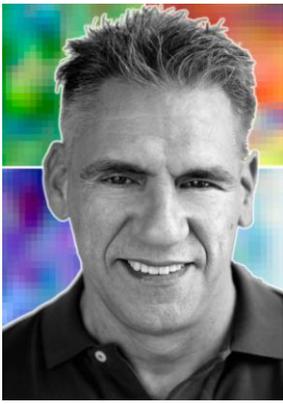


Interview with Michael Victor · MVR



Michael Victor · MVR | United States

Behind 'PiXeL World Beach'
▪ 'Playa Mundial de PiXeLes' Exhibit

Passeig de Gracia Station, Barcelona

The design layout of the artwork here is first a statement of the times.

It is also a personal reaction to my experience as an artist on Social Media; specifically how as a landscape artist I must crop works for display on Social Media – to get anything sizable (much less visibility of fine details) -- because sites favor portrait orientation. That is a hard rule on Instagram where images do not rotate with rotation of devices, nor do Zoom magnifications stay with release of hand. So much for seeing 'microImpressions.'

But in this exhibit with set portrait-orientation, I recognized textbook advertising opportunity in the large-format dimensions allotted, so I didn't mind cropping this beach scene, again. I did however take full advantage of the long 54" vertical dimension.

SMARTPHONE SURROUNDS

An appropriate frame for works 'By-Hand and Pixel-Paint Media', as mine is below, is a Smartphone or any mobile device. Beyond that, all artists and curators now have to adjust works to these devices to publicize them to mass audiences.

All artworks now have a digital version to be on the Internet, enhanced and formatted digitally to look their best. Design helps diminish what naiveté remains about any of this on the part of anyone.

pXL WORKS | PASTELSXL | pxIMPRESSIONS

At height 44", maximum enlargement (magnification) of this work, even in part, drives home the visual impact and quality of by-hand 'pxImpressions', which I refine microscopically rather freely through pixel-painting, and then magnify to varying extents for the world to enjoy.



'Playa Mundial de PiXeLes ▪ PiXeL World Beach' 54" x 34"

Exemplary of this new 'XL' Process is that tiny pigment grains become apparent to simulate sand and salt of ocean waters, which gives beach scenes and seascapes a level of textural authenticity that they never really had before.

CAS: Clear now is that by digital pixel-painting you develop minute hand-impressions to make your work unique. 'MicroImpressionism' is a sensible name for this way to paint. Why 'pxImpressionism' also?

Microimpression is a word already in use with disparate meanings. In the entertainment world for example, comedians do 'microimpressions' of other famous celebrities. Then, some painters create 'microImpressions' directly on canvas to create highly-crafted, delicate effects, but which are still visible with the naked eye.

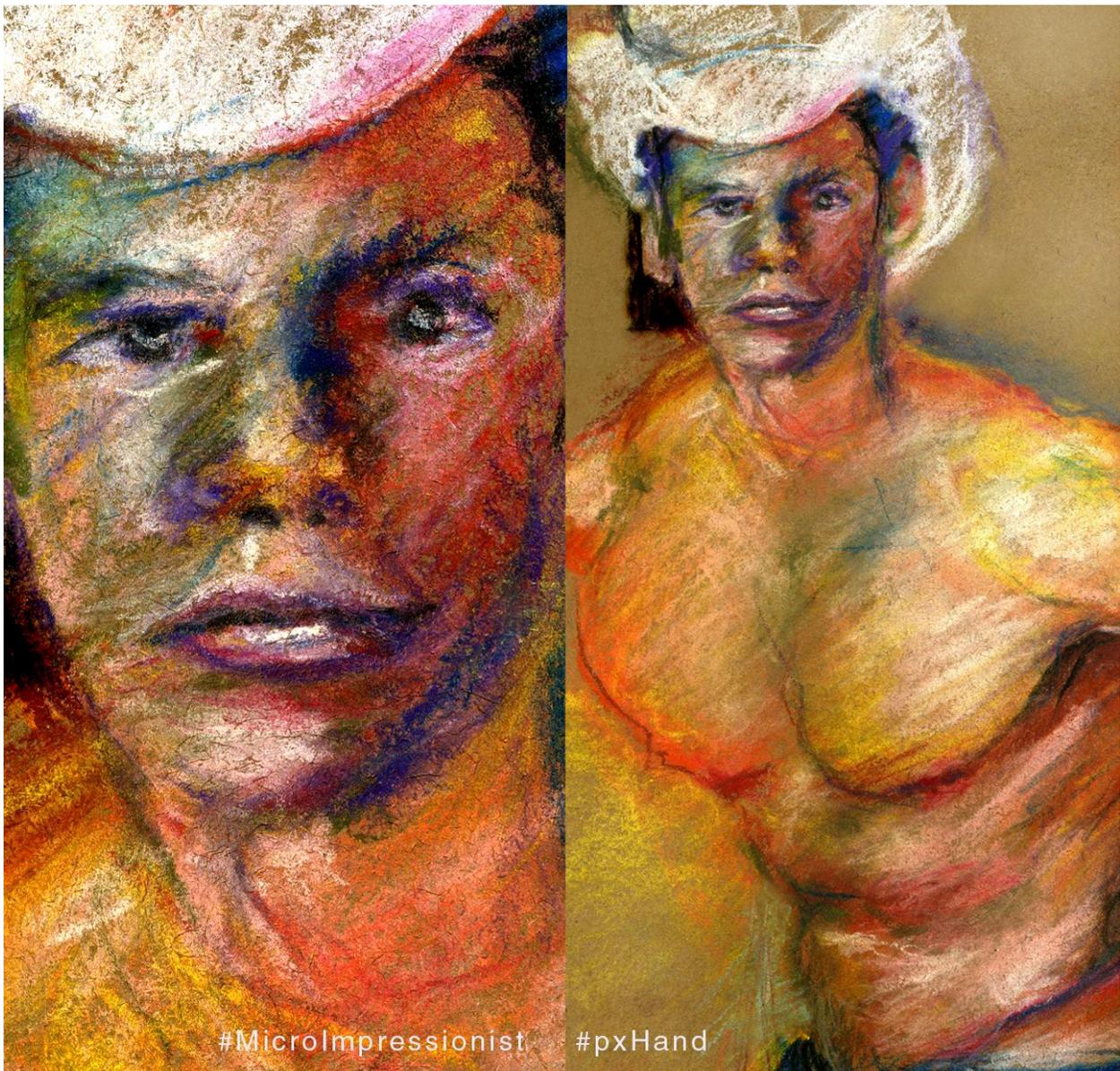
To be more specific, I coined the term "pxImpression" and most recently "pxl.impression" to convey sizes 'on the order of pixels' and that to work with them, *pixel*-painting is required. Magnification is the only way to see these minute hand-impressions. Through digital zoom magnification artists can see and develop them readily, then enlarge them readily within entire works, again by digital processes that are precise, standard and routine.

Digital processes are thus *harnessed*, or rather become in service of, the human hand to empower it, expand its capability, and allow new potential for it in the making of fine art, reversing trends of recent decades.

CAS: Tell us about how you got started doing pxImpressionism?

Strong digital skills are from 20 years as a Licensed Landscape Architect working in A/E design offices where all production was done digitally- CADD, color renderings, PowerPoint presentations, etc. The exception to that and invaluable were countless fast sketches I did with dense, hi-contrast strong color. These "vignettes" to convey design concepts enlarged exceptionally for client presentations. Facility rendering markers and ink pens strengthened my capability in creating fine art with pastel media and doing it swiftly. Skill with hard and oil pastels began in mid-1990's.

I started exhibiting my Landscape Pastels in 2017, but I first sensed pxl.impressions in many of my Life Pastels works when cataloguing them in 2015. An example is in *LiveOn Flash-Hand Cowboy*, shown here. (For full story, please see website Bio and CV Pages.)



#MicroImpressionist

#pxHand

LiveOn Flash Hand Cowboy

CAS: How does 19C Impressionism/Post-Impressionism compare with your contemporary brand of Impressionism? I believe Impressionists would have LOVED working with pixels. I felt that after seeing basic similarities between Impressionists' works – mostly Seurat's - and those I advanced in 2017 by pixel painting.

Grasping the similarity between Seurat's Pointillist dots of colored light and our pixels of today is no stretch for anyone. The patterns of dots in Seurat's works are consistently straightforward and uniform. In contrast, the configurations and textures of pXImpressions I work with are different every time out.

Other differences with 19C Impressionism include:

- Most Impressionists painted their works with a *brush*, whereas I create mine *By-Hand*. When laying-in hard pastels to create compositions, and rendering features within them, the amount of pressure applied varies significantly, which accounts for why they vary within works themselves.
- Impressionists deliberately placed individual spot colors to define impressions; I investigate, discover, interpret, and compose pXImpressions that result naturally and that I "find".

Impressionist artists that influence me most (still) are Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec. Of Post-Impressionists - Seurat, Van Gogh, and Cezanne.

CAS: What is your 'XL' process like, from initial idea to the creation of the final piece?

For landscape works, I start originals, and take them far towards a state of completion, on site with the physical subject landscape environment as a reference and inspiration. Color palette, paper media are determined by conditions of the moment – season, weather, light, etc. After that, development by pixel-painting has been different every time...

Works are not formulaic. The flexible process by which they are developed I call the 'pXL' or the '•XL' Process for short. As works do not have to start with pastel media*, flexibility starts at the very beginning.

MEDIA OPTIONS TO START WITH

Any dry media advantageous for 'mass drawing' techniques -- as opposed to 'line' drawing -- create legible base pXImpressions (pxis). These include pastels, Conte Crayons, charcoal sticks, and graphite pencils. In fact, black-and-white artworks developed with such media are suitable. Color(s) can be added digitally to artworks.

MIDDLE STAGE___ #pxPaint, Magnification, Color Proofing

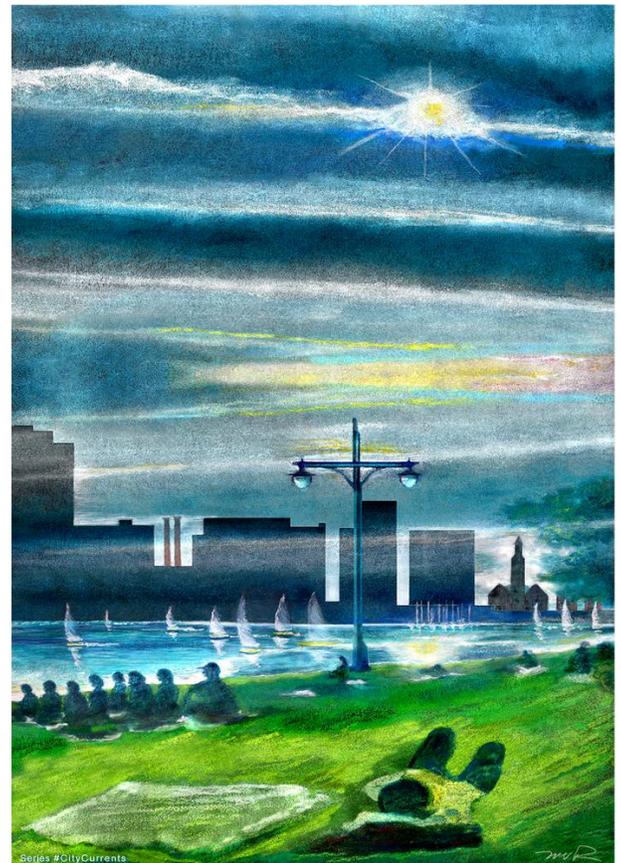
I start by refining pxis because they all need it, but rarely do I go down to single-pixel level. Refinement allows familiarity with pxis and getting a sense of magnification possible in the final work. The greater the magnification, the more work refining and manipulating pxis required – a great deal more! Is this extra work and material expense for exhibition (i.e. Plexiglas) worth it? Magnification is also limited by local printer size.

Of equal concern is color proofing. Among specific challenges is that pxis have extremely subtle color nuances that fine-art printers readily interpret. One reason proofing is mandatory early on.

FINISHES___ Print Media, Hand Color

In 2016, the only archival paper available for fine-art 'giclee' prints was heavy matte (watercolor) paper and printer rendering colors 'true' onto it was suspect at best. Thankfully those days are gone.

Like everything digital today, fine art print technology and archival paper offerings are blazing along with lightening speed. Color rendering even on matte paper has improved hundredfold. For fine-grain pxis, lo-lustre semi-gloss paper is ideal. There are pros and cons to printing on canvas and final color enhancements by hand. So like at the start and middle phases, there is great flexibility at the end as well.

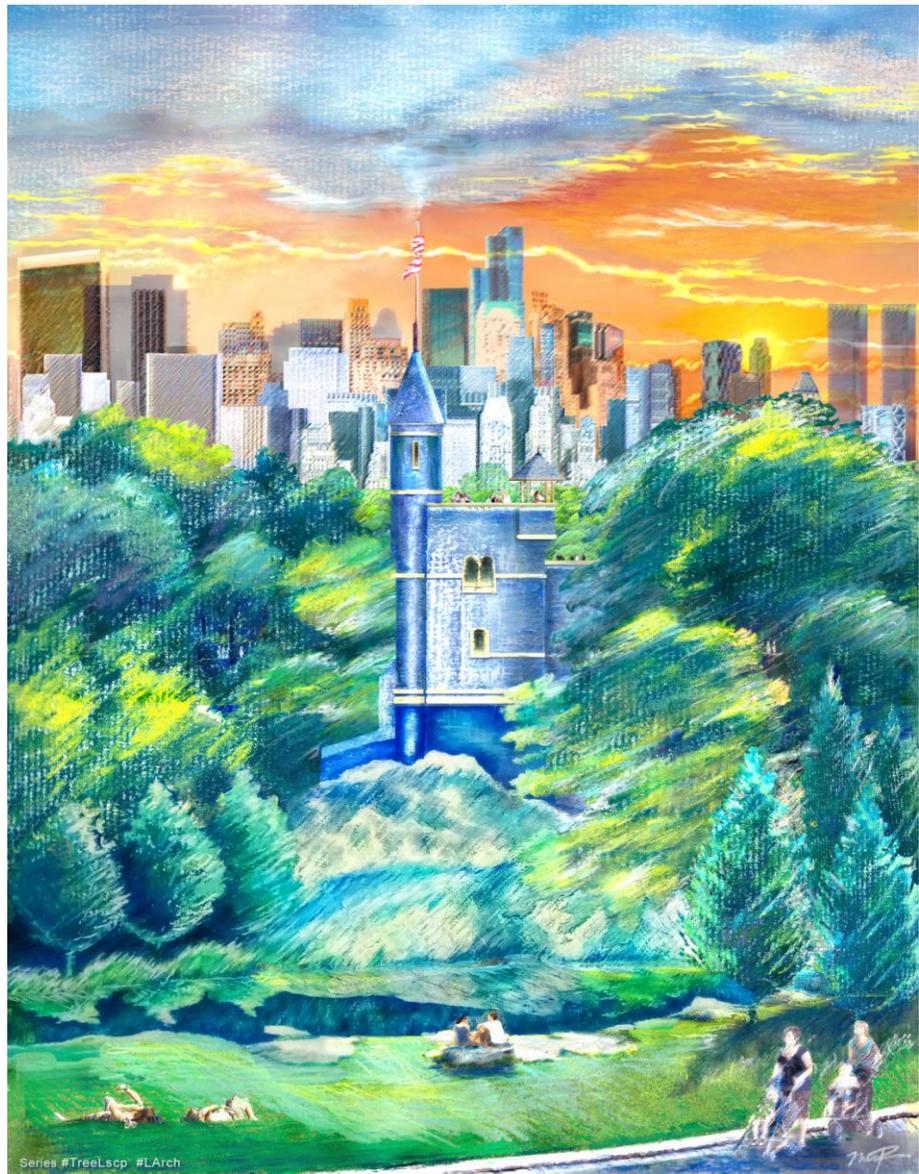


That flexibility requires decision-making throughout the XL process. I am able to make decisions with greater clarity now, having challenged myself with each work undertaken.

Compositionally, in some works pXImpressions are the main feature. Other times they are building blocks in complex 'Composite' works, or altered somewhat to interface harmoniously with collaged elements. Select pxi passages could be abstract paintings themselves - a route ripe for others, but one I haven't yet taken.



from NYS Riverine Thruway @
Tappan Zee Crossing 1664



Castle Central_Central Park The Coolest Weather Center on Earth

CAS: What role do artists play in broader social and environmental conversations today?

Artists are vital in creating awareness of issues. When attuned to specific issue(s), works that raise awareness are rewarding emotionally and spiritually. This happened emphatically with *The Landscape of 21C Lady Liberty* via the 3rd Lady, who stands up for 21C 'Spectrum of Blues'. When I investigated the breadth of blue/depressing social issues to support the work, I saw the magnitude and the non-discriminatory nature of them instantly by 30 hashtags on Instagram. Although I felt hit by a lightning bolt, the revelation validated the purpose of the work, giving modern-day relevance that is profound to an emblem as old as Ms. Liberty from Roman days. I have to point out 'blue' issues are not limited to the U.S., but are global in scope. <https://www.instagram.com/p/BtITNeWnwos/> #LandmarkXL.

I realized though that people don't want to see depressing realities in art, because let's face it - they are not fit for home or office. Doomsday scenarios alone don't work; to accompany serious social issues in artworks, some measure of Hope has to be built in as well.

Being a Registered Landscape Architect, I have to stay abreast of environmental issues. Overcast in *Castle Central_Central Park* (above) are global warming and its ramifications for #GenerationsXYZ. Note that all figures in the work are young people and prominence of 'canopyshadetrees'. <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bs1deH2ncoj/> #TreeLscp #GenerationsXYZ

In #NativeLscp Series works, this Exhibition's 'PiXel World Beach' (top) being one of them, I include wildlife to convey 'eco-habitats' (of creatures besides us) in the hope of conveying how important it is to respect and protect native landscape environments.



CAS: What do you love, or excites you the most, about this -XL Process?

In short, having just scratched the surface on what is possible with it, I see vast opportunities and roads to take with it, not just for myself but many other artists, current and future.

In an Artist Statement from late 2017 for the first exhibition of pXL Works, I wrote, “with materials alone I see vast possibilities to mine...” The will to forge ahead fully in that direction hasn’t diminished; together with it now is the desire to create new works from inception with greater understanding of pxImpressions and the ■XL process. That chapter has yet to start.

Last, there are significant advantages to the XL process, which I identify at the end of the Statement on my [CAS Exhibitor Profile Page](#). These are advantages for artists working individually or collaboratively with artists with different skill sets. One HAS to love so much opportunity, versatility and flexibility, right?

Along that last line of thought, big thanks to CAS for opportunity to express myself and explain all in answer to the questions posed above for this interview.

**I use Hard Pastels the most to start and finish works with the XL Process, thus their name as ‘PastelsXL’. With a dimension of 48”+, they are Xtra-Large. Emphases on XL dimensions and the process to attain them came first; that the letters XL are in PIXEL is by happy coincidence.*