

Cherryland Art Gallery

now bloom

BY PHILIP KOBYLARZ
PHOTOS COURTESY OF
RENÉ CAPONE

One can imagine groves of Black Tartarian cherry trees, wide swaths of almond, prune, and plum trees, and bushes of black currant that once made up the landscape of north Hayward. Cherryland, as it is called today, a census-designated place running from B Street to Lewelling, was once lush farmland. William Meek cultivated this area in the 1850s, and the landmark he left as a testament to his wealth still stands in the Meek Mansion.

Today, another visionary has entered the scene. Hailing from upstate New York, René Capone has come to Hayward with a plan. The city is a vibrant, multi-cultural enclave brimming with life and has reputedly the friendliest people in the bay, but something essential is lacking: art galleries.

Possessing a keen perspective and raw talent, Capone has envisioned a space where people can come together in celebration of beauty in all its forms. The Cherryland Art Gallery celebrated its opening May 27, 2017 with a show featuring the artwork of Lamberto Roque Hernandez, a painter, writer, teacher, and multi-faceted artist from Mexico's renowned Oaxaca region.

Capone himself had a natural inclination and desire to take over the art hall as an adolescent. His high school art teacher recognized his talent and pushed him to pursue the arts, steering him toward college. Capone was accepted into Parsons School of



Design in Greenwich Village, considered the preeminent art school in the U.S. and alma mater of such luminaries as Jasper Johns and Roy Lichtenstein.

At the age of 20, Capone sold his first painting for \$600. He flourished in New York City but grew weary of the crowds and the winters, and one day discovered Armistead Maupin's "Tales of the City." San Francisco seemed to be a vibrant new place in which he could practice his art of life figure painting, so go west young man he did. He came "in search of community and to find a home," and became active in the local art scene, serving as the gallery assistant for K. Imperial Fine Art and a design assistant for Andrew Fisher at the Fisher Weisman Interior Design firm, both located in San Francisco.

Capone is very well known in New York and San Francisco and has sold his art all over the world. His body of work is wide-ranging

and impressive; his paintings have been featured on magazine covers, he has shown at countless galleries on both coasts, his work has been featured in German art anthologies, and a graphic novel titled, "The Legend of a Hedgehog Boy" is also among his accomplishments. "Sometimes I'm embarrassed, sometimes I'm proud," he says of his acclaim.

His paintings feature vivid, sultry colors and studies of figures playing, in repose, or lost in thought and emotion, caught in the act of seeing and being seen. He is fascinated with human/animal beings and of capturing moments of sensual intimacy of the purest form. "I learned to paint to escape pain and abuse and in my adult life and morphed in into something that moves people, sometimes in ways you would not understand," he said. "It's supernatural, life affirming and completely unfiltered."

Having attained that elusive quality called success, Capone now wishes to act as an empowering agent to promote the work of fellow artists. Because he saw himself as an underdog in the art world, his desire for the Cherryland Art Gallery "is to let brilliant artists get a chance to shine." Capone's goals for the gallery are clear. In his own words, he aims firstly to "stay open." He hopes to create and inspire a community of artists in our corner of the bay and to open his gallery to endless possibility. He sees the space as a gathering place of souls that will feature soirées on the weekends, open calls for showings, and even perhaps a venue for stand-up comedy.

The current exhibit, "Stillness Before Dawn," features Capone's art along with that of figure painter Salena Alessandra Valentini from Italy, the digital art of John Waiblinger, and Eddie Louis Delvaux. "Artists sacrifice huge parts of their lives to fully embrace their craft. Here I would like to acknowledge the struggles that each artist has endured. From disabilities or confronting social injustice, all



Artist and Cherryland Art Gallery owner René Capone.

these artists have persevered. As the curator, I see the title of the show as a concept – a concept representing the personal and often quiet victories that we experience alone," said Capone.

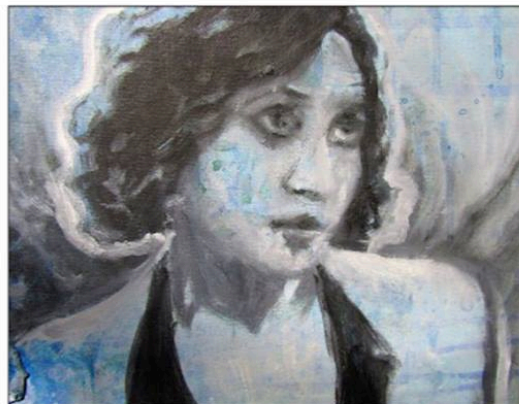
The gallery is also offering Saturday morning art classes for kids with instructor Lamberto Roque Hernandez. Hernandez has created an interactive arts curriculum that honors Mexican traditions with 2D and 3D art projects. Kids will expand their creativity with sculptural

which the lovers of painting, art, and life can commune.

For more information, call (510) 827-7077 or visit www.cherrylandart.com.

Stillness Before Dawn
Sunday, Sep 10 – Tuesday,
Oct 10
Tuesday – Saturday,
1 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Reception
Saturday, Sep 22
7 p.m. – 9 p.m.



exercises, pigment mixing, and storytelling through art. Class size is limited to six; call Hernandez for rates and more information at (510) 760-3003.

Like the work of literature that inspired a New York City artist to manifest his destiny westward, René Capone and the Cherryland Art Gallery now provide a venue of creativity to

Saturday Morning Art Classes
11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
(510) 760-3003
Limited to six students

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Cherryland
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