

# Let's Talk Art! *9th Edition*



**Let's Talk Art!** is New Wave's interactive e-newsletter that provides interviews with professional artists from around the world. We have some great past editions under '[Press](#)' at [newwaveart.com](http://newwaveart.com)... feel free to check them out!

In this edition we had the pleasure of interviewing west coast painter **Alexey Steele**, whose passion and talent for the fine arts is infectious. Enjoy the read!



Alexey Steele

**Location:** Los Angeles, CA (Carson Studio)

**Career:** Figure & Portrait Painting, Multi-Figure Composition, Drawing, Plein Air Painting

**Education:** Studio of father Leonid Steele, [Surikov Moscow State Art Institute](#)

## Product Corner

### GREY PAD™



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***Your painting style is described as 'Novorealism.' Can you take a moment to explain this style and what it means to you as a painter?***

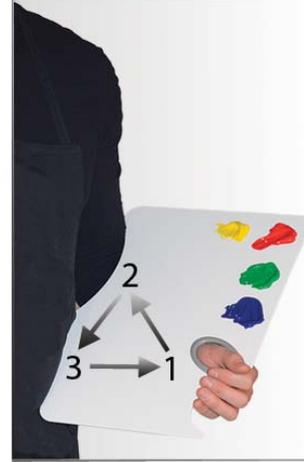
Novorealism as concept and practice is important to me on a number of levels.

On one hand I invented this new term out of years of frustration unable to answer a simple question about "what kind of ART do I do" as I felt all existing terms were inadequate and, mainly, each carried baggage I did not wish to share.

On another hand, we as practitioners have at some point an innate need for theory in terms of helping us understand what, why, and how we do what we do just to be able to constantly grow and take our work to the next level. Providing this real time feedback to currently unfolding artistic process is a societal duty of cultural institutions, like ART criticism, museum curatorial overviews, and academic research. The current art-establishment of waning down post-modernism utterly failed us in this duty, so we, the practitioners have to fill the theoretical void.

Understanding of our sensibility, driving motivations and their placement in the overall cultural progression are crucial in helping us develop our most current visual linguistics on a very deeply intuitive level. Thinking about Novorealism is my form of mental contemplation that allows me personally to get a better sense of what is it that I want to do right now, why do I want to do it and how can I technically express it better.

At the same time just as much as being a deeply personal and intimate act, essentially being a special form of existence, ART is also part of a collective consciousness and a product of a collective search. We are just so



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fortunate a generation to see our ART form on a major historic surge and having a phenomenal group of remarkable artists sharing basic visual philosophies while interpreting them in a wide range of ways beyond any specific “look”. This is what makes us a movement in a truest sense of a word. We are a factually existing movement within a larger world of “contemporary”, meaning “currently occurring” ART. Any attempt to deny it, dismiss it, ignore it or marginalize it is flying in a face of reason and in a face of reality on the ground.

The personal - collective nature of the artistic process manifests historically in the fact that like-minded artists are hanging out together and always did so as the adequate exchange of thoughts and ideas is crucial for their internal development. I am very fortunate to deeply share the views on ART making with my brothers-in-ART Jeremy Lipking and Tony Pro and as a collective exercise of self-examination NOVOREALISM became our joined project with such great primarily figurative artists and friends as Scott Burdick, Michael Klein, Juliette Aristides, Christopher Pugliese closely sharing our views.

The most exciting part of NOVOREALISM is that it's a project-in-a-making designed to help us develop our work, move it forward and itself developing with it. It is a very practical theory. As such, it is a first theoretical evaluation of the first genuine ART movement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that comes after post-modernism.

Among its basic principles:

NOVOREALISM advocates “Human Perceptualism” as a highly developed human ability to see and judge visual information through a complex system of live training advanced and refined through centuries of classical visual tradition to our current level of perceptual development. In this regard it is opposite to photo-realism.

NOVOREALISM is a “Beauty-Centric” system affirming a

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concept of Beauty as an integral part of Evolutionary Aesthetics and a key building block in a “source code” of humanity and thus one of the defining characteristics of us as specie.

NOVOREALISM affirms, studies and celebrates The Sensual as essence of humanity and foundation for independent reason. It stands as a check and balance to societal attempt of controlling individual reason by attacking the sensual whether through restrictive or exploitative means. In that way NOVOREALISM views ART as a force of ultimate liberation of Individual.

NOVOREALISM stands on Genuine, Testimonial and Truthful Seriousness of The Beautiful as a source of Empathy, believing in its transformative power through invoking The Sublime. It views ART as a Force defending and defining Humanity itself. It directly challenges the establishment’s rejection of a Sublime in Beautiful and its imposition of a mandatory “official irony.”

NOVOREALISM stands in firm opposition to principles, philosophies, ethics, promoted priorities and social implications of post-modernism. In this regard NOVOREALISM sees itself as a social movement, opposing the official “bankers’ ideology.”

NOVOREALISM is marked by integration of Classical Concept of Form, Highly Developed Tonalities of Academic Tradition and Realist Engagement of Color.

NOVOREALISM considers ART through its ability to engage core aspects of Human Nature as having a unique Social Function capable of affecting the cultural priorities of society and facilitate their shifts away from glorification of corporate hyper-greed and consumerism.

NOVOREALISM as Art Form consciously sees itself as Humanistic Voice Of The Species in an increasingly techno-centric world.

More about it, of course, on [www.novorealism.com](http://www.novorealism.com). We are in a process of redoing the site with Tony and will put our entire recent load of content from last fall’s Weekend With

The Masters and TRAC12 presentations, so stay tuned.



The Dawn, 77" x 187", Oil on Canvas

***Do you continue to challenge yourself as a painter, and if so, how?***

Application of the Skill – if you have the ability to express, then what is it that you are expressing and why? Just to sell more “units” would not be the right answer. The important part in this is by contemplating and exercising the “application” you inevitably find what “skill” you need to gain. This is how I believe Intent and Content drive the Form.

***Do you have a preferred color palette regardless of subject matter?***

My palette is somewhat a natural terrain, it changes in the type of paint I use, like long or short, their arrangement on palette, expanding or limiting, which colors do I find exciting. In whatever its current state might be, it goes through all subjects I am working on now, from studio studies and large-scale works to plein air paintings.

Painting plein air, by the way, is hugely important to my method as this is what I believe anchors my allegorical and metaphorical imagery within realist perception, making seeing them “experiential.” Plein air experience was a crucial aspect of “The Dawn” (above painting) for example. This is why quite naturally the same color palette followed me in both my huge studio rig and my mobile setup.

As far as what's on my palette now - I switched my paints to [Michael Hardings](#) pretty much entirely as they give me everything I am looking for currently with their extraordinary range and versatility and "The Dawn" was to a large degree my experimentation with Michael Hardings.



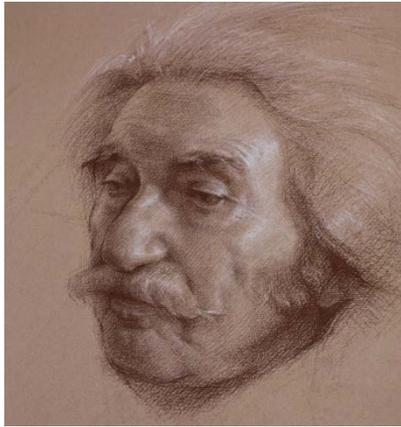
Music of the Storm, 36" x 60", Oil on Canvas

***Do you have a specific technique that has helped take your paintings to the "next level?"***

Alternate drawing with painting. Everything you learn in the process of painting takes you to the next level of understanding drawing, and everything you learn on that new stage of drawing can be taken back into painting.

***Do you find most painters struggling with any one specific problem? If so, what is it and what is your advice to overcome it?***

If there is one very underrepresented concept it is that I believe in a complete unity and of an inherent co-dependency of Form, Tone and Color as none of them really can exist without another. The widespread misconception that separates them into mentally isolated compartments leads to lots of commonly seen mistakes as well as unnecessary limitations in final works. The way to overcome it?... Draw, Paint, Think.



My Father Leonid Steele

***Do you have any exciting new projects or upcoming shows?***

Just completed "The Music Of The Storm" (above painting) for the [California Art Club](#) 102nd Annual Gold Medal Juried Exhibition at the [Fisher Museum of Art at USC](#), working on my second installment of a "Torn Beauty" drawing series at the [American Legacy Fine Arts](#) this fall and getting very much ready for a next big canvas, which is the sole purpose for me doing what I do.

***If someone where interested in taking classes with you where could they learn more?***

It's very easy, just subscribe to my list on [www.alexeysteele.com](http://www.alexeysteele.com) to get info on my next set of classes.



Daughter of a Shoeshiner, 40" x 54", Oil on Canvas

***We have to ask... what is your New Wave Palette of choice?***

You must ask as you guys came up with an absolutely fantastic palette. I love people who make things that I love using. You help me in my work. I think you came up with the best hand palette ever, definitely the best one I have held in my hands.

I always loved using hand palettes, but had to abandon them for a stationary one because they were all so bulky, heavy, and inefficient.

There is a substantial advantage to a hand palette as it lets you see the paints closer and allows you to always have them at a perfect angle to the light no matter which part of the canvas you are working on. I always wanted to make a perfectly balanced hand palette with efficient shape and thumb hole placement... never had time for it, but always hoped someone would do it one day. You guys certainly did it. Thank you for that.

I use your Expressionist in both sizes, [two big ones](#) and [one small](#). Absolutely love'em and their feel in my hand. Sometimes in the morning even before getting to an easel I just walk around the studio with an empty palette in hand just to get into a feel.

They need to be cleaned right away though to up keep the finish that I love so much and I am not particularly good at cleaning at 3am when I often stop painting, so I experiment with some good organic cleaners, like [Bristle Magic](#) which is designed for brushes, but works for my palette too.

Actually, I appreciate enormously the effort and the dedication of small artisan-makers who concentrate on best quality imaginable and not on a volume as so many big corporate-minded companies do, sometimes to their own

demise. Small “quality makers” are forcing big producers to keep up and punish them when they abandon their core customers in periodic bouts of corporate greed. This is why I would support and encourage the great, innovative and committed makers of great art materials in any way I can. Just keep doing what you do!



**-Alexey Steele**

[www.alexysteele.com](http://www.alexysteele.com)