

# Roman Gelfer



*Roman Gelfer*

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*Paintings*



*Etude in Green*

**SOLD**

**B**orn in 1952 St. Petersburg, Russia, Roman began life during the repressive post WWII 'cold war' years. In the Soviet Union, people were valued for what they could contribute to building a strong labor force and army. Artists were not considered useful.

Roman's considerable sculpting talents came to the attention of his father, and at the age of ten Roman was accepted into the St. Petersburg School of Art, where he studied at night after his traditional education classes ended.

"I was so shy, I would never have applied on my own" Roman admits. But one look at Roman's sculptures his Father had brought to show the school, and he was accepted on the spot. Roman had no idea his life was about to change forever.

For the next few years, he reveled in every new discovery, and became proficient in many different media. He found that sculpture suited him best, and there he excelled, until 1968, when Roman's father received a new job assignment, and the family had to uproot and move to a different town too far away from the art school for Roman to continue.





*The Lake*

**SOLD**

As suddenly as the door to his artistic life had been opened, it was now closed shut. The new location was far removed from the more sophisticated and refined St. Petersburg. It was a working class suburb that had no use for art and artists, and kids his age didn't think much of Roman Gelfer, the quiet, introverted artistic young man.

The object of bullying and constant ridicule, his peers were tough street kids with attitude. Self-preservation made Roman finally succumb to the societal pressures forcing him to 'belong.' By his late teens, Roman totally stopped doing any art, and

had given up his dreams of becoming an artist. He began drinking and failing in school, feeling that he couldn't fit in anywhere. "In retrospect, I think I was close to a nervous breakdown" Roman remembers.

Thankfully, his father intervened and put Roman in a Navy college where he was able to get a much better education. "I learned to build engines, create blueprints, and essentially become an engineer. But I never went back to my art--that was over for me."

A constant pawn of the society and times in which he lived, this era in the early 1970s Soviet Union



*Bosch*

**FOR SALE**

saw Jewish people leaving Russia, and his father realized they had to start making preparations to leave the Soviet Union, while it was still legal to get visas. Roman's parents were able to get him out of the Soviet Union and he flew to Vienna, where he began a new life. Another door had opened again.

At that time, the Jewish Federation supported people fleeing Soviet repression, so Roman was able to move to a tiny village near Rome. "I could actually go to a museum and see art. All these waves of appreciation and beauty overwhelmed me. The architecture, the statues, the frescoes, the paintings. It was the best time of my life. I loved this country so much because there was so much art."



*Abstract*

**FOR SALE**





*After Chagall*

**FOR SALE**



*Abstract, Kandinsky Influence*

**FOR SALE**

In 1976 when it came time to get his parents out of the Soviet Union, he soon discovered there was only one country that would take him and his aging parents—and that was the United States. When his parents left the Soviet Union, the state took everything from them. No possessions were allowed to leave the country. "Everything belongs to the state," they said, even his parent's wedding rings. "You are stateless."





*St. Petersburg*

**SOLD**



*Near Carmel*  
**FOR SALE**



*Italian Cafe*

**SOLD**

"So all I can say is God Bless America, because it was the only place that would take us permanently. A country like this who will take everyone--it was amazing. As impractical as it is economically, it is the humanity that prevails."

After Roman arrived in Los Angeles, his background with machinery and engineering gave him job opportunities, and he also went to a computer school for a year and a half, where he became a computer tech supervisor. Through the years, illness and depression slowed him down until he had to stop work, and then Roman and his wife finally received an apartment in one of WHCHC's buildings.

"One day about 3 years ago, my wife suggested I try taking up my art again" he remembers. At first, even the thought of it was unimaginable." But eventually he did try his hand at drawing and watercolor, and found that those long lost feelings of passion for art were coming back.





*Venice Canal*

**FOR SALE**

Today, Roman Gelfer is finally able to become the artist he was meant to be. "The artist's brain comes in waves" says Roman. "Sometimes I can't work for a week, and then it comes again. I love very precise work, and incorporate a lot of details into my painting, but with watercolor the fun is in never knowing exactly how things will turn out."

He has won two competitions already, and he has a web site to showcase the hundreds of paintings he has done over the past 3 years, but the next step is to be part of a show and see where that leads him. "Winning competitions only makes me work harder!"

Slowly Roman is rediscovering the long-lost talents he thought were gone forever. He is finally able to retrieve and nurture that shy little boy inside who was so in love with making art.



*Nuts and Bolts*

**SOLD**





*Chevy*

**SOLD**

## *Roman on Painting:*

I love the challenge to capture rich colors and complex composition, and the opportunity to bring the image to life in watercolor. Usually I prefer very precise (not loose) work, and I love incorporating a lot of details into my paintings.

Typically, I will start with a series of sketches. After I've settled on a composition, I draw the image with a soft graphite pencil, careful not to press down too hard. When I'm satisfied, I'll go over the pencil lines with waterproof ink.

Then comes the fun part: I give my drawing a bath, submerging it under water in the bathtub and using a sponge to lightly wash off the pencil marks and, at the same time, prepare my paper for stretching. When the paper is dry, I have a nice clean ink drawing, without any marks or pencil lines.

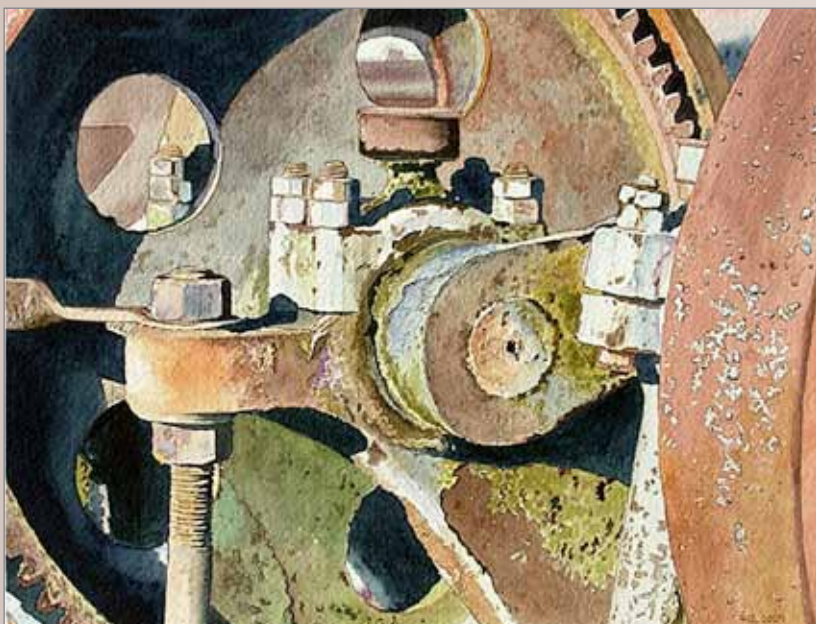
I achieve the rich colors in my work by glazing washes of watercolor. I sometimes wait for the washes to dry between the layers, and sometimes I simply charge in a new wash wet-into-wet. When I'm happy with the result, I add some final details, using touches of ink in areas where I want to make my lines thicker or more pronounced, thereby creating shadows and a three-dimensional effect. It's always a surprise to see what happens when I merge colors together. The fun is in never knowing exactly how things will turn out.

### *Artistic influences:*

*Aleksandr Nikolaevich Benue [Russian Art Nouveau, 1870-1960]*

*Ettore Roesler Franz [Italian, 1845-1907]*

*Adriaen van Ostade [Dutch Baroque Era, 1610-1685]*



*Ghost in the Machine*

**FOR SALE**





*Carmel Memories*

**FOR SALE**



*The Old Tree*

**FOR SALE**





*Modigliani, nude*

**FOR SALE**



*The Fruits*

**SOLD**



*The Red Peppers* **SOLD**



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*The Water Lilies*

**FOR SALE**