



Monolith (detail), oil.

Michael Chelich

Monolith

November 13 - December 14, 1998
Community Gallery of Art
College of Lake County

Michael Chelich: *Monolith*

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Michael Allen Chelich is a native Indiana resident inspired by the great masters of the Renaissance and Baroque periods of art. He began his studies at the American Academy of Art in Chicago. In his first year Chelich won three tuition scholarships presented by the American Academy of Art, the Northern Indiana Art Association, and the Indiana Federation of Women's Clubs. In his second year at the Academy, Chelich won an additional scholarship contest sponsored by the Union League Club of Chicago. During these formative years in Chicago, he was heavily influenced by his life drawing teacher Fred Berger. Berger opened Chelich's mind and demanded the best from the young artist. Berger stressed the creative and compositional aspects of art, as well as artistic anatomy.

After two years in Chicago, Chelich left for Minneapolis where he attended Atelier Lack, a school dedicated to the revival of excellence in craftsmanship. The founder of the school, Richard Lack, believes that an emphasis on craftsmanship is a quality in painting which has slowly but surely deteriorated over the last hundred years. Lack nurtured and refined Chelich's talents through diligent and personalized instruction.

Richard Lack's own artwork is in line with the tradition of the academic and impressionistic schools of painting.

Lack's outlook and contribution to the art world is a unique and precarious one which is dependent on the transmission of accumulated knowledge of past generations of artists. Chelich hopes to continue in this tradition and help grow with the additional accumulated knowledge gained from his own trials and experiences. In this pursuit Chelich is instructing drawing and painting in Chicago at the School of Representational Art.

Mike Chelich now resides and works in Hammond, Indiana where, for the last ten years, he has been painting and teaching at his art studio. The thirty-four-year-old artist has received several important portrait commissions. These include Evan Bayh, Governor of Indiana; Phil C. Neal, retired Dean of the University of Chicago's Law School; Dr. Frank Lloyd, former President of the Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis; Dr. Thaddeus P. Kawalek, retired President of the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine; and Judge Thieme, current Superior Judge of the Criminal Court in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Chelich also won a national contest for Grant monies from the Stacey Lee Foundation in Oklahoma. In addition, Chelich's work has been published in the nationally recognized magazine, *American Artist*.

Apart from the portrait commissions, Chelich's greatest interest and passion lies in the creation of narrative and allegorical figure compositions. He has always been fascinated and moved by the great figurative paintings of artists from the Renaissance, Baroque and Romantic periods in Western art. To further his knowledge of figurative painting, he visited the churches, castles and museums of Western Europe to study the artwork of the old European Masters. His dream now is to produce figurative art similar in drama and design but with themes drawn from contemporary culture. Chelich relates that "creative figure composition challenges me at every level of my abilities and allows for a fulfilling expression of feelings and ideas inspired by particular themes of man and his relationship to his own kind and the world at large."

ABOUT THE PAINTINGS

Michael Chelich is a classical realist painter whose works range from portraits and still lifes to his more challenging narrative pieces. The portraits and still lifes begin as charcoal drawings on toned paper. The image is transferred to canvas and local colors are loosely blocked-in. In the second stage, forms are defined, details are developed, and edges are softened. In the final stages Chelich tries to capture the luminosity and subtle color of the subject.



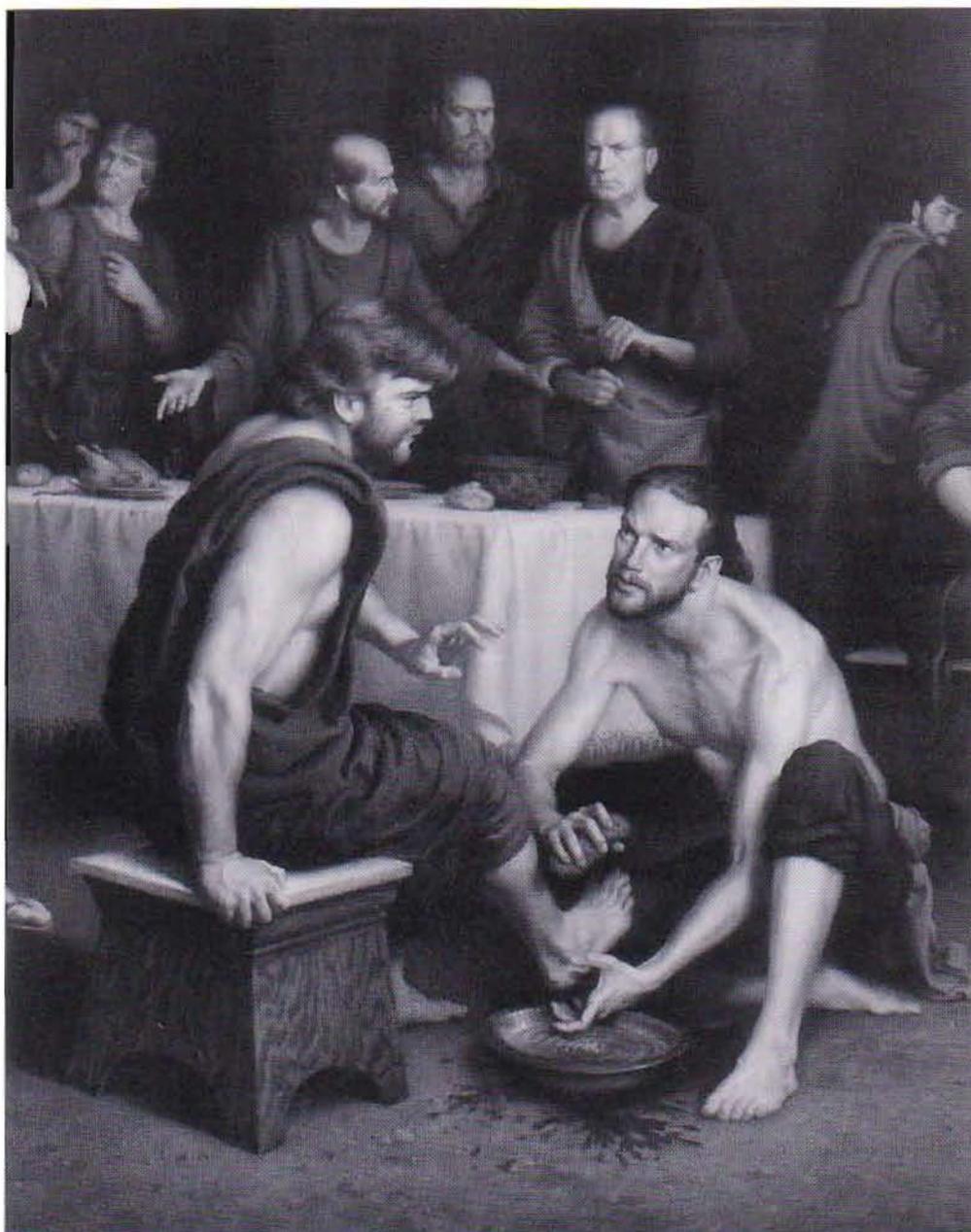
Monolith (detail), oil.

Chelich also has some narrative figure compositions on display. For these works, he has adapted the Venetian painting technique used by such Old Masters as Tintoretto (1518-1594) and Veronese (1528-1588). In a work such as *Christ Washing Peter's Feet*, Chelich first executes a monochromatic underpainting. This monochrome provides underlying color unity for the subsequent scumbles and glazes of color. The underpainting must be kept lighter in value than the values in the completed form because glazes of color deepen the tones. When painting the figures, thick impastos were applied to the light and half-tone masses while the cool neutral underpainting showed through for the dark half-tone of the flesh. The underpainting might also show through in architecture, drapery and other areas.

Monolith dramatically depicts mankind's struggle to bring about social change. It is a commentary about the callous attitude today's corporate America seems to have toward its workers. Chelich spent well over one and a half years to complete the piece. He conceived of it through numerous notes and thumbnail sketches. Once a rough compositional design was created he developed the perspective layout and placement of figures. Next, Chelich worked on figure studies drawn from the live



Study for *Christ Washing Peter's Feet*, charcoal



model in charcoal and pastel. His next step in the painting's preparatory process was to create a large scale black and white cartoon where he can make design adjustments and finalize the composition. Finally he was ready to begin painting on the actual canvas which was executed in the Venetian technique. *Monolith* is a tour de force due to Chelich's thoroughness of concept and design as well as his high degree of craftsmanship.

Sources:
 Michael Chelich,
Systematic Approaches to Oil Painting,
 American Artist, Feb. 1998,
 pps. 39-75
 Rosanne Tolin, *Back to Tradition*,
 The Times, Munster, Ind.,
 Nov. 29, 1996, pps. D1-4

Christ Washing Peter's Feet
 (detail), oil

Michael Chelich: *Monolith*

Exhibition Checklist

1. *Monolith*, oil on canvas, 11' x 14', NFS
2. *Christ Washing Peter's Feet*, oil on canvas, 52" x 52", NFS
3. *St. Joseph and Child*, oil on canvas, 32" x 44", NFS
4. *William and Alice Nudera*, oil on canvas, 24" x 27", NFS
5. *Jacquelin Ostrowski*, oil on canvas, 26" x 28", NFS
6. *Allasandra Mazza*, oil on canvas, 30" x 36", NFS
7. *Louis Mazza*, oil on canvas, 28" x 36", NFS
8. *Angelica Mazza*, oil on canvas, 20" x 22", NFS
9. *Self Portrait*, oil on canvas, 16" x 22", NFS
10. *Linda Thoren Neal*, oil on canvas, 17" x 23", NFS
11. *Lynn Hanson*, oil on canvas, 28" x 26", NFS
12. *Untitled*, oil on canvas, 21" x 17", NFS
13. *Oriental Still Life*, oil on canvas, 28" x 18", NFS
14. *African Still Life*, oil on canvas, 26" x 30", NFS
15. *Aztec Still Life*, oil on canvas, 18" x 16", NFS
16. *Jane's Memorabilia*, oil on canvas, 26" x 21", NFS
17. *Indian Still Life*, oil on canvas, 25" x 21", NFS
18. *Monolith Study: #1 Main Male Figure*, pastel, 44-1/2" x 52", \$3,500.00
19. *Monolith Study: #2 Sitting Male Figure*, pastel, 28" x 24", \$850.00
20. *Monolith Study: #3 Arm Studies*, pastel, 30-1/2" x 17-1/2", \$450.00
21. *Monolith Study: #1 Main Female Figure*, charcoal, 29" x 24", \$600.00
22. *Study #1*, pencil, 13" x 16", NFS
23. *Study #2*, pencil, 12" x 9-1/2", NFS
24. *Study #3*, pencil, 15" x 18", NFS
25. *Study #4*, pencil, 16-1/2" x 13", NFS
26. *Study #5*, pencil, 20" x 16-1/2", NFS
27. *Study #6*, pencil, 23" x 35", NFS
28. *Study #7*, pencil, 20-1/2" x 25-1/2", NFS
29. *Study #8*: b/w cartoon and color sketch, photographic reproduction, NFS
30. *Clay Study #1*, plastilene, NFS
31. *Clay Study #2*, plastilene, NFS
32. *Clay Study #3*, plastilene, NFS
33. *Clay Study #4*, plastilene, NFS
34. *Christ Washing Peter's Feet Study: #2 Christ's Face*, charcoal, 15" x 18", \$450.00
35. *Christ Washing Peter's Feet Study: #3 Christ's hand*, charcoal, 13" x 15", \$400.00
36. *Christ Washing Peter's Feet Study: #4 Hand Tying Sandal*, charcoal, 18" x 16", \$450.00
37. *Christ Washing Peter's Feet Study: #5 Peter's Hand*, charcoal, 16" x 14", \$350.00
38. *Preliminary study from Christ Washing Peter's Feet*, pencil, 26" x 50-1/2", NFS

The Community Gallery of Art is a project of the College of Lake County Foundation.
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