Christ addresses large, philosophical notions in this work, and viewers need detective skills to access and interpret the rich content. Game boards suggest chance and quirks of fate. In certain work, they can allude to the tension between deceit or honesty. Sudden weather incidents—a downpour or furious sky—imply change and its inevitability. Repeated reflections in surfaces comment on simultaneity, time, and time’s passage. Youthful, middle aged, and older figures in a single scene also invoke time and life’s impermanence. In fact, Christ developed his own inventive vocabulary of motifs and their meanings. When the code becomes clear in one work, viewers can carefully unlock layered content in others. That said, it is critical to acknowledge that context coheres and meaning exists, yet not concretely. Christ does not offer unambiguous statements, and his meanings are additive, complex, subtle, muted, and never fixed.

Arresting compositions, exquisite craftsmanship, evocative meaning—these core qualities in the work by Ronald Christ have yielded a signature artistry, one defined by its haunting beauty. Importantly, Christ granted himself the license to craft his own artistic path, shirking the pendulum swings of style in the larger art world. His dedication to honing his own sensibility wisely enabled a sophisticated and seductive artistic voice to emerge and gleam its special quiet radiance. Quoting Merriman again, “Christ creates a magic entertainment for the intellectual eye.”

Patricia McDonnell
Director, Wichita Art Museum
Director, Ulrich Museum of Art, 2007–2012

RONALD CHRIST BIOGRAPHY

EDUCATION
1974 M.F.A., Painting, Indiana University, Bloomington
1972 B.F.A., Painting and Printmaking, Kansas City Art Institute

TEACHING
1976–present Faculty position with School of Art and Design, Wichita State University
Full professor since 1997

Summer 2000 International School of Painting, Drawing, and Sculpture, Umbria, Italy

SELECTED HONORS
2001 Artist Award, Wichita Arts Council
2000 Excellence in Teaching Award, College of Fine Arts, Wichita State University
1995 Artist Award, Kansas Governor’s Arts Awards

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS
Empire Bank, Fidelity Bank, Bank of America, Hallmark Cards, Kansas Health Foundation, United States Embassy collection, Ulrich Museum of Art

Christ is represented by Artworks in Wichita and Duane Reed Gallery in St. Louis. He has a strong record of exhibitions with over 30 one-person shows nationally and internationally.

SEQUENCE
덱스 1, 2, 3, 4
Oil on linen, 50 x 65 in
Cathedral of Notre Dame and Saint Thomas, St. Louis

RONALD CHRIST POETIC FICTIONS

SEPTEMBER 16–DECEMBER 16, 2012
Strong artists appreciate that each artist develops their own expressive language drawing judiciously from earlier artmaking. Ronald Christ is conscious of both the artistic precedents that motivate him and his fresh artistic idiom. Too easily, we fall into the casual habit of stating that one artist influenced another, because we all know you have to learn. “I can make a landscape like Mr. Paul Cézanne,” writer Ernest Hemingway continued, “all such people [artistic predecessors] are easy to deal with, because we all know you have to learn.”

The present exhibition—a survey of nearly 40 years of work—demonstrates his exceptional ability and rigor. Indeed, the accumulative, compounding effect of these paintings, drawings, and watercolors secures his standing as an artist of considerable merit. As Hemingway might state it, he’s clearly learned a thing or two. The late Wichita State University art historian Mira Merriman aptly dubbed Christ’s pictures “a mood of poetic fantasy.” Christ would agree with another of his artistic heroes, the modern artist Balthus, when he wrote: “I always feel the desire to look for the touch of mystery in my paintings.”

His work exhibits a reverence for time-honored techniques and a clear admiration for past masters, whilst it also cultivated new expressive and richly rewarding terrain. The present exhibition—a survey of nearly 40 years of work—demonstrates his exceptional ability and rigor. Indeed, the accumulative, compounding effect of these paintings, drawings, and watercolors secures his standing as an artist of considerable merit. As Hemingway might state it, he’s clearly learned a thing or two.

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