

## Signs of the Times

by [D. Eric Bookhardt](#)



Lory Lockwood's photorealist paintings such as *Vette On Vette* often display a flair for reflections that can border on abstraction

Lory Lockwood is a painter gifted with a chromium touch, an ability to make the arcane art of oil paint on canvas resemble the glossiest product photography imaginable. Her paintings of the sleekest of sports cars and vintage Detroit behemoths restored to more than mint condition represent a multifaceted approach that cuts across the cultural spectrum. For instance, photorealist painting is typically a highbrow concern, something that appeals to a certain strata of hard core collectors and curators, folks who are typically immersed in the minutia of art history, movements, trends and the like. It is a style of painting that is, for the most part, an acquired taste. But classic and collector car buffs are most often comfortable, middle-class folk who share a fascination with exotic or vintage cars that is based on a mixture of sensual gratification, nostalgia and whatever it is about powerful, fast, sleek machines that triggers an "endorphin rush" -- that giddy sense of exhilaration that is for some guys what chocolate sometimes is for women.

So is Lockwood trying to have it both ways -- a mixture of highbrow technique and middlebrow cultural appeal? Or is that even a relevant question? It may not matter. She just waves that chromium wand and distills all that she surveys into the glossiest depictions of exotically machined metal imaginable. Sometimes their allure is as straight up as an illustration out of a book or magazine, but at other times the imagery is almost abstract as Lockwood zeroes in on reflections within reflections, the gloss of mirror-polished enamel reflected in convoluted chrome.

An example of the former approach is seen in *Gold Digger*, a dreamy view of an ultra-sleek custom motorcycle that appears to rise like an apparition from a spit of land surrounded by swamp. Here the painting simply offers a view, as if through a window, of its fantastical subject. But *Porsche And Palms* -- an image of a Porsche so distorted in the reflections of another car that it's as convoluted as one of Salvador Dali's melting timepieces -- is ultra abstract. A happy medium is seen in *Vette On Vette* in which the sleek yellow form of a Stingray-type Corvette appears reflected on the polished cobalt flanks of a classic late 1950s Corvette -- a vision as exalted for a car freak as a Fabergé Easter egg must be for a jewelry buff. Philosophers can debate the fine points of what it all means, but what's beyond dispute is Lockwood's ability to recreate in oils that reflective chrome sizzle -- the mystique of elaborately machined metal, the aura of speed and the visceral excitement it conveys.