

Art...on the Screen

Art and design have gone Hollywood. Here's a look at the faces bringing you fine art and design on television, the big screen, and more By Victoria Charters

GEORGE GALLO & CHRIS BOARDMAN

FILMMAKERS ON A MISSION

Painter and Hollywood filmmaker George Gallo (*Midnight Run*, *Wise Guys*) has a new film, and it's a personal one. It's so personal, in fact, that he and co-producer Jimmy Evangelatos each took out second mortgages on their houses to finance. The film is *Local Color*, the story of a talented but troubled eighteen-year-old art student (Trevor Morgan) who befriends a disillusioned alcoholic old painter (Armin Mueller-Stahl). The two form a bond, which develops into a perspective-changing relationship as they learn to see the world through each other's eyes.

Local Color is based on real-life experience. "I wanted to write about the struggle that representational artists go through," Gallo reveals. "They fell out of favor in the 1920s and 1930s, and America basically turned its back on some very talented artists and a very vibrant mode of expression. In 1974, when I was eighteen and I wanted to paint in this more traditional manner; very few of the instructors that I came across wanted to teach that, so I studied privately with several artists."

For Gallo, the differences between painting and filmmaking are apparent. "Painting is so immediate, you can move at the speed of thought. When you're painting outdoors, within a few seconds of having an idea you can have it in front of you on a canvas for better or for worse, but if



(Left): George Gallo. (Opposite): *Local Color*'s theatrical poster. Images courtesy of George Gallo and Chris Boardman.

you have an idea for a movie it can take three years to see it realized—if you're lucky."

Nevertheless, Gallo's experience making *Local Color* was pure. "I'm incredibly proud of the movie," he says. "Audiences have gone crazy for it. People come up to me and say they want to start painting again, or kids come up to me and say, 'I have this dream, I want to chase it, but I'm scared!'"

Gallo looked to his friend Chris Boardman (*Payback*, *The Color Purple*), a talented composer/musician, for the original score for *Local Color*. Boardman describes his work as an artist as a solo journey, a restless hunt for "the next one," as he strives to create "music in a movie that enhances and glues together the story, so it becomes a story element itself."

As artists on a mission, Gallo and Boardman are devoted to connecting people with the good in the world around them. As Gallo details, "It's a wonderful tale of how important it is to follow your dreams. You have got to follow your gut because, if you do, you can't go wrong. Interestingly enough, that's how the movie was made."

Local Color was released in theatres November 7, 2008.

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CHARLES SEGARS

OVATION TV CEO

Charles Segars, CEO of Ovation TV, is no stranger to the nature of the creative process. After all, he is himself a successful Hollywood writer and executive producer of such box-office blockbusters as *National Treasure* and *National Treasure: Book of Secrets*. And it is his innate creativity that fuels his drive as the head of a major cable TV network. "We know that the arts are alive, well, and thriving around the world," he says. "The mission of our network is to bring that to the forefront in a 500-channel universe."

Segars's 24-hour Ovation TV is the only national television network dedicated to the arts and personal creativity. Built around a mission to inspire and connect, Ovation TV has forged a creative community accessible to amateurs and professionals alike. "The arts are the most powerful vehicle for genuine communication in the world. It has no borders, and we embrace this," asserts Segars.

Ovation's original content includes *American Revolutionaries*, an event that celebrates great Americans who revolutionized their particular art form: Frank Lloyd Wright in architecture; Elvis in music; Martin Scorsese in film, for example. The network also touts the design-centric *Everything Is Art*, which focuses on the intersection of art, design and commercialism.



"It's about how art surrounds us everyday—whether it's in movie posters, advertising, street art, or the artful design of everyday products," Segars says.

Segars is particularly excited about Ovation's fresh offerings. "Our first original programming series is *Art in the City*. It's a walking tour of all the best galleries and arty hangouts in six great cities: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, New Orleans, London and Paris," he reveals. "One of our biggest hits is *The Battle of the Nutcrackers*, where we take different versions of *The Nutcracker*, program them, and then ask our viewers

to vote online for the version they like the best.

"Our job is to get behind the scenes into the artists' process," says Segars. "That has been our mission, and we have seen one common thread—a need to make something, perform something, write something. It's very entertaining and inspires people to create themselves."

Dedicated to creating a community where the like-minded can find each other, Ovation TV has created "my art" on ovation.com, where people have uploaded thousands of pieces of art to share, show, and talk about. "Art inspires critical thinking, creative problem solving, communication, and teamwork," Segars says. "It's exciting to be in the middle of it, creating one destination to celebrate the arts in all of its forms."



(Top): Charles Segars. Courtesy of Ovation TV.

(Above Right): *The Battle of the Nutcrackers*. Photo by Alex Pacheco.

(Above): Still of Andy Warhol with Bob Dylan from *Andy Warhol's Factory People*, a world premiere documentary that aired Thanksgiving 2008 on Ovation TV. Courtesy of Ovation TV.

CHAD YOUNGBLOOD

FINE LIVING NETWORK GENERAL MANAGER

As general manager of the Fine Living Network, Chad Youngblood has a vision. “We really believe that lifestyle television is something that should be entertaining and engaging and informative in people’s lives,” he says. “We focus the channel on programming that helps people better themselves, their surroundings, or their world in a way that is highly entertaining and captures their imagination—whether it’s daytime or primetime.”

Fine Living Network’s programs are dedicated to inspiring and empowering people to live better, maximize their time and get the most out of their money. “We do great shows on relationships, weddings, interior design, cooking,” Youngblood enthuses. “We have some of America’s favorite lifestyle experts creating shows with us—Christopher Lowell, Martha Stewart, Emeril Lagasse. We’re on a quest to make FLN America’s favorite lifestyle network.” With a slate of 40 to 50 different titles on air, FLN is creating an impressive 600-800 hours of original programming per year.

Part of Youngblood’s talent as a network head lies in having his finger on the

pulse of the ever-changing creative landscape. As he puts it, “You have to be insanely curious about pop culture to even have a chance at creating a product that people respond to. I watch a lot of TV, read a lot of magazines, and go to a lot of concerts. I immerse myself.”

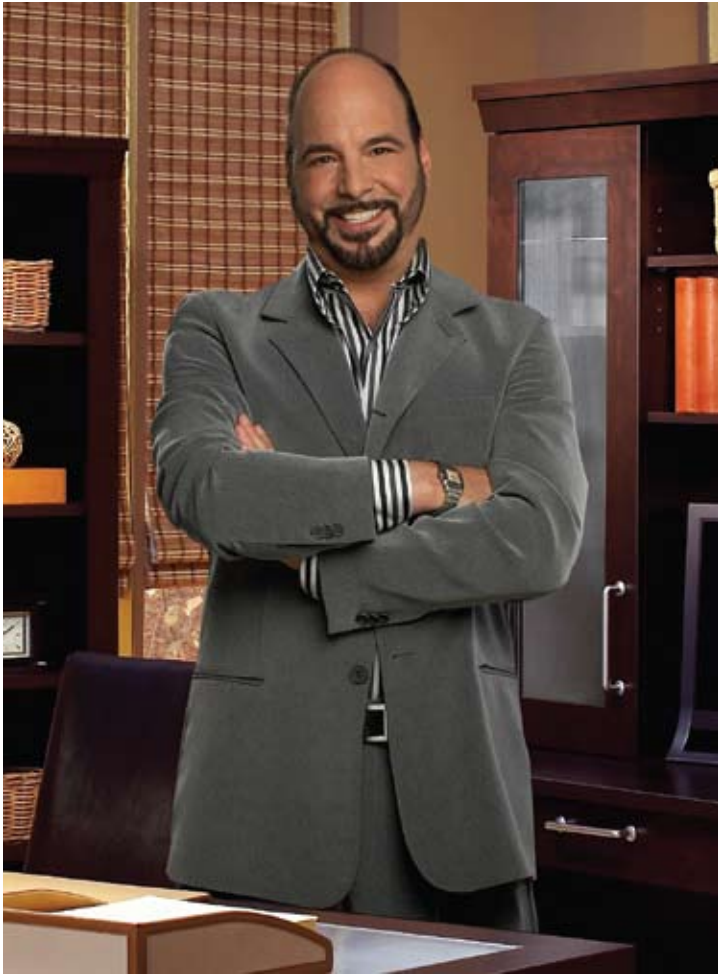
Youngblood observes how, in America today, people’s homes have become ways of expressing themselves. He also is quick to point out the current it-factor of “green,” which he says “has exploded, partially because the product side of it has taken off, inviting in wonderful new design trends like bamboo flooring and on-demand water heaters.”

A creative mind in the truest sense of the word, Youngblood thrives on the ups and downs of life. “The best ideas come when I am at my worst, some of my best ideas come at times of crisis,” he says.

And, Youngblood explains that, at his core, he wants all his FLN viewers to feel three things: “That we haven’t insulted your intelligence, that we made you feel like you are a little bit smarter, and that you were entertained, whether we made you laugh or made you cry.”



Chad Youngblood. Image courtesy of Fine Living Network.



Christopher Lowell. Image courtesy of Fine Living Network.

CHRISTOPHER LOWELL

DESIGN PERSONALITY

"I create 24/7. If I'm awake, I'm creating something," says design personality Christopher Lowell. A man with "a finger in many pies," he could just as easily be called an anthropologist as he could a designer. Lowell is a creator of what he calls "an American brand in the decorative arts." And he is prolific, to say the least, spreading his expertise through his ever-popular, do-it-yourself cable shows, weekly syndicated radio show and newspaper column, best-selling books (*Seven Layers of Design*), consumer products and his personal website.

An Emmy award winner, Lowell's latest show is *Work That Room with Christopher Lowell* on the Fine Living Network. The concept of the show involves, as Lowell puts it, "solving real problems for real people"—which means helping design neophytes get rid of their fears of personal creativity, providing quick solution tools like pre-coordinating, plenty of comedy, and a hefty dose of design education with broad appeal.

Lowell sees his job as helping to demystify the process of home decorating for the regular Jane or Joe, and he is a believer in the psychology of space. "Our mental interior always matches our physical interior—for good and bad," he explains. "My job is to help people get the two interiors to sync up accurately."

Lowell's "get it done" design philosophy comes from looking at American trends, identifying where America's fear buttons are, and understanding how relationships and parenting are changing as we grow. Lowell is empowering people to make the choices that get them to the place where their home is a functional reflection of who they are. "I'm motivated where I see need," says Lowell. "Ideas come from every place I am. As long as my eyes are open, I'm getting ideas."

Lowell is also a personal student of design trends. As he explains, people today are interested in taking the designs that they see in boutique hotels and public spaces and translating those ideas back into the home. Also, for the first time, men are co-partnering in interior design decisions. Yet another is the challenge of marrying two different cultural approaches to design. With an increasing number of interracial marriages, blending two distinct cultures into one American lifestyle can be a challenge! That's when to call in the "doctor of design," Christopher Lowell.

For more information about Lowell's latest, visit www.christopherlowell.com

MONET'S PALATE

FINE ART DVD AND WEB EXPERIENCE

Impressionist painter Claude Monet left behind a legacy not only of painting but also of an exquisite lifestyle. Monet's stunning garden at Giverny (about an hour outside of Paris), which he created toward the end of his life, became the subject for many of his best-loved paintings, including his *Japanese Bridge*, *Le Ninfee Rosa*, and his famous *Water Lilies* series.

Monet's Palate is a celebration of all things Monet: his garden, his cuisine, and his art. What started as a documentary film, *Monet's Palate: A Gastronomic View from the Gardens of Giverny*, has become a broader program devoted to bringing Monet's world to a broader audience. Filmmaker and program founder Aileen Boardman is inspiring people to immerse themselves in Monet's lifestyle. "We can't all own a Monet," says

Boardman, "but through the vehicle of *Monet's Palate*, we can experience a little bit of respite."

At Giverny, Monet created an oasis out of which he ventured to explore the world with specific tasks in mind—like seeking out the best place to have an apple tart. *Monet's Palate* is an experience Boardman describes as "the perfect blend of art and good tastes."

Boardman is encouraging art lovers and foodies alike to follow in the footsteps of Monet and explore the "palate to palette connection."

For more information, visit www.monetspalate.com

A bridge at the village of Giverny, France, where Monet painted. Image courtesy of *Monet's Palate*.

