazzling wonders on display in the Louvre. Akin to visiting, for example, New York City – or indeed, Paris itself – it's always a truly surreal experience, much of the collection so familiar, so iconic, that it's like wandering around a movie set.

Imagine, then, how it must feel for artists to gaze upon their own work within its hallowed halls? This is the situation in which Canadian abstract expressionist

painter James Verbicky finds himself this month. Verbicky and eleven other American-based talents have been selected by Société National des Beaux-Arts to showcase their work in the Carrousel de Louvre, a distinction prompting him in a recent interview to emote:

"I can't describe what an honour it is to be selected to show at the Louvre. To say it will be a milestone in my career would be an understatement. To have my work even in the same building as the most famous and talented artists in the history of the world is an honour beyond comprehension!"

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in preparation for Canadian shows. In this respect, the most recent exhibition of Verbicky's work shown locally was an ongoing series of paintings entitled "Continuum", hosted by Vancouver's Elliott Louis Gallery Inc. in October. As with any exposure of his work, it garnered great acclaim.

On the horizon for Verbicky is a remarkable physical, mental and creative discipline that on paper seems about as challenging as can be imagined. Named "A Day in the Life: The Guggenheim Project 2010", it echoes American neo-folk musician Paley's 2007-08 "Song Diary", a self-designed songwriting odyssey that saw him write, record and post on his website a new song every day for a whole year - while on tour! Verbicky will be creating a new painting on each day of 2010, a daunting process I thought he could possibly be feeling anxious about. Quite the contrary, it seems:

"The essence of the project is its fast-paced, discipline-requiring nature," he explained.

"I am not worried, but rather excited. I developed the idea for this very reason. It will be stressful, but I seem to thrive on pressure."

In the meantime, he has spectacular Paris to absorb and the certain acclaim of new European admirers to bask in. He fully intends making the most of his first trip to 'The City of Light' especially in exploring the globally revered gallery-museum displaying his own work for the first time, but surely not the last.

I'm particularly envious, as he will see the major Picasso-Delacroix exhibit currently showing: the latter's epic, passionate canvasses are among my favourite works of the Romantic period. So, if I may venture, might you need anyone to carry your suitcase, James? ~

For more information:  
[www.jamesverbicky.com](http://www.jamesverbicky.com)  
[www.louvre.fr](http://www.louvre.fr)  
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