

AMERICAN ARTIST

Top 50

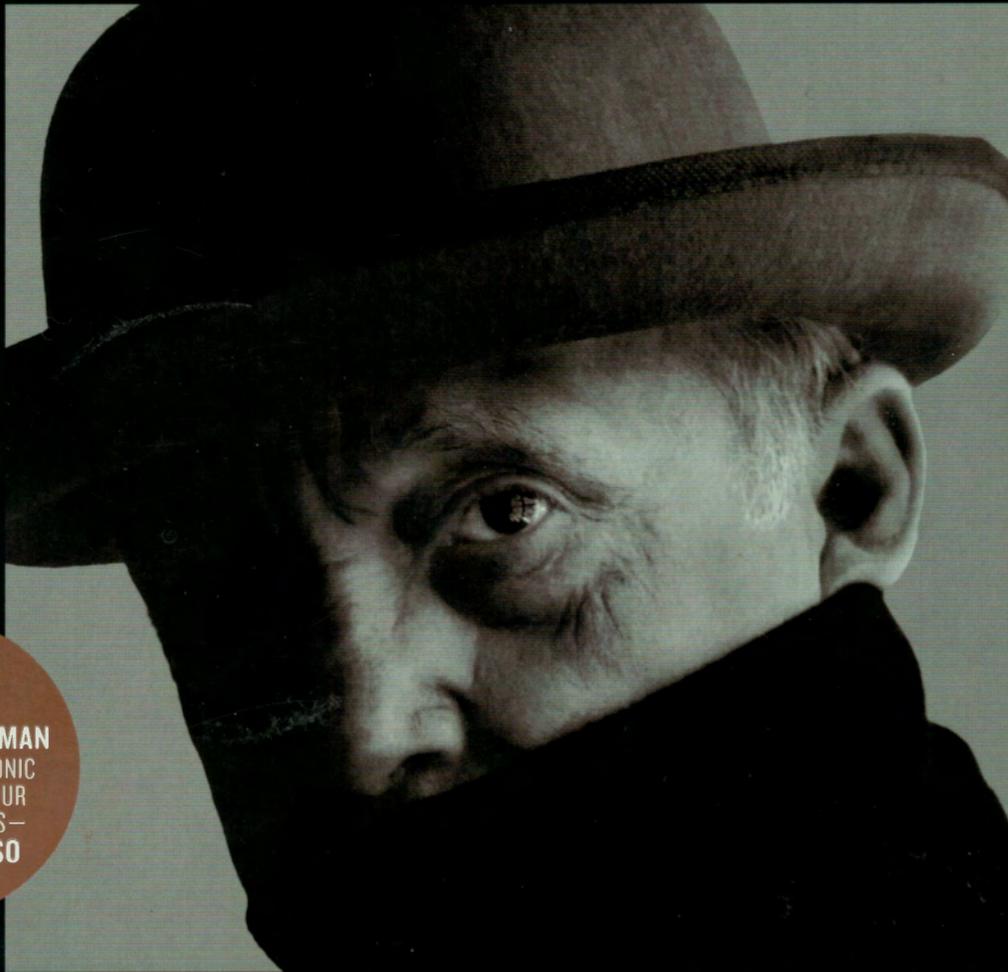
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TOMORROW

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25

ARTISTS OF
TOMORROW

What makes an artist stand out as someone of great promise in a crowd of worldwide practitioners? Certainly we know that art is subjective and that it can't just be about an individual's style, because styles resonate with some and not with others. But there should be an overarching set of criteria that help better define and establish what makes an artist worthy of watching. For this category, we selected painters based on their skill level, subject matter, motivation, understanding, and expression. Another important factor was the internal makeup of each artist: his or her temperament, level of intelligent thought, and that all-important desire to keep searching and reaching for the next level.

Some of the names on the next several pages are immediately recognizable—artists who are represented by blue-chip galleries, regularly featured in magazines, and respected names among their contemporaries. Others are relatively obscure—off the radar but still making a splash, albeit underground, because of their awe-inspiring talent and abilities. In an issue of this nature we have the advantage of seeing how these artists stack up in the context of what came before them. Do any of them have what it takes to be remembered among the greats? Will they run the full race and see their art through to the end? Only time will tell.

BRAD KUNKLE

Brad Kunkle's paintings are statements on beauty. Using gold and silver leaf, he creates sumptuous scenes populated by beautiful and mysterious women. He paints with a largely monochromatic palette, which heightens the sense of otherworldliness in his imagery and creates a stunning contrast between the figures and background. Judging by the success the artist has met in recent years, it seems that his work resonates with viewers as well. He has been featured in numerous publications, and he recently mounted his second solo exhibition at Arcadia Fine Arts, in New York City. In January 2013, his paintings will be shown in the LA Art Show, at the Los Angeles Convention Center, also in association with Arcadia.

Kunkle's work can serve as a tour, of sorts, through many avenues of art history. His use of gold leaf brings to mind the paintings of the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance. His monochromatic figures recall grisaille preparations of the 17th- and 18th-century masters. His nymphlike figures in wooded settings could be lifted from paintings of the Pre-Raphaelite and Aesthetic

The Proposition
2008, oil and gold and silver leaf on linen, 52 x 31. Private collection.



painters of the 19th century. And the list goes on—the Austrian secessionists, art deco photography, film noir, and fantasy illustration all seem to play a part in Kunkle's work.

But these fantastic scenes are also highly personal. In a 2010 interview with *Poets and Artists*, Kunkle listed many inspirations, including “dreams, nightmares, the amazing people who

model for me, and nature—mostly the forests of Pennsylvania where I grew up.” This intimate knowledge of people and setting comes through in Kunkle's finished pieces, making them much more than exercises in surface glamour. —A.R.W.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON KUNKLE, VISIT WWW.BRADKUNKLE.COM.