

Blu Rivard



P O R T F O L I O



Paradise Fever, by Blu Rivard. Oil on canvas, 24x20 inches



Passion for Paradise, by Blu Rivard. Oil on canvas, 30x40 inches
PREVIOUS PAGE: Journey thru Paradise, by Blu Rivard. Oil on canvas, 30x40 inches

Based in Southern California, American artist Blu Rivard is passionate about the underwater world—a realm of wonder which he captures in vivid oil paintings on canvas. An avid scuba diver, he found inspiration for his art in his diving adventures in places such as Australia, Asia and islands of the South Pacific. His passion for the beauty of life in the sea led to a desire to help protect the oceans and the fragile ecosystems of the reefs.

Text by Gunild Symes
Photos courtesy of Blu Rivard

A keen observer of nature and the play of light on natural forms, Rivard has developed a body of work that reflects his interest in the sea and its many inhabitants.

"The sea and its residents fascinate me in many ways," he said. "Each has a role to play in the scheme of things."

Leaving his native Detroit in the late 70's, Rivard came to live in Southern California and

developed a love of the sea and its many creatures.

"The first time I saw reef fish, I was hooked," he said. "I needed to understand how and why they were so colorful. So, I started to study marine biology and oceanography. The more I learned, the more I wanted to learn. I soaked it up like a sponge."

"Of all the creatures, turtles are probably most dear to my heart. They are majestic but yet docile creatures that seem to convey a sense of



Serene Surrender, by Blu Rivard. Oil on canvas, 24x36 inches

ancient wisdom."

For a time, Rivard lived in Guam, where he explored the natural wonders of the Pacific Rim. While he had many diving adventures, Rivard is hard-pressed to claim a favorite location.

"I really have no absolute favorite dive location," he said. "They're all fascinating and unique in their own way. I've been fortunate to dive in so many wonderful locations around the world—the California coast, Hawaii, the Great Barrier Reef,

Micronesia, Bali, the Philippines, Fiji and the Grand Caymans amongst them."

In the future, Rivard hopes to dive in Papua New Guinea, Thailand and the Red Sea, he said.

Art with a message

In his art works, Rivard seeks to communicate his passion for the diversity and beauty found in marine ecosystems.

"My paintings are oil canvas," he said. "This enables me to

achieve the realism for which I am known. I love detail and diligently seek to reveal my passion to the viewer."

With his artwork, Rivard reveals a world not seen by many people.

"When my first image was published (*Send In The Clowns*, 1989), it allowed me to share with others the magic of a world unknown to most," he said. "A significant percentage of the population will never experience planet Earth as I have been fortunate enough to do. Long ago, a close friend sug-



Into the Light, by Blu Rivard. Oil on canvas, 20x16 inches

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Splash, by Blu Rivard. Oil on canvas, 20x16 inches



The Ascent, by Blu Rivard. Oil on canvas, 20x16 inches



Pacific Treasures, by Blu Rivard. Oil on canvas 30x24 inches

gested I share my art. Little did I know something that gave me intense pleasure would resonate with so many others."

Creative process

In his creative process, Rivard uses underwater camera equipment to get source images that inform his paintings. He uses Nikonos IV and Nikonos V cameras.

Lenses he uses include a 15mm fisheye lens, 28mm, 80mm and 35mm as well as extensions. For illumination, he uses four Ikelite Strobes A51s.

"Although I hold an underwater photography certification," he said. "I don't shoot photos to be compositions in their own right. I photograph marine life in different poses and various sections of coral

that I think would be compelling in my paintings."

Being true to the forms of nature and the shapes of living things is important to Rivard who sees artistic value in the details.

"All along, I try to portray these life forms in a biologically and anatomically correct manner," he said. Although, he

admitted, "Occasionally, I use a little artistic license."

Saving the oceans

Over the years, the oceans that have inspired Rivard's art works have also inspired him to take action. For the past 13 years, he has served on the Honorary Board of Governors of PADI's conserva-

tion organization, Project AWARE.

"Conservation. Now that's hugely important to me," he said. "We live on a planet where too many seem more intent on exploiting and destroying, not discovering and enshrining.

"Much of it is selfishness and greed," he continued. "Something owned is generally not something shared. Worse,



Land Down Under, by Blu Rivard. Oil on canvas, 20x16 inches

it becomes ever more challenging to clean up the mess exploiters leave in their wake."

Rivard sees art as an answer—a way to raise awareness about the plight of our oceans.

"Why art?" he asked. "Well, look around you! See what I see! We're highly visual creatures and have been since the dawn of time, as ancient cave drawings remind us. I try to inspire others to positive action with my art."

But what are the challenges artists face today in creating work that will get people thinking?

"I think the challenges most artists face today could be characterized as 'The Triple E'—exposure, the economy, and the economy!" said Rivard. "The

benefits to being an artist today is that more people are becoming aware of the messages art conveys."

In the end, Rivard said his artistic mission is not unique but quite necessary. "We all have a responsibility to this liquid planet as its custodians," he said.

"What most concerns me is the ocean. Every form of life depends on it." ■

For more information or to purchase art work from the artist, please visit: www.blurivard.com



Tortuga Point, by Blu Rivard. Oil on canvas, 24x30 inches

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