

ROUGH MAGAZINE

Nicholas Wilton grew up in Northern California, and attended the Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles. After graduation, he and his wife traveled extensively, living in Southeast Asia, Indonesia, India, the South Pacific, and Mexico, before settling in the San Francisco Bay area. When asked about his introduction to art, Nicholas said, "I loved drawing pictures as a child, then in high school I became interested in making stained glass windows. I took a design course from a very famous German glass artist, Ludwig Shaffrath, and for whatever reason, I completely understood his ideas on design. His encouragement launched me into a more serious art pursuit. Although my art making took the form of custom stained glass windows for different clients for a few years, it primed me for a career in art. Later, the Art Center definitely galvanized my skills and conviction about painting full-time".

Today, Nicholas owns Zocolo, a company representing his art, as well as that of his wife, Jennie Oppenheimer. It seems that during their travels in Mexico, the two would sit for hours in colonial town squares called "zocalos." They would marvel at the parade of life—artists, musicians, children, dogs, vendors, and basically everyone who worked or lived in the town—passing before them. The pace, the appeal, and the energy inspired them to use the name. However, Nicholas mistakenly misspelled it, making for an easy capture of the Web site www.zocolo.com, and Zocolo was born.

When it comes to inspiration, Nicholas says his comes from "traveling, reading, running in nature, and looking at the art of others." His advice to someone coming into the field is to, "Look outside of the world of art for inspiration. Look and work from within for as long as possible before tempting or confusing yourself with the monetary rewards, or lack of, in the field of art. Try to figure out what feeds your soul artistically before trying to sell something."

With a painting style he describes as metaphorical, Nicholas cites a growing sense that, "I am truly in charge and feel as if I can create a life that will allow me to grow in ways that fulfill me as an artist. I can see that often my intuition was right all along and, as a result, I can give more voice, both in the process of picture making and career/ business decisions. A secondary part of all this is the rare and difficult blending of Soul and Business. At times, I feel as if I have accomplished this, allowing me to remain extremely excited about what I am doing." Spark some excitement of you own at the December DSVF meeting when Nicholas Wilton will lecture about the idea of transformation and trust in the process of one's art making.

by: Sandy Irwin