

**UPCOMING SHOW**  
*Up to 15 works on show*  
 October 15–November 15, 2009  
 William Baczek Fine Arts  
 36 Main Street  
 Northampton, MA 01060  
 (413) 587-9880

**ERIC WERT**  
 Macabre sensibilities

Eric Wert loves beauty but, more than anything else, loves for that beauty to be challenged, upended, spilled across a table and shaken outside of its comfort zone. His work is traditional in that it is still considered still life, but everything else about it—from concept to process—is entirely contemporary.

"It is Eric Wert's almost overuse of beauty that is most striking," says gallery owner William Baczek. "A vase of flowers alone is not what interests the artist, but by overturning the bouquet and having it spill across a smooth surface that is reflecting the many water droplets as well as the brocade, embroidered or silky fabric backgrounds, Wert is deliberately pushing beauty to the border of grotesque."

What Wert is after through these still lifes is the idea of reflection and distortion.

"In the new painting *Spider Mum*, the traditional still life elements of flower, vase and background are all there, but they are also reflected in and distorted by the water on the tabletop," says Wert. "While the paintings have the components of a very traditional still life painting, they can have an almost hypnotic or even psychedelic effect within the intense pattern and reflection."

This allows viewers to take the paintings at more than face value.

"I want the paintings to provide an active rather than passive viewing experience," says Wert. "I want to create an image that one can be lost within. To me, still life painting is about looking intensely, about intimately exploring a subject. I hope that the paintings can convey that sense of intensity and fascination."

Wert's initial interest in exotic images and the macabre started when he worked as a scientific illustrator in Chicago. Daily, Wert was asked to painstakingly draw items from natural history, from flowers to animals to reptiles and insects.

"I started my career as a scientific illustrator at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. That training really taught me to use art as a way to explore and research the natural



TULIPS, OIL ON PANEL, 12 X 16"



UZUMAKI, OIL ON PANEL, 6 X 8"

*The Gallery Says . . .*  
 "Wert's oil paintings are feats of virtuosity, not only because of their complex still life subject matter but in the challenges the artist creates for himself with reflections, patterns and distorted perspective."

— William Baczek, Owner, William Baczek Fine Arts



DAHLIAS, OIL ON PANEL, 10 X 40"



SPIDER MUM, OIL ON PANEL, 12 X 16"

world," says Wert. "In my philosophy, there is something very rewarding about spending a whole day painting a leaf. Beyond the initial recognition, when you get in there, there is a feeling like you really spent some time observing and looking."

Wert's paintings in this show will range from very small, sometimes 6 by 8 inches, to other, larger paintings around 30 by 40 inches. While Wert is still a relatively young artist, he is gaining more and more interest in these paintings with every gallery show.

"In 2005, one of my paintings was purchased by the New Britain Museum of American Art in New Britain, Connecticut," says Wert. "It's a real honor to have my work included in a collection

alongside many of my artistic heroes."

Gallery owner Baczek feels that a past experience with Wert at the Chicago Art Institute gives a little insight into the artist's mind as well as the tradition his work pays homage to.

"We stopped in front of Frans Snyders' epic painting, *Still Life with Dead Game, Fruits, and Vegetables in a Market*, from 1614. Besides being a visual tour de force, the painting was, well, grotesque. Eric told me it was his favorite painting," says Baczek. "Strewn about the huge table of this very large painting are dead rabbits, a swan, a boar, a peacock and many small rouge breasted birds tied around their necks and dangling from a sticka...Both the Dutch artists and Eric

Wert are using beautiful 'things' that are, if not dead, past their prime and by doing this they are referring to the transitory nature of life."

For a direct link to the exhibiting gallery go to [www.americanartcollector.com](http://www.americanartcollector.com)

**Price Range Indicator**

Our at-a-glance Price Range Indicator shows what you can expect to pay for this artist's work.

	Small	Medium	Large
2009	\$2,800	\$9,200	\$25,000