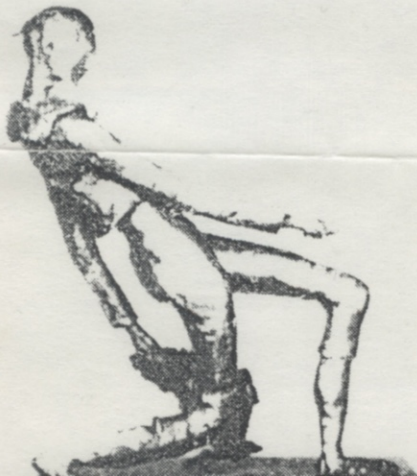


Vincent Capraro



Artist Vincent Capraro

Photo by MARIA ELENA TORCH



- Humanist Painte

by Maria Elena Torch

Few modern painters appreciate painters of the Renaissance, mainly because modern painters do not understand the techniques and the intensity by which the old masters worked. Also, most modern painters never seriously learned to draw. Abstractionists, Pop and Op artists are not interested in the human form.

One painter who can really draw and takes the human form seriously is Vincent Capraro. I met him years ago in Capri when he was a young man in search of inspiration. He worked then in the Abstractionist School, experimenting with color and shapes. However, he was not happy with what he did, because he had truly learned to draw early in life and abstraction seemed like child's play to him.

Capraro is an American of Italian ancestry. He calls himself a humanist, of which I can readily concur; knows people and knows how to paint them. His period of play is over and he has returned to the style he knows best: the style of the old masters. One can see in his work the appreciation of the painter, Goya.

I asked him what he felt about Picasso and if he was ever inspired by him.

"Picasso doesn't turn me on," he began, "He's a powerful personality, he was able to draw once, but he is not the caliber of Daumer or Leonardo; he's not in that league at all. He's had tremendous public relations and the people surrounding him have made him into a legend. Picasso realizes the power of the press and image making. It's presumptuous on my part, perhaps, but I think his work leaves a lot to be desired.

"He could have been a great artist if his earlier work, which he did when he was very young even before his blue period — this earlier work was in the right direction. But today he's an artistic acrobat, jumping from one period to the next. He could have been an all-time great I'm sure few museum men will agree with me. It's a tragedy of our century, but I don't think he's ever reached his full potential."

"Even Picasso admits in interviews that he is nothing compared to the Old Masters."

The Old Masters come up quite often in Vincent Capraro's conversation. His studio is lined with books of all their works. He paints from live models, and if none are available, he hires the villagers nearby, who seem delighted to be a part of his art. A skeleton he confiscated from a medical student bounces on a wire, and might scare most people; Capraro draws from it, learning each bone and how they connect to the anatomy.

His knowledge of art is rich, his stories witty and humorous about the painters he admires:

"I was at the Norton Gallery in Palm Beach, and it is certainly interesting, more so than any other museum in Florida. Diaz, a fine painter, is represented there. He was in the style of the Barbizon School."

One night ... Capraro in the work of Diaz

He spends time away from painting only to walk and meditate along the Hudson River, which flows swiftly below his white clapboard house. A nearby village commissioned him to design a statue, for the village square, of a village fireman who was a local hero. It is a powerful figure, soon to be cast in bronze. His sculpture is as powerful as his paintings. Unfortunately, because his work will appear at a one-man show in New York this Fall, we could not photograph them for this article.

Vincent Capraro will be in Florida this winter, arranging for a show on Worth Avenue. For many of us who frequent the Galleries, it will be a pleasure to see his fine work in our art conscious community.

