

Antony Zito ~ Biography

The **New York Post** has called Zito's portrait paintings "*sensual*" and his renderings of people on recycled materials other than canvas have prompted **The Village Voice** to refer to him as "*a master of the found object*". A dedicated resident of **New York City's Lower East Side**, he is credited with founding the **Every Last Sunday Art Loop**, the first walking tour of its kind that features up to 30 independent art studios and galleries each month. His paintings have been seen in **The Chelsea Hotel, Milk Studios, Abrons Art Center, The National Arts Club, The American Museum of Natural History, P.S. 122, Chelsea Market Arts Collective, Angel Orensanz Foundation and Anthology Film Archives**, to name a few in New York City as well as **La Luz de Jesus Gallery** in Los Angeles, **The Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah**, and museums and galleries in **France, Austria, London and Tokyo**. In May 2004, Zito's portrait of **Lee Marvin** was featured along side **The White Stripes** in the **United Artists** film, "*Coffee and Cigarettes*", directed by **Jim Jarmusch**, and he contributed 2 pieces to the director's most recent movie, "*Broken Flowers*". His tribute to the **Mona Lisa** on a beat-up refrigerator door was shown at **Deitch Projects** in Soho and featured in the Fall Arts Issue of **BlackBook** magazine in 2004. His illustrations have been published in **The New York Press** and public murals by Zito include the exterior walls of the reknowned **Lombardi's Pizza and Spring Lounge in Little Italy**. His work has been featured in **Elle Decor** magazine and after a recent trip through **Spain and Italy**, where several of his new pieces were collected, an extensive interview with the artist was published in the magazine, **Ortodoncia**, out of **Barcelona**. Zito has begun writing and designing on an autobiographical book of his portraits slated for publication in 2009 and the artist is the subject of an upcoming documentary about his life and work.

The second son of artists **John and Rosemary Zito**, **Antony Zito** was born on Mayday, 1969. He grew up on a small self-sufficient farm in the woods of **East Granby, Connecticut** where he was schooled by his parents from an early age in the pages of art history and in the museums of the Northeast U.S. As a young man his interest in the Surrealists led him to develop a taste for diverse materials - "artifacts of recent history" - which led him to use found objects as his canvases. He graduated from the **University of Massachusetts** with a BFA in Painting in 1991 and moved to New York City on Halloween Night 1992. One morning in 1996, Zito awoke to find a powerful self-portrait on a broken mirror that he had painted the night before. He continued collecting more found objects and coercing his friends into sitting for him, thus beginning his lengthy series of portraits painted on found objects which he has been creating ever since.

The fruit of a decade long dream, **Zito Studio Gallery** was opened on **Ludlow Street** in January 2002, in the wake of the **Twin Towers** bombing, and was immediately noted by **Time Out New York** and **The New York Times** as being at the forefront of a ground-breaking new gallery scene on the Lower East Side. As indicated by the name, the exhibition space also acted as a public studio for the artist, who could often be found working late into the night on his portrait paintings. In Fall 2006 the gallery was closed, forced out by the massive real estate development and gentrification of the neighborhood. As word hit the streets, via conversation, webzines, blogs and **The Villager** and **Metro** newspapers, the residents of this art-based community came out by the hundreds to express their condolences at the gallery. They were surprized to find Zito smiling and packing his things excited to move on to his next venture. The closing party at ZSG was a massive Masquerade ball which stopped traffic in the area and went on into the wee hours of the morning - the whole neighborhood came out to mourn its loss and celebrate the end of an era. The Villager newspaper dubbed the event "**The Death of Bohemia.**"

The summer of 2007 brought in Zito's **Portrait Painting Marathon**, an event in which the artist stayed up round the clock painting over 100 watercolor portraits in a 40-hour stretch. Later that year, Zito mounted a show of work by his late father, **John T. Zito Jr.**, at **The Slater Memorial Museum in Norwich, Connecticut**. Six large rooms showcased a fraction of the paintings, sculpture and drawings that John left in the hands of his son. Included in the show were wood and stone carvings, plaster reliefs, ceramic and bronze casts, drawings, scores of large oil paintings and photographs of his life as well as work by Antony. Zito plans to write and design a book of his father's life and work, and to continue showing these pieces and others over the span of his own career.

In the beginning of 2008, Zito's work travelled to museums and galleries in **London and France**. His 2008 projects included an exhibition at **The Chelsea Hotel** and the organization of **The Governors Island Art Fair** with his group, **The 4heads Collective**, as well as exhibiting in **The Pool Art Fair, Miami**.

"Zito is one of my very favorite New York artists, partly because he thinks of himself as an artisan (he likes to make paintings on commission) and partly because he's just a really fine and inventive painter. I have two of his paintings, one is a portrait of Lee Marvin (commissioned for my film COFFEE AND CIGARETTES) and one of the Ethiopian master musician Mulatu Astatke (commissioned for my film BROKEN FLOWERS). I value them greatly. I hope for a few more in the future. Hats off to Zito!"

--Jim Jarmusch, Director

"Zito can capture your essence by painting on a found object for 20 minutes more effectively than more formal and pretentious artists can do by fussing on a canvas for weeks. A genius!"

--Michael Musto, Village Voice

"Zito is a quick-draw artist of astounding talent. I sat down for just a second and when I stood up there was a portrait of me. His work sells with equal speed."

--Stephen Saban, the WOW Report

"Antony Zito took an old flowered cabinet door and transformed it into a cool, realistic portrait of myself that I felt compelled to buy on the spot. (I don't even like looking at myself either) Did I mention he did it in about 7 minutes? Because there is no way I could sit any longer. The best quick portrait painter in the business, with an amazing artistic flair. This guy is amazing."

--Patrick McMullan, NYC Celebrity Photographer