

Branko Marjanovic



Above, Near Wiwaxy Peaks, Opabin Plateau, acrylic on canvas, 48" x 48"



*Above, Beneath Rundle, acrylic on canvas, 48" x 72"
Following Page, Victoria Glacier Hike, Lake Louise, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 36"*

A Canadian Destiny written by Lorie Lee Steiner

Taking in a Branko Marjanovic painting is to absorb the very essence of the great Canadian outdoors. You can almost smell the heady scent of pines stretching skyward. Feel the combined chill and heat from snow-tinged mountaintops awash in sunbeams. Each piece evocative in its own expression... scenes so strikingly vivid as to capture the heart and offer a glimpse into the artist's personal passion for his adopted country and its quintessential landscape.

The Journey

Born in the former Republic of Yugoslavia in 1960, Branko was drawn to creative pursuits, even as a young boy. At the age of 14, he began exploring art as a form of self-expression and vividly recalls, "I started with a brush, a vision, and an unshakable determination to achieve my dreams. I slowly began teaching myself how to paint, and mostly painting the mountain landscapes. I am drawn to their energy, their beauty and the perspective they bring.

I dreamt of living near the Rocky Mountains, and that came to life in 1999 when we moved to Calgary, Alberta!”

With an artistic career spanning more than three decades, Branko has created a distinct palette and style that is recognized and applauded by a wide community of collectors and artists, alike. In the early days, he experimented with oils and watercolors, but the past 12 years have seen a shift to acrylics. Yet, even as his technique continues to evolve, the originality from those earliest years as an artist is still present. Today, signature works by Branko Marjanovic hold pride of place in private collections throughout North America and are exhibited in various galleries in Western Canada.



Above, *Mount Kidd*, acrylic on canvas, 40" x 60"

According to Branko, “The main decision that has shaped my journey is: Values. I value a strong work ethic rooted in integrity. I also value a balance of structure and “let go and let flow.” My wife, Micana, first saw my art when we were 21 years old. She recognized my talent and encouraged me to continue. Later, Zoltan Szabo motivated me to take my art from a hobby into a profession. Also, Mike O’Connor at O’Connor Associates, Canadian watercolor artist Rich Williams, Canadian artist Robert Genn and U.S. watercolor artist Tom Lynch have all helped me to be where I am now. I am impressed by artists with talent, and those who continuously grow their skill sets and show drive to be better. I have never been afraid of a challenge and admire the same in others. Although, I have done many commissions, I prefer to be surprised by unexpected inspiration in life.”

Fascinated by the effect of light and shade found in nature, Branko takes reference photographs and does sketches of the subject matter before he paints – admittedly, preferring a good pencil sketch over a photo. The black and white images are used to look into the values of a subject, which then become the focal point. He fervently believes that “art should not be a copy of the photographic image but rather the mood and impression of the subject.” A large number of photos and sketches are kept in his studio for inspiration. That studio is Branko’s sanctuary. A haven of relaxation and reflection. Just a blank canvas, paint brushes and his thoughts, and often a serenade of light music in the background.



Above, *Three Sisters, Early Light*, acrylic on canvas, 48" x 72"

A piece of sage advice, given years' ago, was a key element in the evolution of Branko's painting process. He notes, "A famous artist once told me that if you want to be a very good acrylic artist you need to master the use of watercolors. In the beginning I used watercolors, where I learned how to capture both light and shade elements of each art subject. My favourite element in painting is the use of large brushes. I find that large brushes help me to be more bold, fearless and unique. I begin with a quick sketch, underpainting and a complete understanding. I start from the focal point and work outwardly until the canvas is covered. Once the painting is near completion, I re-strengthen the focal point elements. A favourite technique is putting whitest white beside darkest dark and allowing the painting to direct light back. Getting started with the best composition and selection of a focal point is the hardest part."

Bold and Inspirational

For beginners just starting to explore art, Branko offers some encouraging words, "Be bold. Be fearless. Be unique. Sharp brush strokes and an imagination are the keys. I always laugh with gratitude at the facial expressions and comments of art collectors when they observe painting demonstrations at Galleries... artists going from a white canvas into completion."



This Page, Top; *Late September Hike*, acrylic on canvas, 48" x 72"



This Page, Bottom; *Snow Castle*, acrylic on canvas, 30" x 60"



This Page, Top; *Captivating Rundle*, acrylic on canvas, 40" x 60"
 Bottom, Left; *Pleasing Assiniboine*, acrylic on canvas, 48" x 48"
 Bottom Right, *Mesmerizing Sisters*, acrylic on canvas, 48" x 48"
 Following Page, *A Day at Consolation Lake*, acrylic on canvas, 48" x 48"

When they see a painting and tell me they've "got to have it" in their home, it is such an honour to be an artist."

The Canadian Rockies hold a special place in Branko's heart... "the way the colour dances on the mountain slopes." He finds Lake O'Hara at Yoho National Park, Banff National Park, and Spirit Island in Jasper National Park are especially inspirational. When not working and creating, the artist spends time communing with nature, whether at the mountain slopes or scuba diving – Hawaii being a favourite diving location. As for plunging into life as an artist, he explains, "We as people are all talented in different ways. The goal is to discover what that is and take a chance by diving into it."



Some of us may recognize it in early stages of life, while others may find it later on. It is the matter of discovering what drives us, growing our skills, and never giving up. If art is your forte, ease into it. It is canvas, a few colours, and your creativity. Painting should not be heavy work, but rather an inspirational journey that manifests into artwork."

Branko tells a poignant story from his youth that beautifully highlights his artistic journey. He shares, "At the age of 13, my family went on a road trip to Venice. My parents and brother were enjoying the fashion and shopping in Italy, while I was drawn to a beautiful wallpaper of Spirit Island in Jasper, Canada. At that time, I did not know much about the image on the wallpaper but I was certain that it belonged in my room. I brought it home with me and looked at it daily in amazement, wishing to see it in real life one day. Seventeen years later I was with my family in Canada, and eventually at Spirit Island, with a brush in my hand and painting that incredible little island that I dreamed of for many years! Some would call it a coincidence, but I call it destiny. Canada was always with me."

Living the Dream

"Painting is not work to me - it is something I become absorbed in. I am fascinated by the effect of the light and shade found in nature. Although I take photographs and sketches of the subject matter I paint, I do not allow them to control me.

Art should not be a copy of a photographic image but the mood and impression of the subject. In this regard, I prefer a good pencil sketch as I find that it captures the basic elements and provides better composition than a photograph." I am living the dream!



Above, *Inviting View, Rundle*, acrylic on canvas, 24" x 48"
Following Page, *Charming Louise*, acrylic on canvas, 30" x 30"



Discover more about the artist Branko Marjanovic at www.brankomarjanovic.com.

The art of Branko Marjanovic is represented by the following fine art galleries.

Avens Gallery
Canmore, AB
www.theavensgallery.com
403.678.4471 or 1.844.678.4471

Grant Berg Gallery
Grande Prairie, AB
www.grantberggallery.com
1.587.259.6333