
Cultural Cocktail Hour



April 25, 2009

Review:

Immortality through Art: Christopher Slatoff & “Fr. Electrico” by Leticia Marie Sanchez

Live Forever

Mr. Electrico to Ray Bradbury

*Let baser things devise
To die in dust, but you shall live by fame:
My verse your virtues rare shall eternize,
And in the heavens write your glorious name*
Edmund Spenser, Sonnet 75

*Nor shall Death brag thou wander’st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.*
William Shakespeare, Sonnet 18



The Pieta Composition of "Fr. Electrico"

Nestled in the hillside of Pasadena, among its beautiful views, which the Spanish dubbed *Linda Vistas*, exists a gem, **American Legacy Fine Arts**. Some of the artists represented at this gallery include **Peter Adams, Béla Bácsi, Jeremy Lipking, Jove Wang** and **Alexey Steele**. American Legacy Fine Arts weds American contemporary art with classical standards. Sculptor **Christopher Slatoff**, for instance, epitomizes the synthesis between classical technique and modern narrative. A piece that incarnates this fusion is *Fr. Electrico*, a complex and stirring sculpture that captures a life-changing moment in the young life of writer **Ray Bradbury**.

The sculpture's form, a clear allusion to Michelangelo's *Pieta*, firmly anchors it in history, while its innovative subject matter, an imagination set ablaze, give it wings to soar into the future. Just



The intriguing back of "Fr. Electrico" – inspired by Bradbury's "The Illustrated Man."

like the Virgin Mary clasps her son in a gentle embrace, Mr. Bradbury's father tenderly cradles his twelve-year old son on the walk home from a long day at two different circuses. The father's composition has a two-fold meaning: the front view represents Bradbury's literal father, while the back view reveals a figurative father, Father Electrico. At the circus, the young Bradbury felt a shock in the form of a mildly charged metal wand that Mr. Electrico, a carnival magician, placed on his forehead, causing the boy's hair to stand on end. During this life-changing moment, Mr. Electrico exclaimed, "Live forever." The very next day Ray Bradbury began writing and has never stopped. The symbols on the back of Father Electrico: astronauts, firemen and lions, represent images from Ray Bradbury's writing, images which have touched millions of readers around the world.

Art functions as a kaleidoscope, a constantly shifting lens through which we can alternatively glimpse the past and the future. Whether the life of Christ, the masterpieces of

Michelangelo, or the futuristic dimension of *Fahrenheit 451*, art allows us to explore life's mysteries. Art allows its creators to live in an eternal realm. The connections between *Fr. Electrico* and Michelangelo's *Pieta* go deeper than formal similarities. Like Christ, Ray Bradbury will achieve immortality. Like Edmund Spenser and William Shakespeare, Mr. Bradbury, through the written word, will live forever. The work of writers, sculptors, painters, and composers live on through generations and, sometimes, civilizations.

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, so long lives Art, which gives eternal life to the artists, and nourishment to all of us who have been touched by its grace.

***Fr. Electrico*, by Christopher Slatoff** is currently on view at:

American Legacy Fine Arts, LLC

949 Linda Vista Avenue. Pasadena, CA. 91103. (626) 577.7733

Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Friday by Appointment; Saturday: 11 a.m- 5 p.m

<http://www.americanlegacyfinearts.com/>