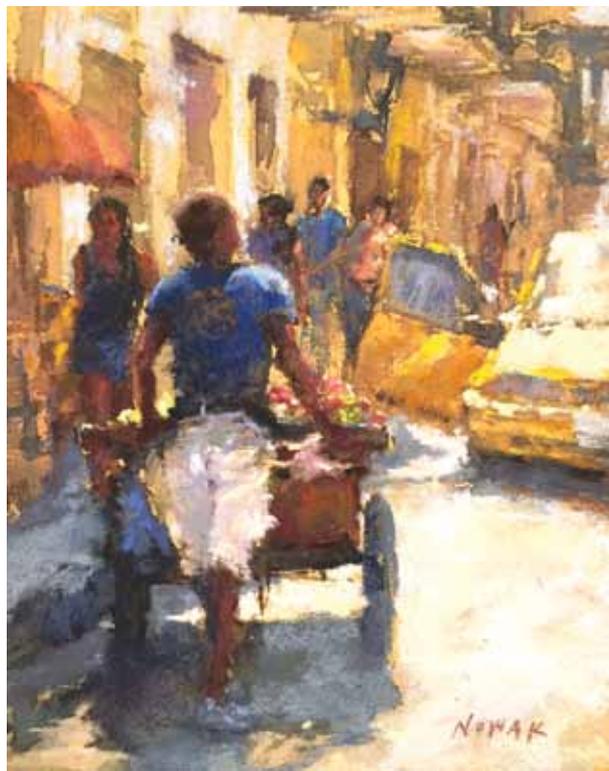


Nancy Nowak

Elevating the ordinary



Riverwalk Cable Car, pastel, 9 x 12.



Apple Cart, pastel, 12 x 9.

WHILE DINING in an Atlanta, GA, restaurant one Saturday night, artist Nancy Nowak unexpectedly found herself seated beside a movie set. Although the production crew's camera focused on the actors at the table next to hers, Nowak noticed she was situated within view of the lens. When the movie was later released, she eagerly checked it out, only to discover she had been edited out of the scene. And she totally gets it. In her paintings of landscapes and city streets, the artist removes nonessential details all the time. "It's like movie directors," she says. "They can tell multiple stories in their films, but it's really about what they want you to see."

Nowak, an award-winning pastelists and Master Circle member of the International Association of Pastel Societies, learned how to wield a paintbrush and mix oil paints when she was just 8 years old. By high school, the New Jersey native was attending figure-painting classes at local art centers. But as an un-

dergraduate at the Cleveland Institute of Art, the artist chose enameling as her major, thinking it was a more practical choice than painting. After graduating in 1981, she moved to Atlanta and launched an enamel jewelry-making business; that proved to be a tough market to crack. Ultimately, Nowak ended up growing successful businesses in calligraphy and printing instead, and when she returned to painting a little over 10 years ago—this time selecting pastels as her medium—her calligraphy experience turned out to be especially advantageous. Like calligraphy, explains the artist, "pastel is all about mark-making. And I love color. When I did calligraphy, I used gouache and mixed my own colors. I expressed myself through color, using a nib or brush for lettering, so I was actually taking color to the next level."

Whether capturing the Peach State, the hills of Tuscany, or beyond, Nowak seeks to portray the most visually ar-

resting patterns and shapes in any scene. And the setting doesn't need to be Hollywood-blockbuster material, either. The artist has painted everything from a man pushing an apple cart to a modest little house along the edge of old railroad tracks. "A lot of my subjects are things people say they never would think to look at," says Nowak. "I love the idea of taking something mundane and elevating it, making it more beautiful and exciting." —Kim Agricola

representation

2 Smith Art Gallery, Duluth, GA;
www.nancynowak.com.

upcoming show

Interpretations: Eastern League of Professional Artists Exhibition, **Quinlan Visual Arts Center**, Gainesville, GA, November 29-February 16.