



PAINTING IS DEAD? THERE IS STILL LIFE IN LANDSCAPES

GARY MICHAEL DAULT

Marco Sassone
at Odon Wagner

\$3,000-\$39,000. Until Dec. 11, 196 Davenport Rd., Toronto;
416-962-0438.

Painter Marco Sassone, lately of Tuscany, lately of San Francisco, and now recently established in Toronto, was a student of Florentine painter Silvio Loffredo, who was himself a pupil of the great Oskar Kokoschka. And the line of descent is vibrantly visible in Sassone's current work.

Squint your eyes and look too quickly at his paintings and you'll begin to think there are simply too many views of Venetian canals here to make sense (and you'd be right, too). But look at them again, up close and wide-eyed, and you'll find yourself wading about in miasmas of pigment applied with such painterly verve and chromatic generosity you catch yourself wanting to eat the stuff with a spoon.

It begins to look, after a while, as if Sassone's canals and his mountain valleys and church interiors (Florence's Santa Croce appears to be made of melting licorice) are mostly just a reason to paint -- for the sake of it. For a tasty painter like Sassone, in fact, Venice's swooning light and fetid waters must have seemed the ideal subject upon which to lavish his pigments (and lavish them he does). I have seen tougher paintings by Sassone (of San Francisco's street people, for example), and they are very powerful things. The vistas in this current show are not powerful in the same way. But they do, at least, offer a well-behaved sample of the kind of sinuous, writhing, incendiary painting of which the artist is capable.