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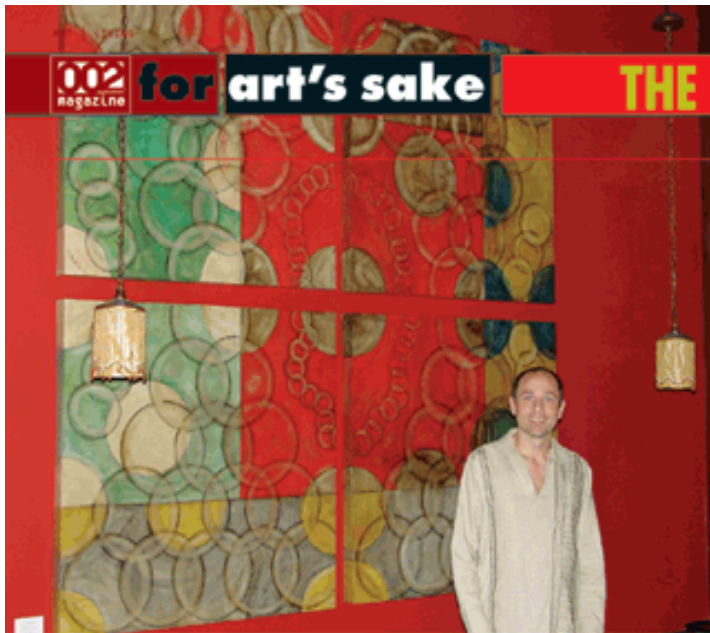
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for art's sake

## THE PARENTE MOVEMENT

by Maurice Bobb

The pivotal moment in Nicola Parente's life came after years of reveling in the libertine kicks of being a wine connoisseur and salesman. Parente snapped out of his ways when a friend passed away, having had a dream that he let idly wither and die.

Inspired, Parente, always passionate about art and painting, went out and bought a huge canvas to finally embark on his quest to be the artist he'd always wanted to be. **Parente overshot just a tad, though, because the canvas collected dust in his closet for almost two years.**

"One of my friends passed away and he didn't fulfill one of his passions in life," said Parente, who was born in the small farming and fishing village of Mola di Bari on the Adriatic Sea. "A friend and I were reflecting on that and we decided that if you have a passion, you should pursue it. So I went out and bought a huge canvas that actually sat in the closet for two years. I was scared to death to do anything with it. And I was afraid of not knowing where to begin. Then, two years later, my friend and I had the same conversation and he asked me when I was going to start, so I started that night and I haven't stopped since."

Parente's nose dive into painting quickly paid off as his pieces became the toast of the local art scene. Di Vino Italian Restaurant on West Alabama hosted Parente's first Texas solo art show and Mind Puddles hosted his first solo gallery exhibit. Since then, gallery exhibitions, art shows and special events have given his work increasingly wide exposure.

Parente's work, an explosive mix of vibrant colors and earthy tones, finds extensions of humanity and his innermost thoughts and feelings. Parente counts modern masters such as Picasso, Pollack and Matisse, a South American artist, as his major influences for their structure, freedom and creativity, respectively.

"Most of my work is an expression of soul and flight," said Parente, who, **not surprisingly, likes to sip wine and listen to music while he paints.** "I like to relate to people. My inspiration is people and travels. It's an extension of humanity – trying to capture a part of that and put it on canvas, wood and glass is an extension of what I felt at that moment. My work is a reflection of my soul."

Currently, Parente's works can be viewed around Houston in such spaces as Franklin Street Coffee House, Mind Puddles Gallery and the newest addition to downtown nightlife, 6° Lounge on Franklin, which has his latest pieces centered on circles on display.

"I did a series at 6° Lounge based on circles," Parente said. "They were made especially for that space. I've been playing with the idea of doing a series with circles because everywhere I go in life I see circles. If I see a face, I see circles. When I look at planets and the world, I see circles. In wheels on cars or people's eyes, I see circles and they all connect. And that's the relationship in the paintings."

According to Parente, life is a dance; it's all about movement, which is the philosophy behind his work.

"A lot of my work is movement," said Parente. "It goes with the beat of the music. Life moves forwards, backwards and to the side. I hope people see that in my work. I love movement."

Parente's favorite expression is commissioned pieces. He finds that creating a commission piece brings him in tune with art collectors, which ultimately, gives him a broader understanding of his work and himself.

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"I do a lot of commission work," Parente said. "And when I'm doing a commission piece, I like to really get to know the person. I really get into what kind of music they listen to, what they eat, how they live. I pattern my tone on those things when I'm painting for them. In this way, I became really involved in that person, which is a great way to connect with that person. **So I really become great friends with all of the collectors of my work.**"

Additionally, Parente is attempting to change the didactic manner that surrounds the art world by forming an alliance of sorts with other notable artists in Houston to form what he calls the Inventive Art Group.

"The Inventive Art Group is a collaboration of talents, personalities and expertise. By removing our individual barriers and working as a team, we create a unique artistic language. Each member of the group is an accomplished artist in his or her own right and we do collaborations that harness the diverse techniques, thoughts, emotions and ideas."

Parente's first international show will debut next year in Ethiopia. His ongoing exhibitions include Bering and James Gallery and Blank Canvas Gallery.

**For more information on Nicola Parente, please log on to [www.nparente.com](http://www.nparente.com).**