

## Icons of our age

**DePice explores abandoned landscapes in Manhattan art show**

by Al Sullivan

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### Artist



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“When I saw the little red dot next to my painting, I couldn’t stop looking at it,” said Secaucus artist Doug DePice, referring to the sale of one of his paintings last year on display at the Agora Gallery in Manhattan.

When a painting gets sold in a gallery, it gets a red dot, he said. People coming to view paintings look more closely at these paintings than they might otherwise.

This year, four pieces of his work are again on display at the Agora Gallery. This time, the sale runs until July 19. More pieces are displayed on the gallery website.

Although DePice has been exhibiting professionally since 1976 and his work has been seen in galleries in New York City, the Paris Convention Center in France, the Morris Museum in New Jersey, and the Fine Arts Museum of Long Island, the recent shows were the first time he had a signed contract with a gallery to represent his work.

While he had sold hundreds of pieces before last year, the sale last August stands out as progress.

In one show before that, he had sold 100 pieces in one day, but he attributed this partly to his democratic pricing that allows people with smaller budgets to afford some of his work.

“My work is priced from \$5 to \$900,” he said.

“I find old industrial sites fascinating.” – Doug DePice

DePice, who has been a teacher in Secaucus for nearly 40 years, said he entered a Chelsea Fine Arts Competition in 2012, which eventually evolved into the offer of representation.

The works in this collection deal with what he calls “industrial studies” and the environment in which people live.

“I find old industrial sites fascinating,” he said. “This could be a rusted train trestle, an abandoned car, or a pipe stack, things that were once functional and abandoned and so they’ve become free. I think this is why I’m attracted to and motivated by Stonehenge and the head on Easter Island. These things are monumental, mysterious, and powerful.”

In some ways, DePice believes, these abandoned industrial objects become icons of an age.

“They stand for something and I see them as powerful in history and time, and we are moved by them,” he said.

### Unusual muses

DePice said he looks for the flaws or mistakes in objects, because these reflect some of the process of their creation and his work is an effort to show the force inside these objects.

He is attracted to places such as the Hoboken Ferry Terminal and industrial areas for this reason.

At the moment, he said he is waiting for inspiration as to where to venture next artistically.

“It has been difficult this summer to focus on my art,” he said. “My primary concern is the environment, endangerment of water and danger to animals. I paint a number of slain animals and water in my studio pieces.”

But he’s at a point where he is looking for direction.

“I’ve always been obsessed with direction,” he said. “I know I shouldn’t be worried about it. When I’m there, I’m in a zone.”

### In the classroom, too.

DePice said he does a lot of reading about art and other things, and believes art plays a valuable role in education. He thinks about how art and beauty affect personality.

“Everything matters that makes up a good society,” he said.

After teaching for 39 years, DePice is being allowed to explore some of his ideas. He has always been concerned with the change kids go through when growing up, and how they lose the artistic vision of youth.

Society teaches kids to categorize things until they begin to lose the creative way they look at the world, searching for answers rather than simply

experiencing things, he said.

For years, DePice has experimented with idea of incorporating art into other fields of study, such as symbol (art) as metaphor (English) as structure (science), and proportion (math). This interdisciplinary approach, DePice said, has endless possibilities and creates a way of seeing that allows students to move on from one subject and look at everything that way.

He said in this he seeks to find the emotional part of math, that point where a student discovers the key to some problem or process. Some of his ideas include studies of objects within backgrounds of paintings, such as plant life or the symbolic meaning of things and how they change from painting to painting and era to era.

"I believe in a non-linear approach to learning," he said.

DePice's current exhibit called "Sensorial Realms" can be seen at the Agora Gallery, 510 W 25th Street in Manhattan. On line, his works can be viewed at [www.Art-Mine.com](http://www.Art-Mine.com). The snow runs from 6 to 8 p.m. For more information call (212) 226-4151.

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