



Street Artists

MAX MORAN: MADISON STOREFRONTS

by Ellen Leary

Max Moran has been painting Carnegie Hill for 11 years. You have probably seen him at his easel, somewhere in the neighborhood, with a paintbrush in his hand and finished paintings leaning against a building. He might be concentrating on how the autumn light hits the blossoms of a Callary pear tree or on the forest-green storefront of J & D Flessas or, perhaps, on two dogs greeting each other in front of The Corner Bookstore.

Mr. Moran considers himself a chronicler of Carnegie Hill. Born in Xenia, Ohio, he grew up "a sort of military brat," he says, and was awarded a full scholarship to the Columbus College of Art and Design. He lived at 1230 Park Avenue for a number of years and became interested in the Carnegie Hill neighborhood. His first merchant customer was Rory Wade, owner of Canard & Company (which was located at 92nd Street and Madison Avenue, now the site of Yura and Co.), who commissioned him to do a painting of his store. "There was no formal contract," says Mr. Moran. "Rory used to cash my checks and let me walk out of his store with \$100 worth of groceries." Since then he has painted almost every storefront on Madison Avenue from 90th to 96th Street.

Mr. Moran now lives in Jamesport, NY, and is booked a year in advance. He is creating a website (www.maxmoran.com) so that people will be able to view his current paintings on-line and will also be able to review the last few years of life in Carnegie Hill. "Change is inevitable," says Mr. Moran. "An artist's job is to document the identity and culture of his day."

Those who strive to keep the tall buildings at bay, stem the tide of telephone booths, and take up arms against a sea of Asian long-horn beetles will be comforted to know that the unique charm that is the essence of Carnegie Hill has been eloquently preserved on the canvases of Max Moran. ■