Robert Vickrey: The Magic of Realism
by Philip Eliasoph

A stunning artists monograph that spans the prolific 60-year career of this master of the egg tempera medium, Robert Vickrey.

My Personal Review:
Many fads have come and gone in the world of Modern Art, leaving behind very few gems and a vast mountain range of rubbish. Meanwhile, largely banished to its periphery by critics and moguls who dictate the parameters of and criteria for admittance to the "Land of Art", Robert Vickrey has been prolifically creating a monumental and stunningly beautiful body of work in his own style, to the beat of his own drum. Vickrey's art is no less Modern than that of any Abstract or Conceptual artist's (or any other movement you could name from the past 60 years), but the big difference with his work is that it's based on realism-- and that fact alone seems to have kept him from receiving the recognition he deserves.

Those who reject Vickrey's work out of hand have obviously never taken a long, unbiased, and truly deep look at it. The jaded or superficial viewer might be instantly put off by his many compositions featuring children, balloons, bicycles, seesaws, kittens, and other such elements-- such trivial, mundane, Norman Rockwellian material! But take another look; this time REALLY look at it. You may see something far deeper, much more engaging than just those recognizable shapes. You may see the world, through those seemingly familiar shapes, in a way you hadn't considered before, or perhaps from a place beyond your everyday waking consciousness. But then, there are plenty of Robert Vickrey's paintings which can strike an immediate psychological chord within even a casual viewer. To this careful and very appreciative viewer, those works are simultaneously astonishing, revelatory, enigmatic, and deeply aesthetically pleasing.

There are plenty of abstract elements in Vickrey's paintings. If Realism the core of his art, then Abstraction is its carapace. And what a glimmering,
shimmering carapace it is! He has taken egg tempera (and in a few cases, acrylic) to a new height, and shown it in a new light.

My discovery, in 1973, of Robert Vickrey's art through his book "New Techniques in Egg Tempera" was an electrifying and exhilarating experience that greatly expanded my concept of Modern Art. His 1979 follow-up "Robert Vickrey: Artist at Work" proved to be no less engaging. Both books afforded fascinating glimpses into his innovative (and heretical, to orthodox tempera painters) techniques, but they also provided small samplings of his wit and his philosophy of art, as well as a short biographical sketch in the latter book. During the 1980s and 90s there was little or nothing published of his work. The long wait for a Vickrey retrospective has been excruciating, but this, his most current book, "Robert Vickrey: The Magic of Realism" is a dream come true.

If I had any wishes for improving this otherwise perfect book, they are: 1. that all the illustrations could be in color (which I know would make it prohibitively expensive, therefore is unrealistic) and 2. that it would have included one of my personal favorites of his works, "Under the Skylight".

If you are new to Robert Vickrey, this book will open your eyes and blow your mind. If you are already familiar with Vickrey and don't have this book, what are you waiting for?

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price: