

As seen in the
April 2011 issue of

AMERICAN
art COLLECTOR

UPCOMING SHOW

Up to 25 works
June 7-28, 2011
Galerie Tamenaga
18 Avenue Matignon
75008 Paris, France
01 42 66 61 94

• SHOW LOCATION PARIS, FRANCE

TOM CHRISTOPHER

Modern times

By James Balestrieri

Tom Christopher's New York scenes are as rich and varied and vital as the city they chronicle. Blending his passion for film noir, the black-and-white classics of urban detection of the 1940s and '50s, with his experience as a courtroom artist for CBS, where his swift drawings captured the emotional nuances of plaintiffs and defendants, judges and lawyers and juries in sensational cases in the last days before film came before the bench.

Christopher lets his drawing show through the paint on his canvases and the ink in his drawings. These lines are the city's arteries and puppet strings and spiderwebs. They draw people to the city and keep them there. They are the city's psychotropic lifeblood, dispensing false hope and fragile dreams. They are often all that connect the disparate, solitary characters—more than merely figures, Christopher's people are characters with stories of their own, this, significantly, even though—or because—they are largely undefined—that mill about the picture plane or stand at the intersection of *This Way and That Way* in reveries of belief and disbelief. They all seem to be trying to remember something, or forget something, or they seem to be wondering whether the thing they want to hide—fear? naiveté? crime?—is written on their faces, in their body language, for all to see.

Colors splash on Christopher's New York canvas, articulating the fever dreams of the hopeful and the hopeless alike, drawing us in as well. Christopher's New York is the siren song that turns out to be the scream in the dark, the nightmare, the siren that signals cops on the move.

Bike messengers are a recurrent subject in Christopher's work, symbols of a throwback netherworld between the pedestrian and the taxi. Weaving in and out of traffic, a bird's-eye view of their routes—the wrong way down one-way streets; racing red lights; making tight right and wide left turns beside and just ahead of urgent cabs—would show that they are demigods, rewriting urban planning on the fly as they drop headshots and next spring's dresses in person in



TOMORROW'S ANOTHER DAY, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 38 X 26"

our impersonal email, fax, file share world.

Christopher's titles are integral to the works. As he moves through the city like a latter-day Weegee with his camera and sketchbook, he eavesdrops, jotting down snippets of dialogue that drift his way: the murmurs of desire, the wisecracks of the broken, and the pleas of the

desperate. These fragments, taken together, are a sonic summary of New York. They add a rich chiaroscuro to Christopher's strong imagery. •

For a direct link to the
exhibiting gallery go to
www.americanartcollector.com



CROSSROADS,
ACRYLIC ON
CANVAS, 24 X 48"



YES, YES, A
PREMIUM SELECT
SPORTCOAT
SOUNDS VERY
GOOD RIGHT
ABOUT NOW,
ACRYLIC ON
CANVAS
38 X 38"