

# Sketches: Nicola Parente

**Captivated by the sea, a local artist channels his childhood.**

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By [Peter Holley](#)



Nicola Parente

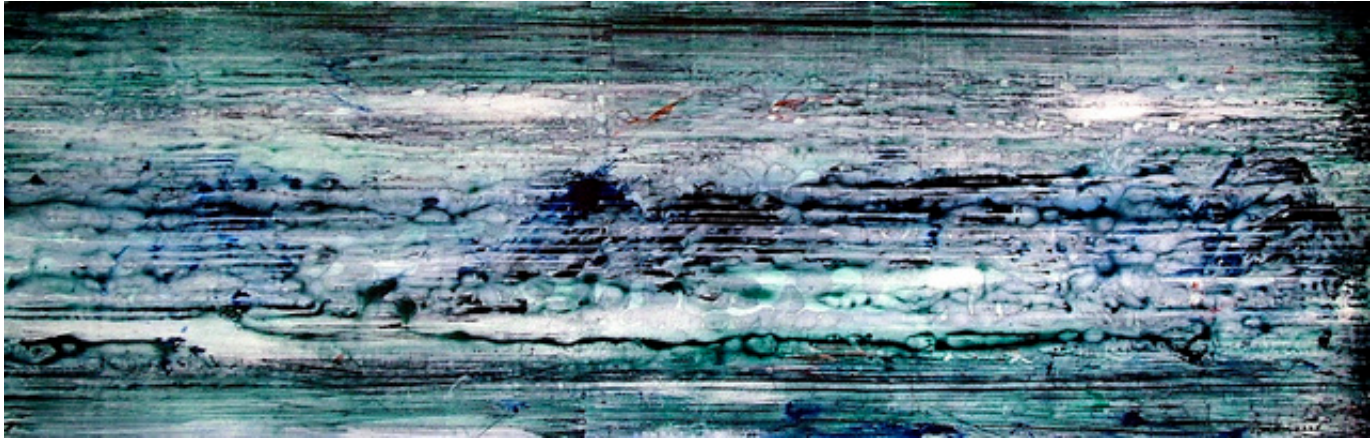
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Growing up on the shores of the Adriatic Sea in southern Italy, [Nicola Parente](#) became accustomed to expansive views of the open water. His family lived in a small town and didn't have a car, so their primary

means of transportation was trains. Once onboard, the little boy often found himself glued to the window, his imagination absorbed by the various shades of blue rushing past his window.

"The trains followed the coastline and so looking out of the train window was like a movie for me," says Parente, who is represented by [Gremillion & Co. Fine Art](#). "The experience of the movement itself is something that has carried through all my work as an artist."

It is also the inspiration for *Pelagico*, his latest series of paintings. As Parente puts it, the series "beckons the observer to consider both the sea that lies within and the expanse of sea that brings life to the world."



A  
Greek  
word

meaning "one with water," *Pelagico* is a series that fully absorbs its viewer. Most pieces are seven feet tall and four feet wide. Parente, who considers himself a reductive abstract painter, works mostly with acrylic paints, but he also incorporates ink and charcoal. He is fond of working with fluids, creating a intricate process of wetness and drying that leads to undulating lines and unexpected fusions of color.

"What happens initially is that I almost fill my surface with paints," he says. "Then I reduce it down and I keep reducing it back down until it's sometimes almost like a drawing with lots of negative space."

The process can last for weeks and involves paintbrushes, his hands, and a series of chiseled plexiglass tools that Parente created specifically for the task of dragging paint.

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