CLASSICAL REALISM JOURNAL

DEDICATED TO A RENEWAL IN THE VISUAL ARTS

VOLUME II, ISSUE 1

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From the Editor

REBECCA H. ANDERSON

With this issue, the *Journal* extends a warm welcome to Peter Bougie as associate editor and columnist. Peter's ties to the realist tradition are bound by four years of training at Atelier Lack; many years of teaching, including anatomy at Atelier Lack, landscape painting at Atelier LeSueur and figure drawing at the Minnesota State Arts High School; and seven years as director, teacher and owner of The Bougie Studio in Minneapolis.

An associate guild member of the American Society of Classical Realism, Peter specializes in landscape and figurative works. He has exhibited extensively both in Minneapolis and across the country and his works are found in numerous private and corporate collections. Peter's first column appears in this issue, and he has already enthusiastically contributed to this and upcoming issues with his ideas, insights and helpful suggestions. Thanks, Pete, and welcome aboard.

Also joining the ranks as associate editor is Steven Levin. Readers will recognize Steve's name from articles in past issues and as an associate member of the ASCR Guild. He will lend his expertise as an editor of painting, and we'll rely on him to advise and choose reproductions to accompany the *Journal*'s articles, help with layout procedures and more. Steve has traveled extensively to paint and study, most recently in England, and just a few months ago in France and Italy (see Notes From Abroad). Steve's training includes six years at Atelier LeSueur, in Wayzata, Minnesota, where he now maintains a studio and is an instructor. His paintings are represented in both public galleries and private collections, and he is the recipient of numerous national awards. Steve's knowledge, energy and experience will help the *Journal* continue to grow and flourish.

When I started my job as editor of the *Journal*, I felt the need to speak up for an equitable presence of women within the *Journal*'s pages as writers, artists, historical figures, reviewers, cover artists, etc. However, I quickly realized that I was working with an editorial board who embraced standards of excellence regardless of gender. The same standards apply to every issue of the *Journal*, inviting all comers in the capacities previously stated. Enough said.

The intriguing lives of two historical figures are to be found in our pages this time. Theodore Lukits and Nerina Simi both lived well into their nineties and influenced legions of students who carry on their legacies in studios all over the globe. Lukits resided and taught in California. His artistic lineage harkens back to Bouguereau, with whom his teachers had studied. Simi's father and teacher, Filadelpho, studied with Gérôme. Many thanks to the people whose lives have been touched by these two masters and who were kind enough to contact us with information and anecdotes that we know you'll find fascinating.

Our front cover artist, Lindesay Harkness, offers a thoughtful essay on seeing values from a decidedly scientific approach. Artist readers may think about squinting in a new way after reading this informative article.

On a personal note, many thanks to all who expressed concern and good wishes during my illness as the last *Journal* was going to press. Special thanks to Stephen Gjertson for his careful attention to final editing/production details.

Enjoy reading the *Journal* during the final weeks of the cool, dark months. We'd love to hear from you with the thaw. — RHA

Back cover:
Dale Redpath.
Tea Set and Bird Cage,
Oil on canvas, 24" x 18".

Front cover:
Lindesay Harkness.
Bouquet in Oriental Vase.
Pastel, 27" x 38".

The *Classical Realism Journal*

is dedicated to the preservation and promotion of traditional representational art. The *Journal* features artist-written articles on the painter's craft, as well as articles by experts who work in related fields. It is published by The American Society of Classical Realism, a nonprofit volunteer organization.

CLASSICAL REALISM JOURNAL

In This Issue

"The art of representational painting is founded on the organized interplay of abstract patterns with finely rendered aspects of visual truth, and the merit of pictures should be judged primarily on that basis."

— R. H. Ives Gammell

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LETTERS

Thank you for the beautiful issue on William A. Bouguereau. It is something I just never dreamed I'd see. I'm just an average person with no art history training, etc. I love a painting by Bouguereau we have at the Dayton Art Institute called The Song of the Nightingale. *I've since started researching the artist and it's been a wonderful year of discovery.*

It was my saddest moment when I read that Mark Walker had passed away. I would have loved to have written to him. He was a kindred spirit!

Lois Clingman
Dayton, Ohio

It's a story many Journal *readers are familiar with. You can't find desired artistic training. Galleries refuse your work because realism is passé. MFA programs "don't know where Old Masters' techniques are taught." I share your experiences. Until I was referred to Cecil-Graves Studio in 1988, I knew no one who could teach me what I wanted to know. I was able to study there just long enough to be introduced to sight-size techniques before I ran out of money.*

Returning to America, I worked as a full-time nurse, taking on extra shifts to earn tuition for an appropriate education at an atelier. I discovered the ASCR and the Journal *early in 1993. Since then, it has sustained me with intelligently written articles on splendid artists. Last year, I was diagnosed with cancer. Although the neoplasm was localized, I did a lot of "life review." I decided I could not put off completing my training any longer. I discovered Atelier LeSueur, applied, and was accepted.*

I'm very excited about being at this atelier. The teachers are artists of formidable ability and the curriculum is truly awe-inspiring! I can look forward to extensive instruction in imaginative, historical painting. And I'm absolutely confident that under direction of Annette LeSueur, I will become an artist of a higher caliber than I had ever dreamed possible. Thank you Classical Realism Journal*!*

Barbara Kellam
Spring Park, Minnesota

William Bouguereau has been a favorite of mine for a long time. I've been fortunate to have seen at least half a dozen of his works. One I used to view regularly at Forest Lawn Mortuary in Glendale, California. It is a replica of an old English church and is magnificent!

I have an old print of Elizabeth Gardner Bouguereau's called The Bird's Nest. *I am continually discovering women artists relegated to the dust bin. What a challenge!*

Evelyn Embry
Berkshire, New York

P.S. I feel compelled to mention that regarding Richard F. Lack's article On the Training of Painters, *I find the sexism not excusable and not acceptable on the premise that it "simplifies" the writing. "He" will never represent "she" any more than she will adequately represent he.*

Too bad you spoiled it for me. I do believe you are trying to do a good thing, but the diminution and/or exclusion of women will only detract and turn away those who would otherwise support you in your endeavor.

Editor's note: Thank you for your important viewpoint. It is our intent to uphold the Journal's *policy to eliminate gender bias in its articles.*

Thank you so much for sending me the information about The American Society of Classical Realism. I've been struggling for years to preserve the style and methods of the Old Masters against a swelling tide of advocates of modern art.

Bless you for offering the Journal *and the support of your organization to those of us trained in the classical tradition! My check for membership is enclosed.*

Janet W. Kimberling
Santa Fe, New Mexico

I just received my first issue of the Classical Realism Journal. *WOW! I'm most pleased with the* Journal *and agree with the aims of the ASCR. I especially enjoy and look forward to articles on technique. Enclosed is a list of publications I would like to purchase, along with a check.*

Again, I applaud your efforts and the results.

David Parker
Louisville, Kentucky

Bravo! The most recent Journal *is beautiful!*

Roberta Kritzia
Sherman Oaks, California

Allow me to compliment you for the excellence apparent in both the presentation and content of the Classical Realism Journal. *It, and the goals and objectives of the Society, truly serve as an inspiration for artistic endeavor.*

I especially treasure the Bouguereau issue and was also glad to see the article on the sculptor Bistolfi.

Many thanks, keep up the fine work.

Donald Broderick
Monument, Colorado

Nerina Simi. *Portrait of an Old Woman.*

The Signorina

by Richard Freemantle

When Filadelfo Simi returned to Florence in 1880 after four years of study in Paris, he started to paint and teach techniques which went back through the 19th-century French painters to earlier masters. His mentor in Paris, Jean-Léon Gérôme, had taught him tight drawing in the manner of Ingres, and anecdotal oil painting which was carefully studied and dramatic.

Simi's Florentine studio and home was in the parish of San Giuseppe behind the big Franciscan church of Santa Croce. Like so many artists he became relatively well-known in his lifetime, but still never enjoyed the degree of success and popularity for which he had hoped. For more than 40 years he continued to teach and paint in piazza Piave, until his death in 1923.

The long life of his daughter Nerina, born in 1890, was also dedicated to art—to preserving her father's studio and to teaching in his memory. Until she became ill and died in February, 1987 at age 97, the studio was still full of happy students, and unbelievably, she was still teaching. As a child and young girl, Nerina Simi would sit for hours and watch her father's methods of work. She would help him with his commissions, keeping things in order, mixing paint and aiding him in small ways. In return he would explain how to divide

> *"Remember that Nature is your teacher — I am only your guide."*
> – *Nerina Simi*

up a drawing, how to look at spaces and light between objects and how different marks could be made with the same pencil. Until she was 16, she led the cloistered existence of many young Florentine girls of her day. But then, so that she could also teach, she went for six years to the Liceo Artistico, a high school specially dedicated to the arts. Afterwards she began to work as an independent painter, teaching in convent schools for girls, at the Quiete, Villa Schifanoia, the Sacred Heart. World War I interrupted her career, and soon after, her father died.

It was natural that she should take over the studio, exactly as it was, and continue to teach there. Her father's drawings and paintings continued to hang exactly as he had left them. The plaster busts remained in the little study to which slower students were often banished. Easels, the model stand and coal

Nerina Simi (1890 – 1987) in her studio.

Nerina Simi. *Castelnuovo in Garfagnaisa, Italy*, Oil on canvas.

Nerina Simi. *Child's Head*, Oil on canvas.

stove, the air vents in the ceiling, all was kept as he had left it. At first the students were exclusively Italian. But by the 1960s her doorbell would ring regularly every few weeks with a new English or American student wanting to learn the secrets of classical drawing and painting. As her fame grew, students arrived from all corners of the earth, until slowly the large classes became predominantly foreign.

"Drawing is everything," she would say. "Without it, and light, there can never be any art. Then the composition follows, and finally a real sense of color. The student must look correctly and then draw correctly."

Nerina always insisted upon the basics: the paper had to be good quality, the pencil sharp. Few erasures were allowed—they damaged the paper. The student's position, the line of sight toward the model, the easel—everything had to be considered with great care. Before drawing anything, a student's pencil would be raised at arm's length toward the model. An axis with correct proportions of drawing to the page would be established: five-head-sized for a sitting figure, seven to one standing. Dawn Cookson and Susan Crawford both trained with Signorina

> ***"Nerina Simi, like Gammell, was the Gérôme of our time."***
>
> *- Nelson H. White, artist, long-time friend, and student of Simi's*

Nerina Simi. *Basket Weaver, Costume Sardinian*, Oil on canvas.

> ***"She can get results out of no talent at all!"***
>
> *- attributed to Pietro Annigoni*

Simi and are successful artists in Great Britain, the latter particularly well-known as a painter of horses. The Americans Lincoln Taber, Joe Vogelsang, Nelson White and Charles Kapsner all trained with her for many years. Antonio Ciccone was sent to her as a talented lad from Foggia by Padre Pio. Lance Bresso is a well-known artist in Sydney, and Daniel Graves, an American, carries on her work at his school in Florence.

The abstract expressionists used to claim that realism—classical drawing and painting—was dead. Art had moved on toward new rhythms, new colors, new interpretations. Never again would valid art be produced by portraying the natural world, or people, as we see them. Signorina Simi did not believe that. "All I do is make my students look more carefully at the world around us, and then draw and paint what they see—reality."

Realism is now in vogue again. Nerina Simi taught that to paint realistically one has to know how to draw. Even if the last 19th-century art school has vanished, its legacy remains alive.

Richard Freemantle is an art historian who interviewed Nerina Simi in Florence on a Wednesday afternoon in 1979. He is the author of Late Gothic, Early Florentine Renaissance, *a catalog of central Italy's paintings of that era. He resides in Florence and is currently working on a series of essays on the Florentine painter Masaccio.*

Many thanks to Mr. Freemantle for his kind permission to reprint this previously published article.

—Ed.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The *Journal* gratefully acknowledges Nelson H. White for making reproductions available to accompany the articles about Nerina Simi. White is a third-generation artist from Waterford, Connecticut, who studied with the Signorina for many years in addition to lengthy study with her contemporary, Pietro Annigoni.

Florentine Classic

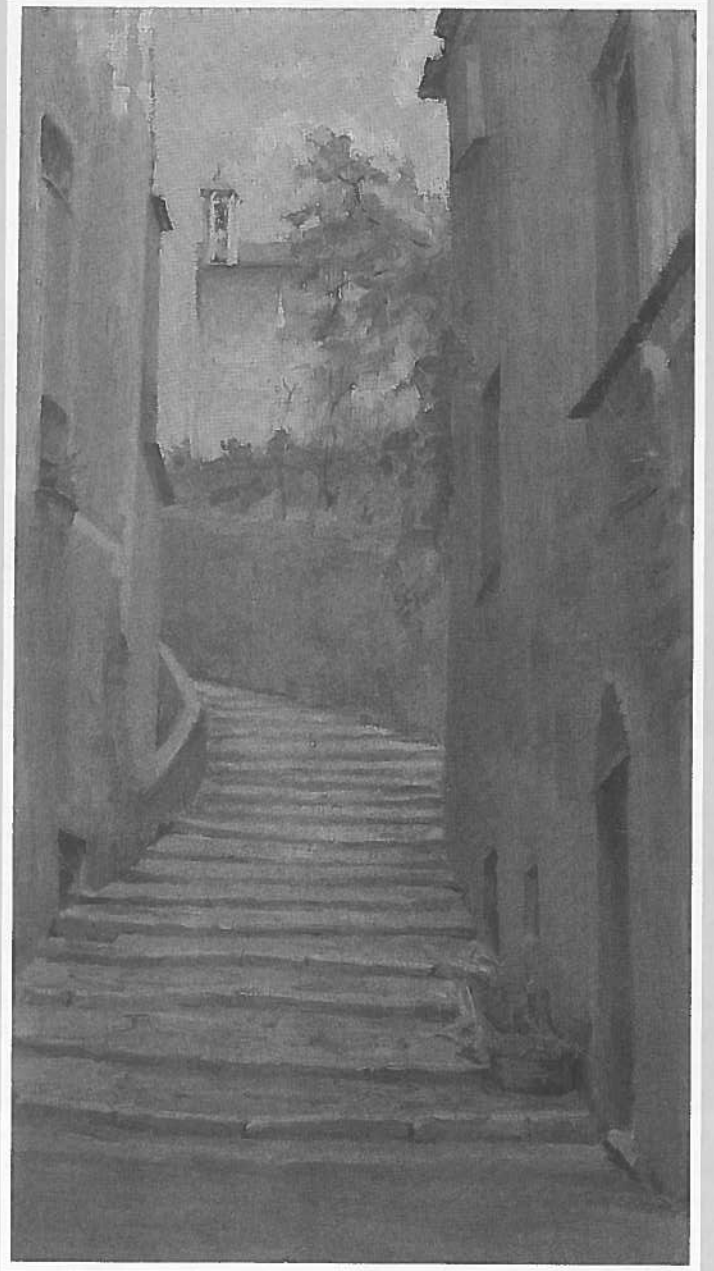
a memoir by Charles Kapsner

I first met Signorina Nerina Simi in January, 1974. A friend brought me to her studio to introduce me and to see if she had room for another student. Unfortunately, she didn't at the time, but she agreed to critique my work every other Saturday. This went on for several months until it was time for me to return to the States. I asked her if it would be possible to get into a class if I came back in the fall when classes were to begin. Her response was classic: "Yes, it always helps to start at the beginning."

I remember my first few days of classes that October. I was as nervous as one could be. I had never experienced a studio situation like it before. It was easy to be intimidated with all of her father's work looming overhead. I had only seen work like it before in museums. (Coming from Little Falls, Minnesota, to Florence, Italy, was "culture shock maximus"!)

It was several days before Madame Simi came around to comment on my work. The first thing that came out of her mouth was, "Is this all you are going to draw — little flies? One must work larger!" I had been working on a quarter sheet of paper; she was wanting us to work on full sheets and then work out life-size sections of the pose, always remembering design.

As time went on, I became more comfortable with the studio setting and my growing friendship with the Signorina. It was wonderful listening to her speak Italian. It was so crisp and clear, unlike the typical Florentine who slurred their words. We used formal Italian, which meant third person, singular when addressing each other. As my knowledge of the language developed, she would critique more and more in Italian. This was a great advantage, because Italian is so much more descriptive than English from an artistic standpoint. What in English would have been a minor discourse became something quite elaborate in Italian.



Nerina Simi. *Stairway in Town.* Oil on canvas.

After attending classes for a couple of years I made appointments with Maestro Pietro Annigoni. About every three months on a Saturday morning I'd take my work to his studio for a critique. Remarkably, it was almost as if the Signorina had called Annigoni the night before and told him what work I was bringing in and what her opinion was. Immediately after the appointment I'd go back to the studio and talk to her about each drawing and tell her what the Maestro had said. For me this was an incredible experience, having two of the Florentine greats giving me the same direction. There was no confusion about my work.

Every time I expressed a desire to paint, the Signorina would tell me that when the time was right I would get to it. She always insisted that I draw, draw and draw some more. One day I would look back and be grateful for that guidance.

During my last couple years as the Signorina's student, I sat in the front seat on the right side of the studio. Every morning I'd be there 15 minutes early so I could sharpen my charcoal. She'd come in at 9 a.m. every morning, give me a smile and say, "Good morning, Chuck. How are you today?" and begin the class. It was a little ritual that made our friendship all the more special.

The last time I saw her was during the summer of 1984 when she was getting ready to go to her mountain home northwest of Florence. She was 94 years old at the time and as sharp as could be. Unfortunately, she had difficulty walking because of a hip problem and bad knees. We had to get her down two flights of stairs and into her nephew's waiting car. She was in a big, comfortable armchair that three of us carried down the steps. Her only comment to everyone was to be careful "because Chuck has a bad back." Her safety depended on my back not going out! Once outside I helped her into the car. She smiled at me and said, "See you soon, Chuck." The Signorina waved as the car drove away.

Note: For an update on Charles Kapsner's work, see page 48.

Charcoal Drawing, Simi Style

by Alexander Katlan

The following techniques of charcoal drawing were taught to me by Nerina Simi in 1978 in Florence, Italy. . .

The two most critical factors in classical drawing are materials and measurements. In order to do a finely detailed charcoal drawing, the hardest charcoal should be selected. The charcoal that I used at Simi's studio in Italy was Winsor & Newton No. 3 Hard. This charcoal is only manufactured in the United States because it is made from kiln-dried redwood twigs. Needless to say, no redwood forest exists in Europe, making this type of charcoal difficult to locate. (Vine charcoal is too soft and when used, the drawing lacks detail, blurs and often is too dark, losing subtlety.) Not every piece of charcoal is suitable. The straightest pieces should be used, but if there is a slight curve to the charcoal, it is acceptable. Too much of a curve makes the charcoal more difficult to control. The tip of the charcoal should be sanded to a fine, pencil-like point.

Simi's students working in her studio in 1965.

This is how Simi's students created their first tool for charcoal drawing: To create the charcoal's point, a sanding board was made. A fine sandpaper and superfine sandpaper were selected and glued to two small boards using either an aqueous or PVA-based adhesive, making sure there were no air bubbles or wrinkles in the sandpaper. The boards would dry for a day or two. To create the drawing point, students would roll the charcoal over the sandpaper creating a tapered point, first with the coarser sandpaper, then moving quickly to extra fine.

Next came the selection of the paper itself. We were taught that the paper should be uniform and free of bumps (sometimes found in handmade papers), wrinkles and ridges. Too great a tooth will result in too much texture in the drawing, while paper that is too fine will not hold the charcoal. After all, a charcoal drawing adheres to the paper solely by filling the crevices of the fiber matrix. Among the students in Italy, the two most popular papers were Fabriano Ingres and Whatman paper. Some of the papers were toned either grey, red or beige. I'm not sure of the availability of these handmade papers today. However, a paper with a slight tooth, probably cold pressed, and even if machine-made is suitable. And it is critical that drawing paper be 100 percent rag (composed of linen or cotton fiber) and acid-free, meaning that no wood pulp has been added. Wood pulp papers will deteriorate, discolor to a brown tone and become extremely brittle. Buffered papers simply have an additive, usually a calcium salt, which prevents them from becoming acidic, even though the paper contains wood pulp. Over time, however, the buffers are absorbed or weakened as the acidity of the wood pulp increases, eventually resulting in an acidic, brittle paper. More importantly, the sizing and buffering materials fill the crevices of the paper fibers making it more difficult for the charcoal to stay on the paper.

A successful drawing depends upon accuracy of measurement. A plumb line or the tip of the charcoal would be used for measurement to roughly map in the form of the initial drawing. By working lightly, building up the form and shading, concentrating on the darks and leaving alone the lights, the students created the fine detail and confidence necessary to do portraiture. Corrections of form were made with a soft eraser in the early stages of the drawing. In later stages, the darks and all corresponding tones were darkened overall to correct the drawing.

Sometimes an eraser would be used to extend the highlights, and white chalk or watercolor Chinese white were sometimes added to create highlights and accents. Very fine paper stumps were sometimes used to remove shading and re-accent highlights. (In the 19th century, these stumps were often leather or felt.)

We were taught that it's a good idea to place a drawing upside down at an early stage to check the form. When viewed upside down, one's preconceptions are altered and weaknesses in the form are revealed. Another technique for exposing weakness in form is the use of a black mirror. This mirror in Simi's studio was prized and carefully passed from one student to another. It was a curved concave piece of black glass which reduced the image and focused the drawing. One could immediately see in the black mirror whether the highlights in the drawing corresponded to the highlights of the figure. It was a most useful tool and is easily replicated. Simply take a piece of glass (it is better if the glass is concave like a lens, but not necessary) and either put it in a box with black felt beneath it or, even better, paint the back of the glass black.

Thus, at Studio Simi, the quality of drawing progressed as a student's ability, technique and visual acuity allowed him or her to do so.

Alexander Katlan has done conservation work on European and American paintings for more than 15 years, including microscopic fiber and pigment analysis, infrared reflectography and ultraviolet examination. Katlan holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from Rosary College, Villa Schifanoia, Florence, Italy, and a Master of Arts degree in Art History from Queens College, City University of New York. He is an adjunct professor at New York University in the Appraisal Studies Program.

Values:
When Seeing Isn't Necessarily Believing

by Lindesay Harkness

I have wanted to be an artist since I was a young child. My efforts at rendering nature were so humiliatingly inadequate, however, that I opted to do what I seemed to be good at — sciences. I unfortunately suffered from the common misconception that artists leap fully formed from their mother's womb — you either have "it" or you don't.

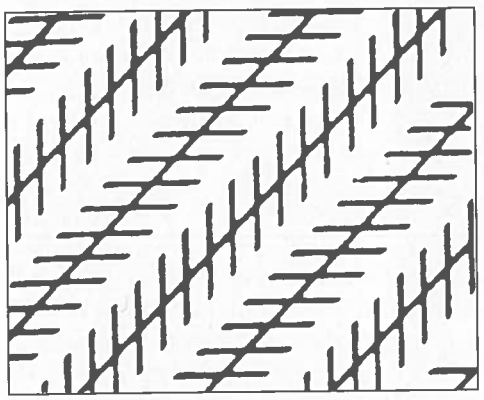


Fig. 1 — The Zöllner illusion. The long diagonal lines are really parallel, yet they seem altered in orientation by the transverse lines.

Fig. 2 – Incorrect drawing of a cast with uniform mid-tone values. Lindesay Harkness, *Early student cast drawing*, Charcoal.

In fact, there are many people who assume that if you have talent and can see, you can draw or paint. In fact, this is as ridiculous as saying that if you have talent and can hear, you can play music.

Of course you could on some level. No one would seriously suggest though, that because you're capable of listening to a Beethoven piano concerto you're also capable, without training, of playing it. The reasons are less obvious why untrained artists fail to convincingly render the effect of nature even when sitting down in front of it and attempting, in good faith, to copy it. In this article I try to explain some of the reasons why would-be artists need to be taught how to see values if they want to make their work look like nature. I also hope to convince experienced artists to be constantly alert to the human visual system's skill and facility at providing its owner with highly distorted visual information.

Visual illusions are actually commonplace and rather fun. A simple one is shown in Fig. 1. The diagonal lines are parallel, but the little side arms make the long diagonals appear curved. Another illusion with which you may be familiar is the peculiar appearance of color charts at paint stores. If you look at one of these charts, phantom dark spots appear at the junction of the white margins that separate the individual color chips. These illusions may convince you that you should not necessarily believe what you see, but I hope to make it clear that the problem is not restricted to seemingly trivial circumstances. The fundamental design of the human visual system causes great confusion to the artist attempting to render accurately from nature. Let me explain by describing how we see values, i.e., how our brain interprets brightness.

The human visual system is designed to detect and interpret differences in value. As primitive human beings, it was adaptive for us to be able to discriminate a tiny, pale thorn from the surrounding pale flesh of our finger in order to remove the cause of irritation before infection set in. Similarly, we were anxious to distinguish the faint difference in value that would enable us to detect the presence of a saber-

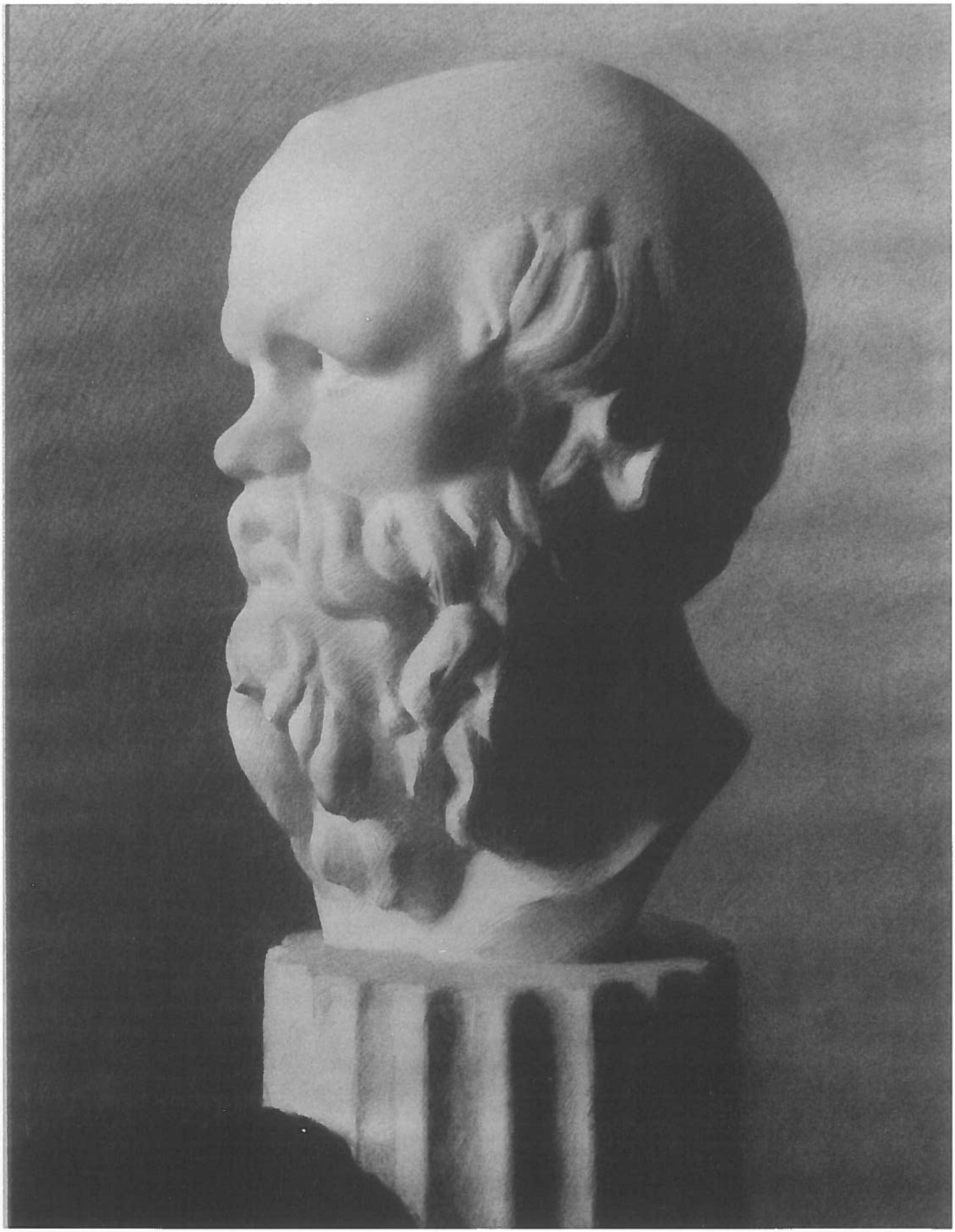


Fig. 3 – Correct cast drawing showing a complete range of values more closely resembling the true effect of light in nature.

Lindesay Harkness, *Later student cast drawing*, Charcoal.

Paul Rubens (1577 – 1640). *Daniel in the Lion's Den*, 1615. Oil on canvas, 88 ¼" x 130 ⅛". Collections: Sir Dudley Carleton; Charles I of England; the Marquess of Hamilton; third Viscount Cowdray. Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund, 1965. National Gallery of Art, Washington.

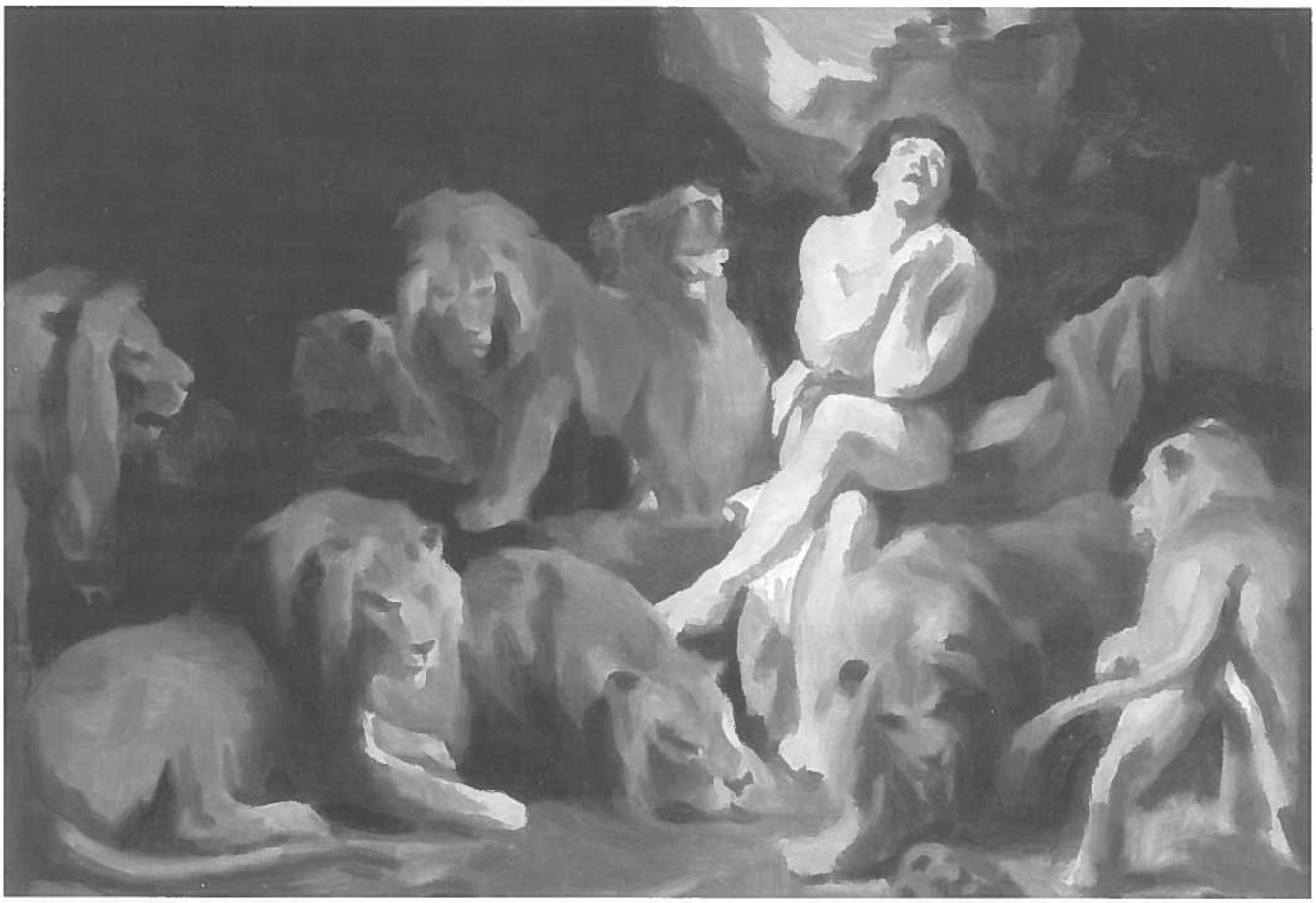
toothed tiger lurking in the shadows. Fine discrimination of relative brightness (contrast) is very important biologically. Let's examine how the human visual system is designed to achieve this.

The natural variation of light levels from darkness to bright sun covers a range of about ten billion intensity differences. The visual system, however, is only capable of discriminating 1,000 intensity steps. If each of these thousand intensity steps were used to represent a fixed section of the ten billion intensity levels to which the viewer might be exposed, the resolution of the system would be so poor as to be meaningless biologically. Let me clarify this statement with an analogy. Suppose we needed to measure distance, and all we had available was a giant ball of string in which we were allowed to tie 1,000 knots to mark a scale. Suppose further that the greatest distance we needed to measure was the circumference of the earth, and the smallest measurement was one inch. If we took a piece of string the length of the circumference of the earth and tied 1,000 knots in it at regular intervals to make a giant tape measure, we would not have made a device that would be of any use to us in making the sorts of measurements we might normally wish to make — the size of a piece of furniture or the length of a child's foot, etc.

The visual system deals very cleverly with this problem. For every field of view it encounters, it makes the equivalent of a special string tape measure, tailored to fit the unique conditions each new field of view presents. The visual system does this by having a sliding scale that automatically recalibrates itself, recentering to the current light level.

Ambient light levels affect the recalibration, but more significantly for the artist, the system also fine-tunes itself to each unique field of view. In other words, every time you move your eyes to look at something new, the eye resets the center of its discriminating range to fit the new field of view. Whatever you look at becomes defined as a mid-tone.

To further complicate the issue, the visual system not only recenters itself, but compresses or expands the extremes of its range to fit the value range contained in each field of view. For example, in very bright sunlight where the field of view includes both deep shadow and very bright light, the system will recenter on a mid-tone, redefine dark (one limit) as the brightness of the shadows, and light (the upper limit) as the brightness of the dazzling reflections off shiny surfaces. The light range in this example is very great, so the fixed 1,000 discrimination intervals are spread very thin and discrimination is consequently relatively poor (the equivalent of an extremely long piece of string, with very widely spaced knots). In contrast, suppose you lift your hand close to your face to examine it before



Steven Levin. *Value Study, Daniel in the Lion's Den after Paul Rubens*, 1995. Oil on prepared chip board, 8 ¼" x 12". This value study demonstrates the correct depiction of values as originally painted by Rubens.

attempting to extract an offending thorn. The field of view now contains a very restricted range of values. The general tone of your hand sets the new center of the range. Dark is defined as the darkest area on an offending thorn. Light is redefined as the lightest lights on the skin's ridges. The total brightness range is now minute, and the full 1,000-interval discriminating power is brought to bear on this very small brightness range, affording extraordinarily fine discriminations (the equivalent of a short string with very closely spaced knots). The elegance of the system is breathtaking and its biological adaptiveness obvious. The would-be artist should be breaking out in a cold sweat at this point; however, as far as your brain is concerned there are no absolute values, everything is relative, and the observed world changes every time you move your eyes!

As if this were not enough to thoroughly confuse you, your eye has a system for further enhancing small differences in value across edges. It is designed to automatically amplify these small changes in brightness to make them detectable — an admirable biological adaptation, but an artist's nightmare. Every time you look at an edge, the contrast across that edge will appear greater than it actually is!

> **"I once saw the most *riveting example of incorrectly seen values when visiting the National Gallery... The copy was quite extraordinary. Rubens's design had been completely obliterated.*"**

What will be the result then if we, as naive artists, sit down in front of nature and attempt to paint what we think we see? Suppose we think about looking at a garden. Our attention is caught by some white flowers. We look at them. Our eyes rescale to fit a narrow, light value range and we see white flowers silhouetted against what appears to be dark green foliage. We then look away into the shadows beneath a bush where a cat is lurking. Our eyes shift their scale to center on a new, narrow, dark value range, and we are able to discriminate the outline of the white cat silhouetted against dark foliage. We shift our eyes to carefully examine the outline of the cat or the flowers and our eyes helpfully amplify the apparent value difference between these interesting images and their backgrounds. A naive artist will render the flowers and the cat white, all the foliage shades of dark green, and all the edges nice and sharp. Worse still, as everything they look at becomes the current mid-tone, the cat, for example, will probably not be rendered white, but a gray with dramatically exaggerated white highlights and dark shadows, while every twig and leaf will be detected and added to the background. The result will be visual chaos, as the big division of light and dark, normally used by the brain to set

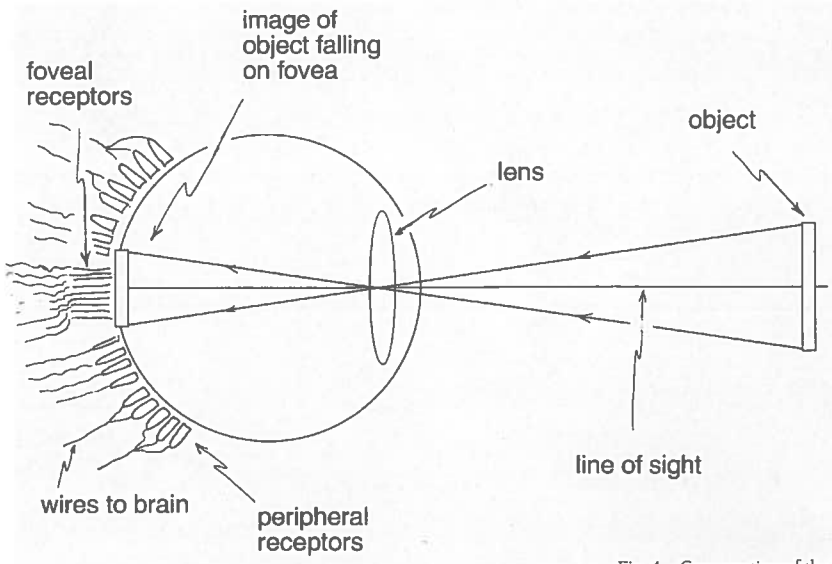


Fig. 4 – Cross section of the human eye.

the general scene, is replaced by a confused jumble of exaggerated detail. Grotesque examples of this sort of rendering can be seen in any magazine.

These "naive" drawings and paintings may vary in the degree to which their author falls into the trap of drawing what they think they see. Many will show a strong reduction in contrast when compared with nature — a general graying of the field, combined with falsely introduced contrast in the detail. The effect is a visually busy patchwork rendered in mid-tones.

I once saw the most riveting example of incorrectly seen values when visiting the National Gallery. Someone had almost finished with a copy of Rubens's *Daniel in the Lion's Den*. It was a huge canvas, painstakingly rendered with much paint-handling skill and remarkably accurate shapes. The copy, however, was quite extraordinary. Rubens's design had been completely obliterated. There was no division of dark and light in the copy. The copyist had clearly rendered each tiny section by looking very carefully at it, and the visual effect from a distance was of a uniform mid-tone field, with a patchwork of flecks all over it. It's so tragic that people with the talent and dedication of this copyist have never had the direction they so desperately need.

I did much the same thing as this copyist when I first started drawing from casts. Fig. 2 shows an early drawing of mine, while a later drawing (Fig. 3) more closely resembles the true light effect in nature. It is almost inconceivable, but at the time I thought my earlier drawing looked remarkably like the cast I was copying. I was dismayed (although not disbelieving) when my teacher commented that although my shapes were improving, my values were way off. I had failed to render the light effect; the big look. I had no idea what this big look was. I could not see it. The reason I could not see the light effect was because I could not see the whole setup simultaneously, but could only build it up from my distorted assessments of its parts. It took me months of doing what I was told and struggling to see correctly before I could look at a cast and delight in seeing the beauty and glow of the light washing over it — the light effect. It was a magical revelation.

> ***"The fundamental design of the human visual system causes great confusion to the artist attempting to render accurately from nature."***

During my lengthy struggle to see more correctly, various tried and true methods were suggested to me. These included trying to defocus (very hard if you are youngish and long-sighted), half-closing my eyes, looking through my eyelashes, looking away, etc. What all these methods are directed at is trying to make it a little easier for the student to look at the whole picture simultaneously. It should be clear to the reader by now that looking at the whole picture simultaneously is the only way of seeing all the relationships correctly, as it is the only way to ensure that you are dealing with one consistent set of calibrations in your visual system. What is not yet clear is why it is so extraordinarily hard to actually do this. Let me attempt to explain.

Fig. 4 shows a cross section of your eye. An image is focused onto the back of your eye, the retina, where receptors register the brightness of light falling on them. Thus a mosaic of information is formed that corresponds to the distribution of darks and lights in the image being viewed. The receptors in the center of your retina are very small and packed very closely together. Each has its own "wire" to the brain, so each can register the brightness of a tiny, discreet area of the image. The mosaic becomes increasingly crude as you move away from the center of the eye. The receptors are each larger and many are wired together, only providing the brain with a general idea of the light level over a relatively large area. When you look at something, you are moving your eyes so that the image you wish to interpret falls on the central, high resolution area of your retina. This region of your retina is called the fovea. It makes sense to place the image of interest on the fovea, as it is this area that can provide the most detailed visual information. Doing this is as automatic as breathing. As artists, however, we try to avoid using the fovea as it does not generally provide us with the information we need. As artists we try to simultaneously attend to the whole field of view, while every fiber of our being is trying to get us to do the biologically normal thing, which is to attend to the foveal image and

then flick our eyes around in order to build up a picture of the whole from multiple fovea views.

There are two types of strategies that can help a student (or experienced artist) to attend to the whole picture simultaneously. One type of strategy strives to wipe out foveal information. Once these channels are silenced the brain attends to the next best information available, which will come from the coarser, peripheral receptors that view a far larger area than the fovea. Defocusing is very effective as all the high frequency (detail) information, for which the fovea is tuned, gets wiped out. The only information left is the low frequency stuff to which the peripheral receptors are tuned. In the absence of competition from the foveal channels, the brain has no trouble attending to the low frequency information that the peripheral receptors can provide. I think near-sighted individuals have a distinct advantage here. They can defocus just by taking off their glasses. Furthermore, their brains are probably wired to attend more to peripheral receptors because as children, they may have had little detailed information available.

One way to facilitate defocusing your eyes is by opening them as wide as possible, so you look popeyed. For some reason, this makes it harder to focus. I never mastered this as a student, I suspect in part because I didn't quite understand what I was trying to do. If you can learn to do it, however, it is probably the most powerful trick to master, and so well worth the struggle.

If you are not yet able to defocus, half-closing your eyes and looking through your eyelashes helps in the same way as defocusing in that the image is degraded; details are wiped out. However, values are affected by this maneuver so although it is helpful, it is not ideal.

Another way to wipe out the detailed information so that the peripheral receptors can be attended to, is to reduce the light level. Those readers over 40 will be familiar with this phenomenon when they attempt to read telephone directories in inadequate light. Checking a drawing at dusk is an effective way of revealing drawing errors.

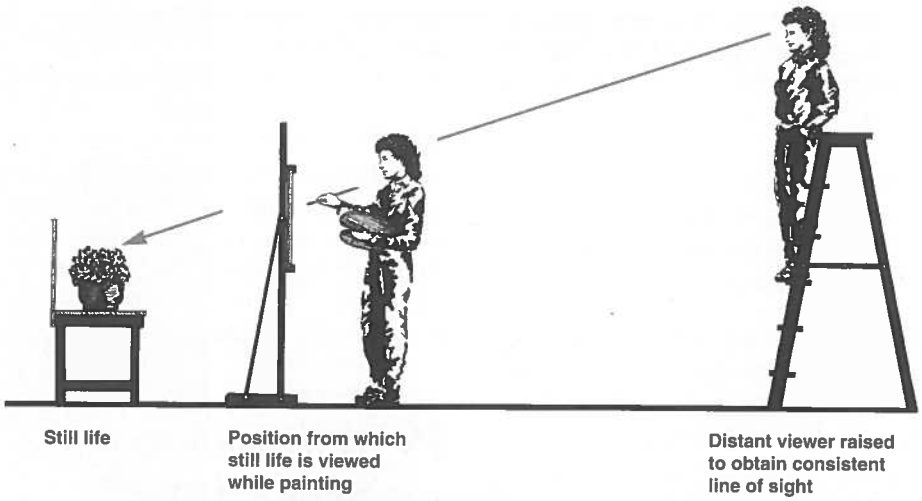


Fig. 5 – It is helpful to check your work from as far away as possible. It helps to have a stepladder handy so that you can get the right angle of view at a distance when the setup is below eye level.

> *"I think near-sighted individuals have a distinct advantage here. They can defocus just by taking off their glasses."*

One of the best ways to get used to attending to the peripheral receptors even when the foveal receptors are in a position to compete, is to direct your eyes to a point lying to one side of the area you actually want to examine. For example, say you want to draw your model's nose. You direct your eyes to look not at the nose, but at the ear of your model. Then you instruct your brain to examine the nose, but you simultaneously tell it that your eyes must not be allowed to move. Your brain will fight you over this maneuver, and you may have to keep staring for a long time, mentally saying nose, nose, nose, nose, nose before your brain can figure out how to send you any useful information about the nose and its relationship to the rest of the picture. While this exercise is strenuous and hard to bring oneself to do, it is worth mastering.

All these methods work, but they are all initially exhausting. As a student I can remember going home feeling cross-eyed and headachy. If you understand the importance of relearning to see, however, you are more likely to keep struggling to do something that appears so unnatural and tends to give the uninitiated a headache.

The second set of methods accept that it is easiest to attend to the fovea, and artificially reduce the image size so that a large part, rather than a small fraction of it falls on the fovea. (Gammell had students set up so that they stand away from their work a distance equal to three times the diagonal dimension of their paper. He claimed that from this distance a student should theoretically be able to see, or take in, the whole of their drawing simultaneously. Leonardo came up with this magic number, but I don't recall on what information it is based. If it was empirical and Leonardo was short-sighted or over 40 at the time, this figure has limited relevance to the average student with "good" vision except to stop them from standing right on top of their work.) Simply standing a very long way away from your work is a marvelously effective and unstrenuous way to check the values in your work. I was very

fortunate as a student to be working in a very large studio. I could easily get 25 feet away from my work, and once I discovered the efficacy of checking from a distance I spent a lot of time backed up against the studio wall. (The only way I can get myself to do this when I'm landscape painting and get in a frenzy and can't think straight, is to put my paints or pastels on a table way back from my easel, so I am forced to stand back.) I still check my work from as far away as possible; it is often sobering to do so. It helps to have a stepladder handy so that you can get the right angle of view from a distance even when the setup is below eye level. (See Fig. 5.)

If you are not able to get very far from your work because your studio is small, a mirror set at an angle can double your viewing distance. (To maximize the viewing distance, stand adjacent to your setup, and look at it in a mirror placed as far away from yourself and the setup as possible.) Looking through a reducing lens dramatically reduces image size and can also help in checking for evidence of errors in how the values are rendered.

I used all these methods blindly as a student and tried to do by rote what I was told, because I knew I was not seeing what my teacher saw. It took months of study with Paul Ingbretson before I actually saw that elusive thing called the light effect. It may be unusual to take as long as I did to grasp seeing something so basic, but all students are going to receive comments from their teachers that make no sense and even seem threatening unless they are comfortable with the idea that what you think you see has surprisingly little relation to what is actually there unless you look at it in the right way.

All of us can probably be helped by knowing that no matter how experienced we are, our visual system by its very nature is constantly eager to supply us with a wealth of highly distorted information. I have discussed at length how our brain sees values as relatives, never absolutes. I could have written a similar essay on how the brain interprets color, edge quality or any other visual parameter. The brain doesn't give you an absolute read-out on any of them; everything rescales itself, so our best strategy is always to try and look at everything at once and look always at relationships. Dennis Bunker was clearly aware of this when he noted with despondency that whenever he relaxed and started to really enjoy painting one area of a landscape, he would lose the unity of the whole. "I'm always losing myself in detail, always forgetting and beginning to paint comfortably. I wish I were made of steel and had a demon with a pitchfork at my back."[1] In fact, it's remarkable that over generations, artists have empirically come up with strategies that are just what a neurophysiologist would advise. As a student, the last advice Paul Ingbretson gave me was to look at *everything* relationally. And similar advice comes from many artists, including the following:

> "In the commencement of all portraits the first idea is an indistinct mass of light and shadows, or the character of the person as seen in the heel of the evening, in the gray of the morning, or at a distance too great to distinguish features with exactness." [2]

> "Excellence in any one of these parts of art [outline, values, color] will never be acquired by an artist unless he has the habit of looking at objects at large and observing the effect they have on the eye when it is dilated [I think he means defocused by opening the eyes very wide—the popeyed method] and employed upon the whole without seeing any one of the parts distinctly, ..." [3]

> ***"The rewards of learning to 'see big' and see value relationships correctly are enormous."***

The rewards of learning to "see big" and see value relationships correctly are enormous. As a student you go from producing rather dull looking, grayish drawings to renderings that have a smash of light and tremendous punch. Then your color work will reap the benefits. The only way to fit color into a naive drawing rendered in a grayish, reduced value range is to reduce the chroma range also. When you begin to see values more correctly, color starts to come alive also.

The students in the Gammell tradition have a tremendous legacy. Compared with that unfortunate copyist in the National Gallery, for example, we paint from a position of great strength. Theoretically, we are all capable of rendering light as the great American impressionists were capable of doing. What we have to be careful of is half-doing it, because our visual systems are constantly eager to provide us with just what we don't want: contrast-enhanced detail. For the rest of our artistic lives we will struggle to stifle the voice of our fovea in order to listen more to our more peripheral, low frequency receptors. In doing this, we will continue to broaden our vision, resulting in even greater breadth, unity and grace in our work.

Lindesay Harkness grew up in England and holds a Ph.D. from Oxford University. Harkness has lived in the United States since 1975 and has taught at MIT and Harvard. Her most significant artistic influence was the training she received from Paul Ingbretson in Boston. Harkness divides her time among portraiture, landscape and still life painting, and lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, with her husband and children.

Harkness gratefully acknowledges Paul Ingbretson, Louise Lavine, Jeane Lightman and Ann Stuart for their "most helpful criticism, comments and help with quotations in this manuscript."

1 *from* Dennis Miller Bunker, *R. H. Ives Gammell, Coward-McCann, Inc., 1953.*

2 *quote by John Walker in National Gallery of Art, Washington; Henry N. Abrams, Inc., NY, 1984.*

3 *Reynolds' Discourses, No. 11.*

Lindesay Harkness. *The Camel.* Pastel, 22" x 28".

A Few Words With Lindesay Harkness

CRJ: You indeed take a scientific approach to seeing values. Some artists say, "I just squint—that seems to work for me!" Any comment?

LH: I'm happy for any artist who feels that they're in control of the values in their work. This article is directed more at artists who are unaware that there *is* a problem, but I hope it may also serve to alert others that it would be worth checking their values with a more critical eye than they would otherwise, were they unaware how deceptive their visual system is.

Peter Sellers, I believe, once said, "When you think you're good, you're finished." It seems to me it never does any harm to question one's skills. Breadth of vision is a continuum, and I believe almost anyone would benefit from being reminded that they need to continually push themselves to broaden their vision.

CRJ: As an artist, what has been your greatest challenge?

LH: It's hard to think in terms of a greatest challenge, when life seems to be a continuous series of challenges, all of which seem big until they are surmounted.

Having the courage to make a mark on paper the first time I did life drawing seemed very challenging at the time. I suppose my greatest challenge is, and always will be, composition. I am not a natural designer and struggle all the time to improve my compositions. It has always been a challenge for me to keep things simple. I have a tendency to clutter the page. In fact, I have a tendency to clutter in all aspects of my life! My studio looks like a disorganized junk shop. I am also constantly challenged to try to keep my work clean. One of the beauties of pastel is that you are free to move over the whole page at any time to make small adjustments to color note or values. I seem to enjoy doing this endlessly, but as I'm long-sighted (it's a struggle to look at my work close up) I can end up with a surface that looks pretty messy unless I'm rather more disciplined than I like to be (bifocals have helped).

CRJ: Whose works do you most admire or turn to for inspiration?

LH: Most of my inspiration comes from chance encounters of stuff lying around my studio: the pile of junk rejected from one still life; clothes piled up in a corner, etc.

I probably don't turn to other artists for inspiration as much as I should. I have such limited time to work that I feel the need to spend it actually doing something. I've just read Nancy Hale's book about her mother, artist Lillian W. Hale, who constantly berated herself in comparison to her husband, who seemed to know everything about art. I drew comfort from this although it did nothing to assuage my guilty conscience. I also noted with interest that Hale kept a file of newspaper photos as a source of inspiration for her compositions.

I refer frequently to my Sargent and Degas books which usually leave me more in awe than inspired, and I often visit the National Gallery in Washington to view the works of Titian, Rembrandt and Raphael, among many others.

CRJ: What projects are you currently working on?

LH: At the moment I'm working on a still life of flowers with some intriguingly enigmatic color notes that make it fun to work on. I'm also playing around with a couple of other setups that I'm composing from a much greater distance than I usually work from. I was inspired by my own article, that logically it made no sense to be composing from five to 10 feet when I still have problems seeing the big effect from that distance. I think (hope springs eternal!) that it will help me a lot. I'm also working on a portrait of a 3-year-old which at the moment seems one of my greater challenges.

Lindesay Harkness. *Bouquet in Ginger Jar.* Pastel, 15¼" x 19½".

Theodore N. Lukits. *Mrs. Martin C. Wahl*, 1947. Oil on canvas.

Theodore N. Lukits

A Light in the Desert

by Stephen Gjertson

In southern California Theodore Lukits is an artistic legend. He was one of the last representatives of California's plein-air landscape painters, a celebrated Hollywood portrait artist and an influential teacher. He was an outspoken champion of fine painting founded on the rigorous study of nature and past art stating that, "It takes more time and more knowledge to become a true artist than it does to become a fine doctor." For 70 years the colorful paintings of Lukits enlivened the art scene of southern California.

Theodore Nicolai Lukits was born in Romania on November 26, 1897. Two years later, his parents brought him and his sister to the United States. A precocious and artistic child, he decided to become a painter at the age of three. His training began six years later in St. Louis. In 1914 he enrolled in the art school of the Art Institute of Chicago. While in Chicago, he studied with several painters including Alphonse Mucha, Edwin Blashfield and Frank Leyendecker. Seeing the work of Hovsep Pushman awakened his love for Oriental still life. The great traditions of the past, taught by these men, shaped and nurtured the art of the young Lukits.

While a student, Lukits won every award available for life drawing, figure painting and design. In 1919 he won the coveted *Prix de Rome*, but strained diplomatic relations due to the First World War forced him to accept a cash award rather than travel abroad.

Like many artists, Lukits began his career as a magazine illustrator. His burning desire, however, was to be a fine artist. To further this goal, he accepted portrait commissions on the side. After painting several successful portraits of Hollywood stars who were attending a convention in

"The Master," Theodore N. Lukits in his studio. Dec., 1987.

Theodore N. Lukits. *Head Study*, Graphite on paper, 20" x 16". Courtesy of Jeff Morseburg.

Theodore N. Lukits. *Sierra Mountains*, 1923. Pastel, 10" x 14".

Chicago, silent film actress Theda Bara encouraged Lukits to move to Hollywood, where she promised to secure him additional portrait commissions.

Recognizing this as an opportunity to seriously pursue his art, Lukits moved to Los Angeles in 1922. There he rapidly gained a reputation as one of the foremost portrait artists of Hollywood celebrities. Among his many portrait commissions were those of Nazimova, Delores Del Rio, the William Wyler family and Mrs. Ray Milland. At her insistence, he painted Mae Murray in the nude.

In 1923, excited by the varied landscape and intense light in California, Lukits began a lifelong study of outdoor color. Financing his first sketching trips with his *Prix de Rome* money, he hired a guide and mules and spent several months in the High Sierras and the Mojave Desert. Lukits did most of his sketches in pastel, which he felt was the lightest and most convenient way to work outside. He eventually sketched or painted hundreds of effects in locations throughout California and Arizona.

The pastel sketches and painted landscapes of Theodore Lukits are notable for their acute rendering of outdoor color and light, a quality that also characterizes his other work. Lukits was a brilliant colorist and his works show great originality and sensitivity in this regard. Like other colorists, he preferred the richness of nature's color at sunrise, sunset, evening and moonlight. He often used a miner's helmet for illumination when painting at night.

At the request of other artists, Lukits established the Lukits Academy of Fine Arts in his home in 1924. He was an influential and beloved teacher, going beyond the simple training of students; many became lifelong friends and colleagues. Lukits' teaching was methodical and thorough, with an emphasis on "truth" in art (truth being the sensitive and faithful representation of nature). He continued to teach until poor health forced him to retire in 1987, at the age of 90.

Lukits' method was painterly, similar to that of Carolus-Duran, John Singer Sargent and Joaquin Sorolla. He painted in large, blocky planes, which he could refine according to the effect he was after and the amount of time he had to work, yet always trying for the "big look." Lukits was never idle, always working on some facet of his art. He ground his own paints, manufactured his own palettes and pastels and, as a hobby, made his own brushes. He felt that, "A brush to the artist should be as a bow is to the violinist." Lukits used each spare minute to amass a huge file of clippings covering every subject of interest to the artist: landscape, trees, clouds, lakes, rivers, costumes, antiquities, history, works of art, figures, Japanese prints and so forth. He sorted these into separate categories and boxed them for easy reference. They provided him with research material and inspiration.

Theodore N. Lukits. *Mrs. Ray Milland.* Oil on canvas.

Dean Cornwell hired Lukits to help him with his murals for the Los Angeles Public Library. Lukits considered Cornwell's teacher, Frank Brangwyn, to be this century's finest muralist. Lukits' contact with Cornwell and Mucha, with whom he had collaborated earlier in his career, strongly influenced his sense of composition and design.

In 1933, Lukits married the artist Eleanor Merriam, daughter of California *plein-air* painter James Merriam. She became the model for some of his best portraits. Tragically, she died in a fire at their home in 1948.

Lucile Greathouse, who was a still life painter working in the art department at Walt Disney Studios, came to study at the Lukits Academy in 1951. The following year, after a brief courtship, she married Theodore Lukits. Shortly thereafter Lukits became very reclusive. Tired of "art association politics," he dropped out of the many clubs to which he belonged and ceased to exhibit publicly. He wished to devote his time to painting and teaching, though he continued to have private exhibitions in his studio and occasionally lectured and juried shows.

Lukits died of pneumonia on January 20, 1992, at the age of 94. He believed that the legacy of great paintings inherited from the past was crucial for the art of this century. Theodore Lukits was an individualist, determined to pursue his vision of beauty and order amid this century's ugly and chaotic art world. The artistic legacy that he left reflected his conviction that art firmly based on these principles would last.

The Journal *is indebted to Mrs. Lucile Lukits for the information and reproductions contained in this article.*

Recollections

by Peter Adams

Reprinted with permission from The Pastel Landscapes of Theodore N. Lukits. *Edited due to space constraints with our apologies to the author.*

At the age of twenty, I knew precisely when I stepped into his studio that my long journey had come to an end. In front of me lay a most extraordinary array of Lalique, Tiffany and even rare excavation glass. There were hundreds of plaster casts and beautiful statuettes carved from marble and alabaster lying everywhere. The afternoon light illuminated some golden threads of heavily brocaded silk that fell from one wall onto a table and then cascaded to the floor. On top of the table stood a Tang horse, alongside it, a standing polychrome Kwan Yin, and in back of them, leaning against the wall, a massive iridescent glass bowl that framed both Chinese figures. An assortment of beads, some abalone shells, a copper charger with a few peacock feathers lay in the foreground of the table. Around the room I noticed vases and jars crammed with paint brushes, thousands of them. Each brush had a foot and a half long balanced handle, which was obviously handmade. A skeleton hung in the corner with an extra skull and a box of bones beside it. Everywhere I looked the walls were draped with antiquity.

Entering the room, a chill came over me. In just a few short steps I had seemingly walked into Paris of the late 1880s and into the atelier of a Gérôme or Benjamin-Constant. Surprisingly though, as I stood there awestruck, I felt that many years of my life had been spent in search of this very place. The studio of Theodore Lukits felt like home to me. From that moment in 1970, it was to become my life for the next seven years.

As a student of Mr. Lukits, I spent two years drawing almost exclusively in graphite pencil from plaster casts before I began my studies in color; even after that I kept drawing two days a week. Lukits believed that a knowledge of black and white values was far more important to the painting student than a knowledge of color. Like everything, he divided values into categories: true, tonal, out of focus, exaggerated, compensated, transposed, atmospheric and lastly, foreshortened.

Furthermore, he took great pains to teach about edges. Whether in drawing or painting, he believed it best to keep edges soft at first and to achieve a tonal or atmospheric key. Only in the last states of modeling could the sharpness or roundness of edges be established. A painting done in this manner, if stopped at any point, would look finished. The earlier it was stopped, the more the painting would look like a study of light. The later it was stopped, the more clearly the objects would be rendered. Since the drawing or precise modeling came last, not first, Lukits' painting techniques were more closely aligned with Sorolla or Sargent than with those of Bouguereau. These techniques enabled Lukits to paint very quickly outdoors.

Lukits divided visual art into distinct categories:

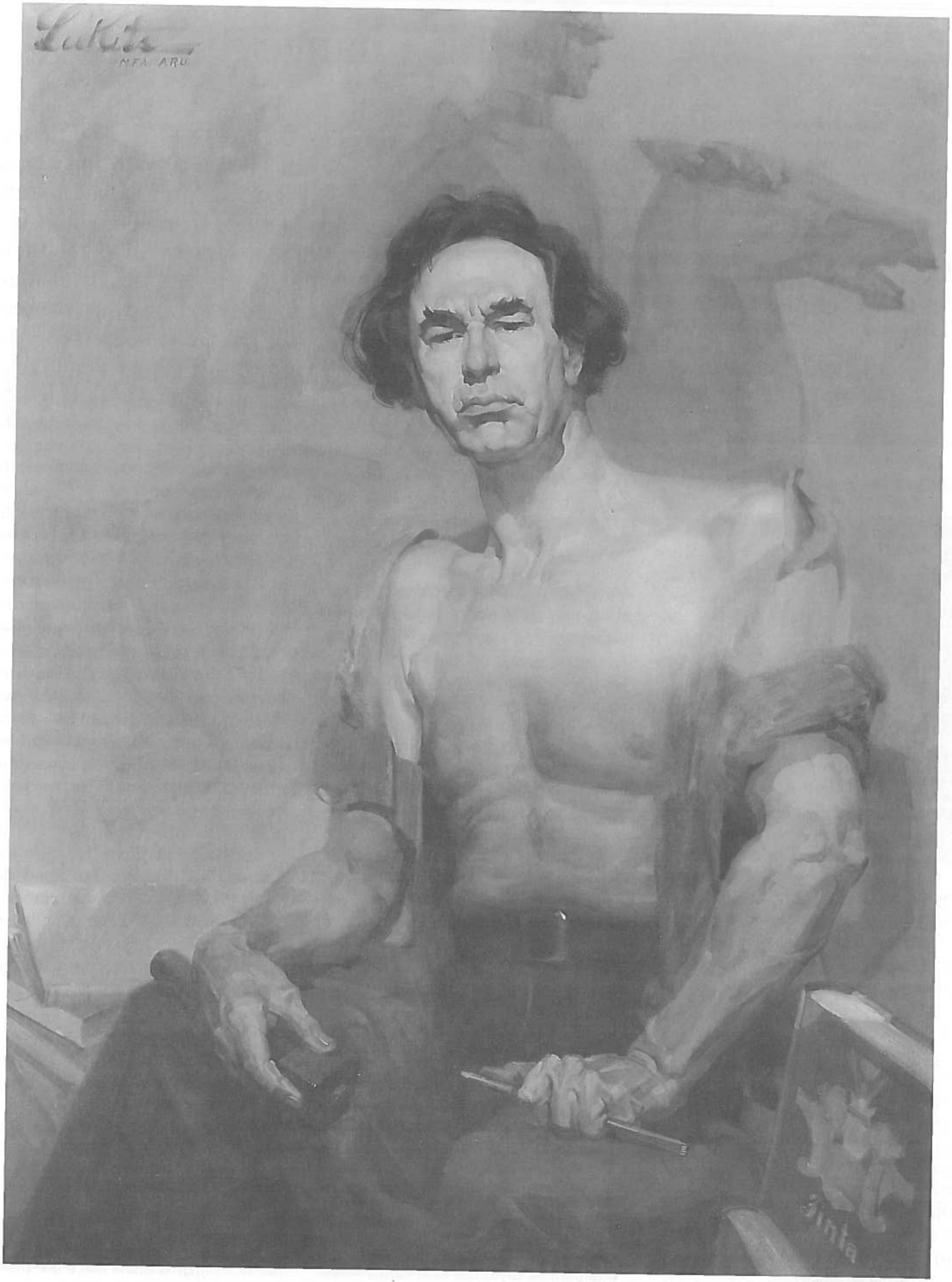
Drawing – Lukits considered drawing to be the science of explaining, through line, the artist's subject. When the human figure is being drawn, the artist's line should explain six aspects: subcutaneous bone, muscle, tendon, fat, skin condition, and occasionally, superficial veins or arteries.

Design – For Lukits, the study of design entails the study of ornamentation and pattern. It is also the study of producing movement of the viewer's eye throughout the work by use of various lines, shapes or colors. Lukits believed that composition and design are different entities, but that in certain works the two overlapped and became nearly indistinguishable. The more three-dimensional a painting appeared, the less important would be the design.

Composition – Lukits did not believe in the traditional triangular composition, often mentioned in reference to Renaissance paintings. He believed that good composition should keep the eye flowing back and forth from the foreground to the background. In order to keep the eye moving, it might be necessary to use contours or contrasting values to create "invisible" flowing lines or currents. According to the rhythm of the painting, little areas of detail, like staccato notes, could be used in greater or lesser abundance along these invisible currents. To take the viewer back in space, subtle horizontal lines of diminishing lengths were employed.

There is much that could be said about Theodore Lukits. He always has been original, talented, hard working and dynamic. He also has had a wonderful sense of humor. Those who have known him well have loved him as much for his wit and his laughter as they have for his genius.

Peter Adams is a successful painter living in Pasadena. He is the president of the California Art Club, created in 1909 by the California Impressionists. For membership information see ad on page 50.



Theodore N. Lukits. *Alexander Finta*, 1946. Oil on canvas, 42" x 52".

A Brush With Change

by Dale Redpath

It was a beautiful day at the end of my first trip to Washington, D.C. in 1988. The sightseeing was done and the major art museums had given me plenty of visual information to apply back in my studio. I decided to see the recently opened National Museum of Women In The Arts before I left. The museum had a dignified look and the beginning of a fine collection of art. As I strolled through, I saw paintings and drawings by artists I had always admired for their craftsmanship and ability to project life into their ideas. Kollwitz, Cassatt and the Hales were among them, plus others I had not known before. Even though I was happy to experience the best of the work and pleased with the success of getting the artwork in public view (rather than isolated in private collections or forgotten in basements of bigger museums), I felt uncomfortable. It made me ache to see the artwork of women separately housed and not hung next to their fellow painters in the larger art museums.

Dale Redpath was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Her search for a technical language that would allow the painting of her world and envisioned ideas brought her to study with Richard Lack at Atelier Lack in Minneapolis. Redpath continues her studies at museums in the United States and Europe. Her work has appeared in shows throughout the United States and is represented in private collections in North America and Europe. Redpath taught full-time and evening students at Atelier Lack until 1992 when she became co-director of The Atelier, Inc., in Minneapolis. Redpath's home and studio are in St. Paul.

Years before I had taken a trip to Norway and Sweden. I had noticed, with pleasant surprise, how the art of men and women were hung next to each other with no special fanfare. My surprise made me wonder about my own country's way of dealing with gender. I found out early that there was an advantage to my name, Dale: it has allowed my paintings the neutrality male painters receive. I have overheard honest critiques from people viewing my pictures, but on discovering I'm female their opinion of my work will often change. All this makes me think about how those not traditionally of the group holding power were kept separate in the past, and how in some aspects still are. As a realist painter and a woman I write from my own experience and observation.

I grew up loving to draw, and during high school I sought out every art class. However, these classes were often the dumping ground for the school's disciplinary problems, and this labeled me as a student not working to my full potential. Rather than enduring home economics class where I melted measuring cups and wrecked mixers, I tried a drafting class (much to the woe of the ex-marine teacher). He used an adversarial form of teaching, using statements such as, "You're just a bunch of girls!" to wake up his male students. It was painful to watch him think before saying nearly everything because of my presence. The teacher was well liked and I believe we received solid instruction, but I knew he would rather not have had my participation in his class because I made him aware of his teaching approach.

When I met with my high school counselors they advised me that fashion illustration was the artistic avenue open to women, and it was obvious to the entire class that our counselors had two career lists from which to advise. And while my parents encouraged college for my brothers because "they would have to support families some day," they assumed, with no ill will, that I would gain security through marriage. I had hoped this assumption would free me of expectations and allow me to pursue art school. But as all budding artists hear, "You'll be throwing away your education on a career with no financial payoff and no respect."

My father then arranged interviews for me with commercial illustrators who advised placing security before dreams. Yet I discovered that they all dreamed of retirement so that they could pursue art of their own. It was my first awareness of how society puts so much more pressure on men than on women to succeed financially.

I have heard from the mouths of a few older male painters that a downfall of

the turn-of-the-century art schools and ateliers was the abundance of female students. Their reasoning is that most women married and "forgot" the career their training obliged them to fulfill. "What a waste," I overheard one man say. But I saw their point, there were too many spots in the schools filled by people who would not be painters. Of course they weren't considering the whole picture. I could cite dramatic historical information on women painters from the past centuries as examples, but instead I'll share the story of my great-grandmother, Elizabeth Haney.

Elizabeth drew throughout her teenage years and though discouraged by her elders, became one of the first women to enter the Chicago Art Institute School. Her graduating painting, which I hold dear, is dated 1886. I've seen a number of her portraits and studies using roommates as models, and it's apparent that Elizabeth had a good eye. Soon after returning home she married Horatio Arthur Redpath. But with no support for pursuing her art and great public condemnation if she were to fail at making a good home, the duties of cooking, cleaning and washing took precedence. Elizabeth's artwork was viewed as a cultivated hobby. Her desire to paint was usurped by the obligations to her husband and children, and I'm not aware of any paintings by her after the children were born. After her husband died she lived 20 more years to the age of 91. To create pictures probably seemed a faded dream.

There's no doubt that to be recognized as a success as an artist (a career that's already on society's edge) takes a lot of personal drive. And like in Elizabeth Haney's time, artists' work is often perceived to be a "fun hobby" and resented from within the family or by people who see their own work as more necessary. Most women learn early to acquiesce for the greater good of helping to make life run smoothly for others. Society's power to keep a group of people thinking of themselves as a serving class is convenient. Those lessons bring guilt when women dream beyond the norm. Lately more societal acceptance of day

Elizabeth Haney. *Landscape*, 1886. Oil on canvas, 46" x 36". Collection, Dale Redpath.

care or the choice to not have a family has freed the hours women need to paint. They are knocking on the same school doors as their male counterparts and move into the same art markets. This competitive process may change the stress some men have when considering their definition of success in careers and at home and, as I see it, brings male and female paths to a crossroads.

To keep the image of an art career from slipping into a less than serious endeavor, a quality standard must be held forth with vigor. As an artist and a teacher, I understand this need. If trained art students produce nothing substantial with their education, the whole process of passing on that knowledge slips back a notch or two. If a whole generation stumbles, that knowledge can disappear and the momentum can be lost. The confusion over who to blame for this disappearance is often placed in the very definition of that quality standard. As in religion, each generation adds its biases to the basic belief until any resemblance to its origins is cloudy. In art school, a philosophy is often taught or sought without respect for its needed balance with the rudiments of sound drawing and painting.

Until the r'ecent past the definers of a serious artistic occupation have been almost exclusively men. Men did the painting, writing and teaching for successive generations, with women being at most companions or subjects. In teaching it is very natural to move toward a face like one's own, passing to an image of oneself the knowledge that age and experience has brought.

I've seen the power of knowledge used as a tool of manipulation from teacher to student and as a goal of conquest from student to teacher. But I hope it is rare that a teacher consciously imparts instruction or encouragement to students by gender: If an awareness is there for both instructor and student, they can be more fairly educated. We must maintain quality standards of picture making but clear ourselves of restrictive philosophical biases from the past. Through my life as a student, painter and teacher, I've experienced these struggles firsthand.

As our perceptions of history and power change in the next decades, so will our view of whose voices and visions are free to be expressed without threatening society's fabric. The years ahead will be alive with the mixing of faces and ideas. Will we be able to raise a generation that can skillfully use a brush to convey our world—without merely mimicking the past but evolving from it?

It will be fascinating to see if power is in the brush or the words.

Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema. *Unwelcome Confidence*, 1895. Oil on panel. Private collection.

Sir Lawrence's Legacy

A Copyist's Strategy

by Kathryn Manzo

For the artist wishing to study master techniques, it is in the great museums, galleries and private collections of the world that one finds an unparalleled education. And if one desires to study directly from a master painter posthumously, these collections offer the artist the only opportunity for such instruction.

The lessons to be learned from copying a master painter's original painting are priceless, and the knowledge obtained from the process far outlives the time spent in front of the masterpiece. While studying painting in France, I was able to make repeated trips to my favorite museum, the Musee D'Orsay. It was there that I first discovered the art of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema (pronounced Tad-em-uh). Upon my return to the United States, I was thrilled to hear of a traveling exhibition of his work. I knew that the exhibit might offer me the rare opportunity to study his technique firsthand by copying from one of his paintings. Best of all, I wouldn't have to travel abroad to do so!

Copying from a master work has long been an assumed and integral part of a classical art education. Historically, copying from the masters was once a required practice in the curriculum of virtually all European academies, ateliers and guilds. With the current renaissance in classical art education, I suspect copyists in exhibition spaces are again likely to become familiar sights to museum-goers. If one wishes to copy from a painting, the importance of advance preparation cannot be overstated, especially if the painting is part of a traveling exhibition. In my case, I first contacted The Dixon Gallery and Gardens in Memphis, Tennessee, almost a year in advance of the date I wished to start copying. This is an important step because many museums have never experienced having a copyist working in their galleries. The episode can be mutually beneficial for both

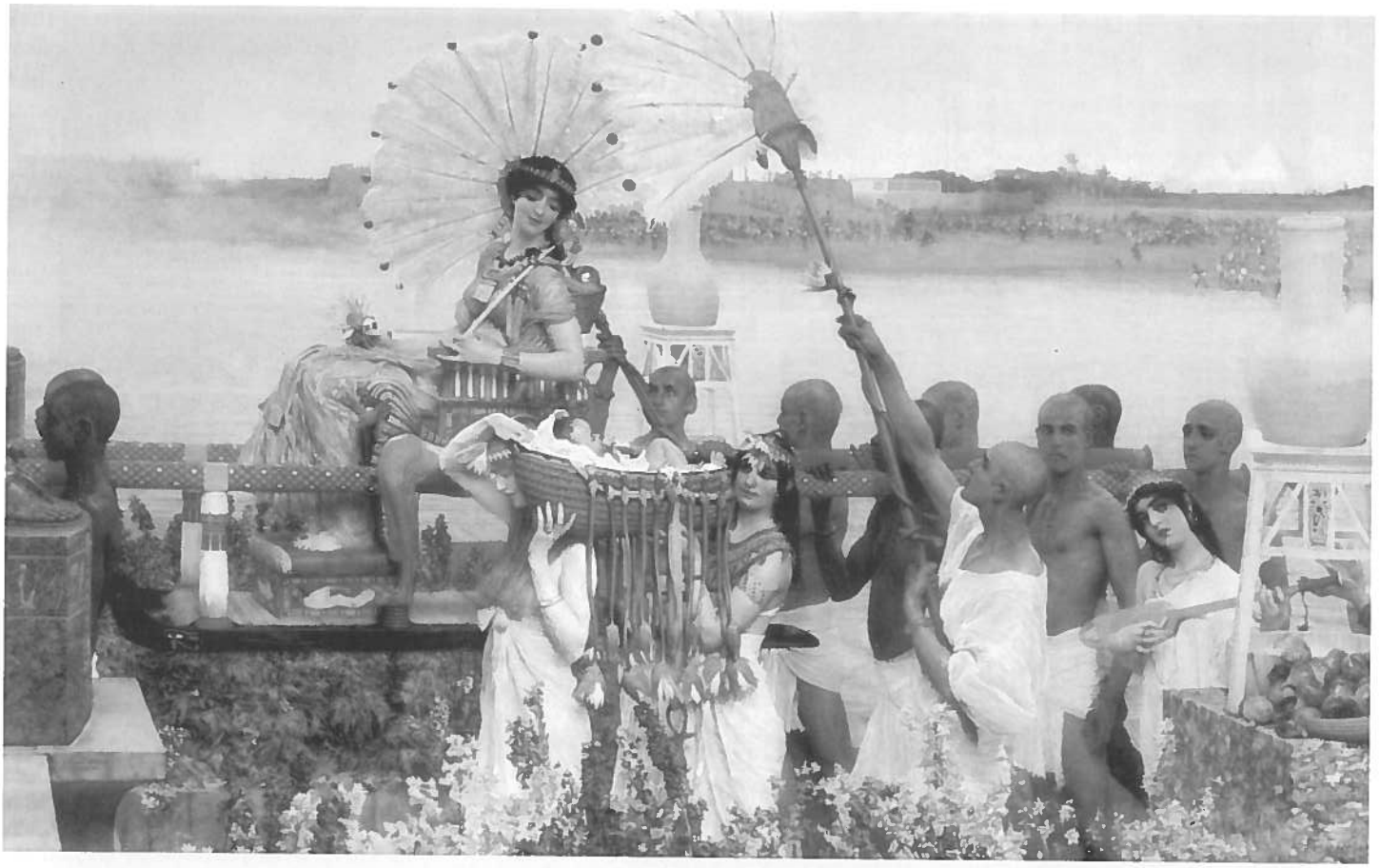
Student engaged in museum copying, National Gallery of Art.

the museum and the artist. Just as the opportunity is a precious one for the artist to learn about technique from the copying process, it is an equally rare opportunity for museum visitors to view the painting process. After contacting the museum, I then obtained the Alma-Tadema exhibit catalog and wrote the exhibition curator to obtain written permission to copy from a number of works. It's best to request permission to copy from more than one work because you won't know in advance how the show will be hung, what the lighting will be like or how the traffic will flow within the exhibition space. Permission to copy from a variety of paintings allows you an increased number of options to accommodate your needs as well as those of your host museum. Then, when you first visit the show, you can choose the best possible location to work at. Also during that first visit, it's a good idea to discuss with museum administration any additional concerns they and you may have, such as obtaining a safe and convenient place to stow your easel and supplies between painting sessions. And if you're not afraid of talking to crowds, it's a great time to offer yourself as a "docent for the day" to lecture about the painting process. It's best to schedule this for a date toward the end of your copying experience, because you'll likely find that you exponentially acquire a deeper understanding of the master's technique on a daily basis. Offering to share the unique wealth of knowledge you have garnered during your days in the galleries is a gesture that emphasizes the mutually attractive benefits of the copying process for both the artist and museum.

In addition, I suggest the following logistical tips. The museum administration is likely to have concerns about protecting their walls and floors during your copying process, as well as the visual aesthetics you create simply by your presence in the exhibition space. If the gallery has a hard floor, and if the museum does not provide a standard drop cloth for copyists, I suggest purchasing a clean, new drop cloth. Be sure to tape it well to the floor. But if you're working on a carpeted surface as was the case when I copied, I suggest spending a little extra money to purchase a carpet remnant similar to the carpet you'll be working on. By doing so you are providing protection for the floor and yet addressing any aesthetic concerns your host museum may have. And yes, nature calls even when you're painting in a museum. It's best to prepare a small "Please Do Not Touch" sign in advance of your first painting session to leave on your easel when you do have to take necessary breaks. Also, while you are copying, you are likely to receive a number of inquiries about your painting. These are common and to be expected, but if you receive too many during your painting time, you are not likely to get much accomplished. The act of wearing a set of headphones, coupled with a photocopied lecture invitation and/or a descriptive write-up explaining what it is you are doing will limit the inquiries during your precious painting sessions. Be assured that if you give a lecture, the extremely interested visitors, artists in particular, will return with questions.

Concerning the actual copying process, there seems to be two divergent schools of thought about preparatory study. Simply put, some artists do, and some artists don't. Both choices are made intentionally and by no means reflect the degree of earnestness with which one is approaching the experience. One can choose to become familiar with all the details of a master's procedure and materials in advance of copying. Then, when copying, the artist places an emphasis on re-creating the exact steps the master originally took when painting the work by employing the same process, pigments, mediums, brushes, etc. If choosing to work this way, a *procedural approach*, it helps to constantly try to imagine yourself in the master's shoes. Questions that

Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema. *A Dedication to Bacchus*, 1889. Oil on canvas, 30½" x 69¾". Hamburger Kunsthalle.



Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema. *The Finding of Moses*, 1904. Oil on canvas, 54" x 84". Private collection.

consistently take the point of view of the original painter are helpful. For example, in the case of Alma-Tadema, one might ask, "Now that I have completed a neutral-colored initial sketch, what would I do next if I were Alma-Tadema?" The understanding gleaned from taking this approach to copying offers a keen insight into how the master worked.

On the other hand, one can purposely choose *not* to familiarize oneself with details of the master's procedure in advance. Instead, when copying, the artist evaluates the masterwork as any still life, model or scene. The emphasis is placed on employing his usual procedure and palette to match that which he is painting on his canvas with the masterpiece that hangs before him. This is a *non-procedural approach* to copying, and all the same "visual discovery questions" an artist asks himself when working from life also apply in this case. For example, (again in the example of copying from an Alma-Tadema work) one might ask, "Which of *my* oil colors do I mix to match the tone that I am observing?" The resulting insight acquired from taking this approach to copying is an understanding of how to solve a visual problem via an "uncharted route"; in particular, one that employs your own palette, brushes, mediums, etc. This is in contrast to an artist who is copying with the procedural approach. Rather, he might ask, "Which of Alma-Tadema's colors do I mix to create the tone I am viewing?"

Neither the procedural approach nor the non-procedural approach to copying is mutually exclusive. Many artists choose an approach to copying that emphasizes elements of both. In any case, the copyist can be sure that he is constantly honing his own technique and observation skills throughout the process.

When viewing a masterwork at a museum, one need only lay claim to keen observation skills and a hunger for the truth to acquire a deeper understanding of an artist's technique. It should not be assumed therefore, that acquisition of insight into how a master created his illusions requires an in-depth study of lengthy treatises on technique. On the contrary, there are numerous questions one can ask when evaluating any painting in a museum that will render answers which shed light on an artist's technique. I offer only a few. They will likely propagate many more of your own for the evaluation process:

- What is the direction of the light?
- Did the artist place a priority first on modeling the paint with the form? Across the light?
- Are there *pentimenti* to be seen?
- Are the shadows dark and opaque? Transparent and luminous?
- Does the paint surface have an eclectic or consistent surface?
- Are the edges treated in a uniform manner, or did the artist treat some edges softly, while leaving others hard?
- Is glazing apparent, or does the paint appear to be applied opaquely?

If glazing was employed, to what extent did the artist utilize it?

- Is an implicit palette evident in the painting? Can any of the hues be easily identified?
- If both indoor easel paintings and outdoor plein-air paintings by one artist can be seen in the same gallery, do they suggest a consistent palette was used both inside the studio as well as outside?
- Are there any brush hairs left stuck within the paint surface?

My days of copying from the work of Alma-Tadema taught me a plethora of lessons that I have since been able to utilize in my own painting process. The experience has increased my repertoire of available options to solving problems that I may encounter in my studio. When I teach, I refer to my process of creating art as one that utilizes the "Felix the Cat" approach to problem solving. This seemingly arcane reference to a once popular children's cartoon series may be recalled by American members of the "baby boom" and the "X" generations. According to the cartoon melody about Felix, "Whenever he gets in a fix, he reaches into his bag of tricks!" Technique is only a means to an end, *not an end in itself*. The greater the number of techniques one has readily available to solve drawing and painting problems, the greater the likelihood one will do so successfully. To this end, the act of copying offers the artist a "fuller bag of technical tricks," and thus an increased creative freedom.

From the point of view of a painter, I offer some observations regarding Alma-Tadema's work:

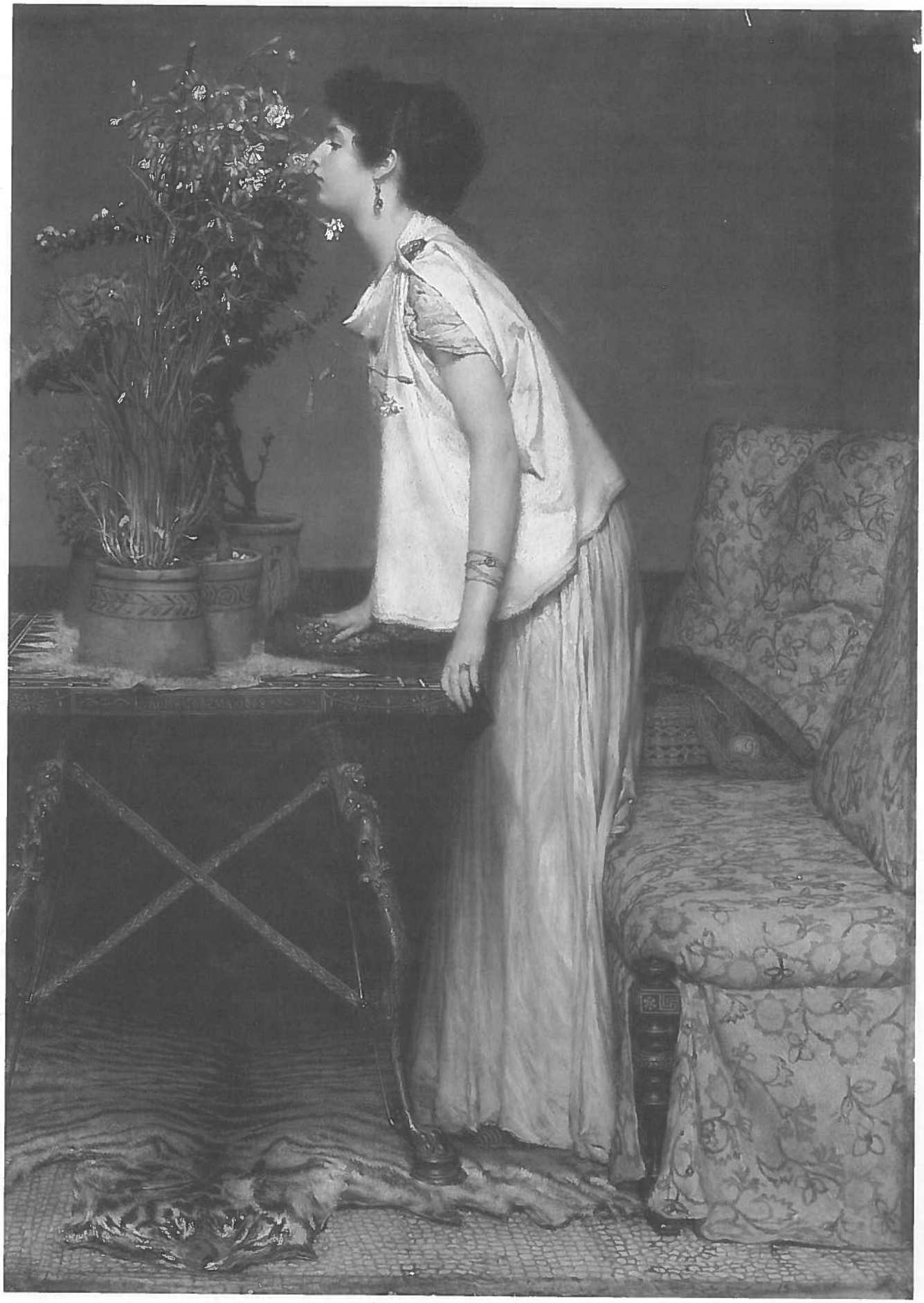
- Most paintings offer an implicit viewing range to their audience. Because of his attention to detail, Alma-Tadema's paintings are very satisfying in that they offer the viewer a large range in which to view the painting.
- There is a high level of technical difficulty involved in painting very fair flesh tones in bright lighting situations, because the form must be fully turned within a very narrow value range. A musical analogy to this problem would be playing Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* on a violin that has only three strings! Alma-Tadema not only turned such forms successfully, but did so time and time again almost seeming to welcome the challenge. But in painting very fair flesh tones, his erudition did not stop at creating form alone. Many display a spectral opalescence emphasizing the translucent quality of skin.
- His ability to render marble remains, in my opinion, unparalleled to this day. Again, his painting shows a sensitivity for the translucent quality of the material. According to Russell Ash in his book *Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema*, the artist attained this translucence without ever incorporating glazes or varnishes. (Although I am not a paintings conservator, or an art historian, upon inspection of the works, a few areas seem to spectrally shift in a unified fashion that would suggest that Alma-Tadema may have occasionally introduced a glaze over a section that was already painted with opaque paint. Notwithstanding my suspicion, I saw no evidence of this in the artist's marble renderings.)

Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema. *Portrait of Miss Alice Lewis.* Gift of Mr. Benjamin Frank. Courtesy, Zanesville Art Center, Zanesville, Ohio.

- Alma-Tadema's paint surface is somewhat of an eclectic one. It is not leathery, but rather remains thinner in the areas of dark value, and built up a bit in the lights. The passage of the eye across the painting is never a boring one!
- Despite the fact that the artist created genre easel paintings inside his studio that depicted outdoor scenes, they consistently display a kind of atmosphere that rings true. They do not look like contrived assemblages—indoor elements glued into outdoors. Alma-Tadema did this by keeping his contrasts on his figures limited and by retaining the colors of natural light in his paintings.
- The artist displayed keen observation skills by painting edges as they are seen in nature—some are painted hard, some are soft, and some are simply in-between.
- And finally, although Alma-Tadema is not often remembered first and foremost as a portrait painter, he has painted one of the finest portraits I have ever seen. In *Miss Alice Lewis*, the artist not only painted a young woman with technical virtuosity, but also with an empathetic respect. Known to her acquaintances as possessing a shy and withdrawn demeanor, she glances out of the canvas but intentionally away from the viewer. In doing so she is clearly avoiding eye contact. In portraiture, obtaining a likeness should be a given; if a personality is successfully communicated to the viewer the artist has created the sublime.

Because of my copying experience, I was able to learn painting lessons firsthand from Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema. Since he died in 1912, the opportunity offered me the only option to directly study his painting technique. The education I acquired during a few days at the museum will last a lifetime, and has contributed to every painting session I have had since. The copying process can benefit any artist at any level, as well as any museum. I once heard it said that the museum that allows an artist to copy from the masters is like the farmer who plants a seedling; the actions of both insure a future harvest.

Kathryn Manzo is a realist painter presently specializing in portraiture. She studied the painting techniques of Ted Seth Jacobs and Michael Aviano in France and New York City. Her background includes studies in the sciences and graphic design, the latter she refers to as "four solid years devoted to compositional training." Manzo notes, "A special thanks goes to The Dixon Gallery and Gardens and The Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute for allowing me the experience of copying." Manzo lives in New York City.



Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema. *Woman and Flowers*. 1868. 19⅜" x 14⅛". Oil on panel. Gift of Edward Jackson Holmes. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Remembering Elizabeth Okie Paxton

by Richard F. Lack

After a fruitless four-month search in New York for a school that would teach me how to draw, I decided to go up to Boston to investigate a lead I had received from a young art student. He told me of a man with whom he was studying; a painter who had started a small school based on the principles of the 19th-century ateliers. Little did I know that chance meeting would change my life. After my first encounter with R. H. Ives Gammell, I intuitively knew he was the teacher and Boston, the place, for me. A new world opened before me, including an introduction to the Boston School tradition which was to become the chief guide in my studies to become a painter.

—Richard Lack

Elizabeth Okie Paxton. Courtesy of Vose Galleries of Boston.

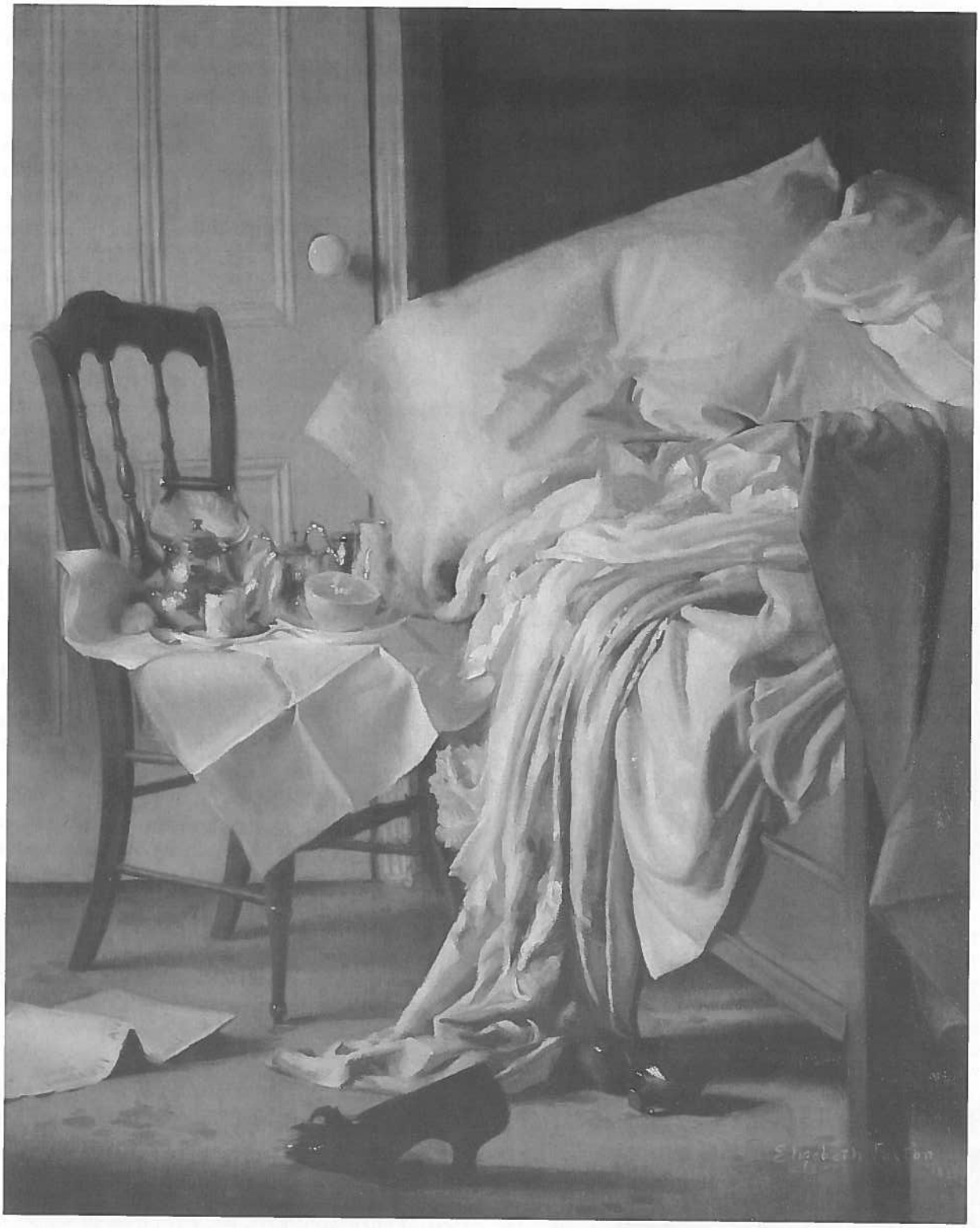
I first met Elizabeth Okie Paxton in Boston in the spring of 1950. I had been studying with Gammell for about three months when one morning a tall, very handsome woman of indeterminate age entered our studio accompanied by Gammell. It was Mrs. Paxton. To this day she will always be known to me as "Mrs. Paxton," a formality that, in my mind, suited her beauty, dignity and the artistic traditions she represented.

By the time I met her, I had a decent working knowledge of the Boston School tradition and the place she and her husband, William Paxton, occupied in it. William Paxton had been Gammell's teacher. Moreover, Gammell's pedagogical methodology was largely derived from Paxton. As a neophyte I had assimilated much theoretical knowledge concerning the methods of the Boston painters, but was a mere babe in the woods putting those methods into practice. Nonetheless, I was experienced enough to appreciate the perceptive, and at the same time gentle, critique Mrs. Paxton gave my humble still life that day. Her eye was sharp and her comments shrewd.

During the following years of my study with Gammell, I probably saw Mrs. Paxton a dozen times, including a few memorable dinners at her lovely home in Newton were she regaled us with stories about travels with her husband and the painters she had known. I vividly recall an anecdote about John Singer Sargent. We had been discussing the importance of drawing as the foundation of the painter's art. She said that she and William Paxton were visiting Venice one time, and they encountered Sargent. They were watching the great virtuoso from a short distance as he executed one of his masterful watercolors. She described with great satisfaction how the master carefully plotted the architecture of a singularly complex baroque church with a ruler and pencil, thus proving that even a sketch artist of Sargent's stature had to carefully prepare his drawing before dashing off his most spontaneous creations.

Mrs. Paxton's own work exemplifies the best qualities of the Boston School, namely the ability to capture color truth, the flow of light and the subtle relationship of edges. Her still lifes (most of her oeuvre consisted of still life) are among the finest of their kind done in the history of American art. They are unpretentious in conception, consisting largely of commonplace kitchen objects, varied textured utensils, and fruits and vegetables, all chosen "to hold the light well." Like her husband she had a very personal color taste—always based on the most intense and severe study of nature. Her compositions were well thought out, having the look of the most natural kind of arrangement, the sort nature herself might choose. The workmanship is exquisite, with surfaces that are smooth without being slick and clean-cut without being overworked. Indeed, Mrs. Paxton's paintings are veritable textbooks on both seeing and execution. For students who are beginning their study of still life, I can think of few other American painters who would be as healthy a model to follow.

Of course, the similarity between Mrs. Paxton's work and that of her husband is immediately noticeable. William Paxton was not only her chief teacher and mentor, but her enthusiastic supporter as well. As long as he was



Elizabeth Okie Paxton. *The Breakfast Tray*, Oil on canvas, 21" x 17". Courtesy of Vose Galleries of Boston.

alive, he must have given her regular critiques. Cynics, no doubt tinged with the sexism of the period, argued that Mrs. Paxton could never "do those things without Bill's help," and even suggested that he painted many passages himself. When Paxton died, these same cynics speculated that this would be the end of her career. These "doubting Thomases" were proven wrong, however, and Mrs. Paxton continued to produce work of exceptional quality until the end of her life. Her work was, as Gammell observed, "like no other work in the genre. For sheer sensitivity and veracity of statement, her color relations challenged William Paxton's own, as he himself proudly proclaimed. The jolt given the beholder by her simple revelation of the beauty of commonplace things transformed by the magic of light and shade and atmosphere is given an additional fillip by the originality of her selective taste."

Beyond Impressionism
The Naturalist Impulse

by Gabriel P. Weisberg

Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, NY, 1992

303 pages; 285 reproductions, 85 in color

Reviewed by Carol A. Cyran

During the 1870s, the traditions and teachings of European academic art were challenged by the modern schools of impressionism and symbolism. The impressionists with their interest in the effects of light and color sought to portray transitory visual impressions. The symbolists desired to convey ideas through suggestion as opposed to direct statement. Both schools renounced academic standards and subject matter and revolutionized the course of art. Was there another impulse in existence as well at this time? One that went beyond the academic and then-modern schools to reach the sensibilities of the common population? The answer, according to Gabriel P. Weisberg, is a resounding yes, and it is just this theory exploring the style called Naturalism that Weisberg sets forth in his revisionist book *Beyond Impressionism—The Naturalist Impulse.*

Preliminary photograph for *Breton Women at a Pardon*, Archives Départementales, Vesoul.

Pascal-Adolphe – Jean Dagnan-Bouveret. *Breton Women at Pardon*, 1887. Oil on canvas, 49¼" x 55½". Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Museum, Lisbon.

Weisberg opens his argument with a look at some of the ideological issues that allowed Naturalism to evolve. He finds its birth in the writings of Jules-Antoine Castagnary, Emile Zola and Joris-Karl Huysmans and the literary school of Naturalism. Next he presents an overview of the characteristics that define the visual style. Common traits include: themes drawn from contemporary rural or urban life, the use of glass studios to pose models in all types of weather, figures painted *en plein air* and integrated into their environment, and the use of photography as a visual aid. As this last trait is the key to the Naturalist Impulse, Weisberg explores its expression in the work of Pascal-Adolphe-Jean Dagnan-Bouveret and Jules-Alexis Meunier. In this analysis, numerous never-before-seen photographs are revealed which compare closely to Dagnan-Bouveret and Meunier's finished work. The photograph, it seems, replaced the traditional pencil or ink preliminary sketch. In addition, it provided a compositional aid whereby images could be manipulated to achieve a specific idea or photographic negatives could be combined to create one. Photography, therefore, enabled the Naturalist painter to adjust reality to suit his or her own personal vision.

To examine other Naturalist artists and to further define the scope of Naturalism, Weisberg divides the rest of the book into chapters based on nationality. An investigation of Naturalist painters in France, the birthplace of the Naturalist Impulse, comes first. Work ranging from the alienated figures of Jean-Francois Raffaelli to the urban scenes of Victor Gilbert is discussed with a special emphasis on Jules Bastien-Lepage, whose theories and art provide the standard for Naturalism. Here it becomes apparent that even though Naturalist paintings share similar characteristics, no clear-cut boundaries for the movement exist. Naturalists did not exhibit as a group; there were no written manifestoes, and Naturalist stylistic traits are found in both salon and avant-garde work. Other chapters include Naturalism in England, Hungary, Germany, Scandinavia, the Low Countries and American Naturalists in France.

Just how compelling is Weisberg's argument? With more than 300 pages and numerous reproductions, the work is amazingly comprehensive. And, as few art historians other than Weisberg have ventured to look at the artists included, it certainly is unprecedented. Yet the work is not without fault. First, though Weisberg's book is broad in scope, he fails to provide an adequate foundation upon which to build his thesis. More attention should be given to other art movements and artists so that Naturalism can be placed in a historical and theoretical context. For example, realism, from which the Naturalist Impulse is an outgrowth, is only minimally mentioned. Other contemporary artists and movements are omitted altogether. A second shortcoming is that Weisberg fails to adequately define the movement itself. Though he does ascertain its distinguishing features, he neglects to discriminate between its various expressions. What are the

merits of certain artists over others? What constitutes the success or failure of the specific works cited? Also lending ambiguity are the variety of names used to discuss the style. Weisberg uses the terms Naturalism, the Naturalist Impulse, the Realist Tradition, Rustic Naturalism, Social Naturalism, Documentary Naturalism, etc. in his text. These terms are simply stated with little definition and overlap each other without satisfactory explanation.

A core trait of the Naturalist Impulse is the use of the photograph as a visual aid. Weisberg provides some interesting examples of the specific use of photographs as a compositional tool, especially in his analysis of the work of Dagnan-Bouveret and Jules-Alexis Meunier. But to declare the general and systematic use of the photograph as a visual device by Naturalists seems an overstatement. Indeed, the text contains many suggestions of supposed photographic influences when none are apparent. For example, a painting whose imagery is "not fully integrated" is thought to be formed from separate photographic sources, while one that's "remarkably well-composed" is suggested to have roots in several photographic groupings—essentially the same analysis.

On the other hand, Weisberg deserves applause for his considerable undertaking. His extensive research and perseverance have brought to light numerous artists whose existence has been overlooked. Though the quality of his exploration of the Naturalist Impulse is not without flaws, the quantity and scope of his examination is certainly unprecedented.

Carol A. Cyran conducts research, appraisals and the cataloguing of auction items at a regional auction house in Cincinnati, Ohio. Cyran holds a Master of Arts in Art History from the University of Cincinnati, has taught art history at various colleges and is the author of several published articles.

Preliminary photograph for *The Catechism Lesson*, c. 1890. From glass negative, 5" x 7⅛". Private collection.

Jules-Alexis Meunier. *The Catechism Lesson*, 1890. Oil on canvas, 26¾" x 36¼". Museé des Beaux-Arts, Besançon.

Having just returned from a two-month painting and museum-hopping trip to France and Italy (see *Notes From Abroad*), I'd like to add an observation or two to Carol Cyran's succinct evaluation. Since I've always had a special interest in those artists mentioned in *Beyond Impressionism*, it is my habit while traveling to hunt down as many "naturalist" paintings as I can. During my most recent visit, I thoroughly enjoyed a museum in Vesoul, France, packed to the rafters with Dagnan-Bouverets, Meuniers and some very surprising Gérômes. It's clear, as Weisberg demonstrates in his book, that some first-rate painters used photography to aid in the development of multi-figured compositions. It is also clear to my painter's eye that a few of those in their lesser moments and a number of their less gifted comrades appear to have used them as their primary reference, usually with marginal success. Naturalism may well have degenerated to that level as it ran its course in the late 1800s and into the '90s. However, to subtly suggest that the finest works of Bastien-Lepage, Anders Zorn, Stanhope Forbes, Dagnan-Bouveret and Emile Friant were derived in anything more than a cursory way from photos is in my opinion erroneous. Having on some occasions had to rely on photography as my primary reference, I know from experience what a passage painted from a photo looks like. These exceptional works could not have been painted in that manner! What makes these pieces remarkable achievements are their unerring sense of form, value and color relationships broadly seen in the atmospheric light of day; qualities that simply cannot be derived from anything but direct and intensive observation of Nature's aspects "en plein air." Kudos and thanks should go to Weisberg for finally bringing these painters to the public's and art establishment's attention. But to overstate the case for photography as it relates to the Naturalist tradition in the late 19th century serves only to wrongfully diminish the astounding accomplishments of the finest of these painters.

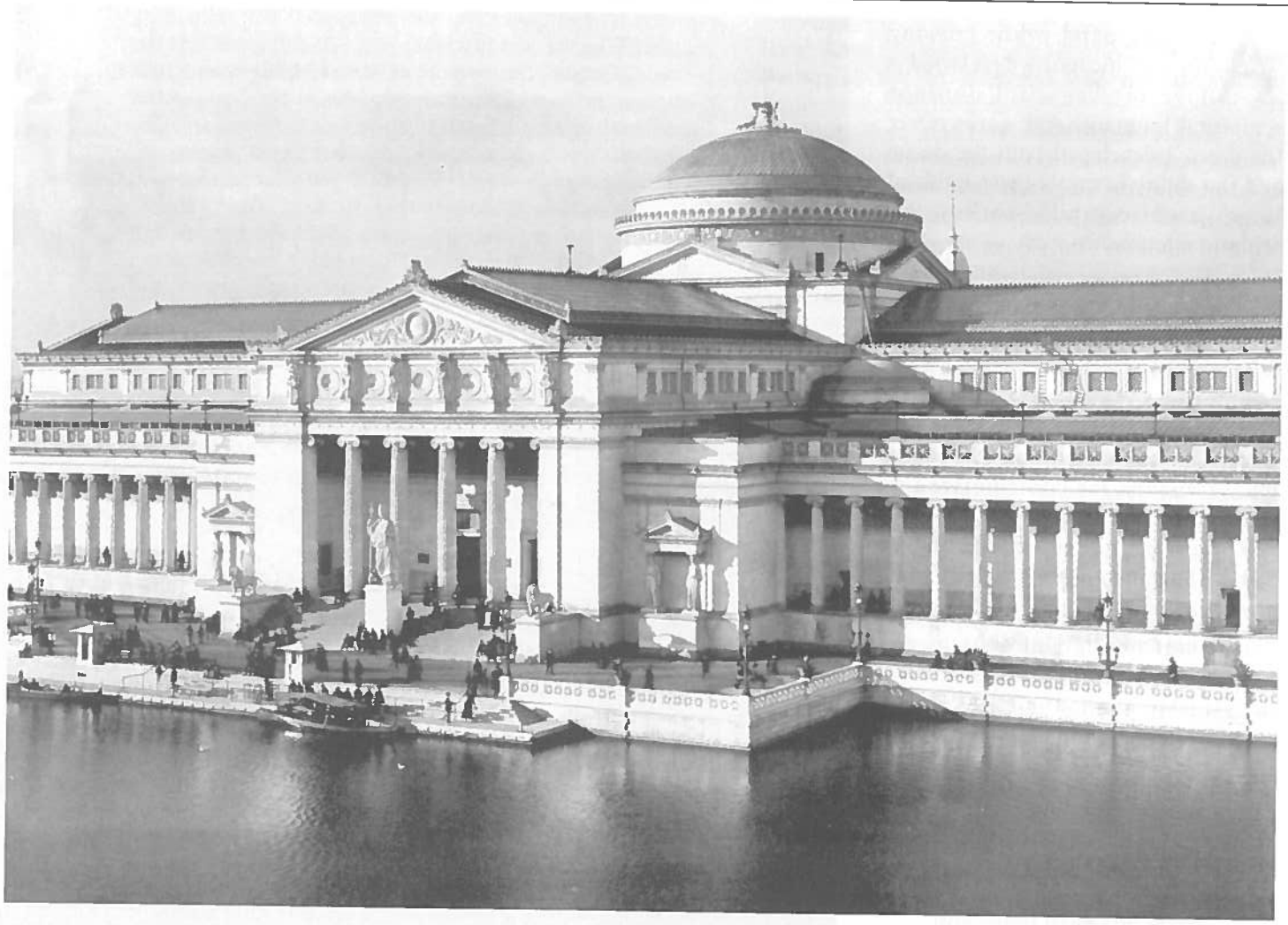
–Carl Samson

SCULPTURE IN PUBLIC PLACES VS. THE SYSTEM

by Glenn Terry

Recent experience has presented a strong challenge to my optimism and hope for the public art process. Given the status quo for latter 20th-century public art, one may wonder where this optimism comes from. Historically, artists have always faced challenges, but the nature of today's challenges has changed significantly.

Below the main dome inside the Fine Arts Building.



Main entrance to the Fine Arts Building.

If we look back to the World Colombian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago, for example, we see an amazing manifestation of energy and commitment to a purpose involving a multitude of people from diverse professions. All worked together in a spirit of harmony with a shared vision under the direction of the leading lights of their respective fields, most notably architect Daniel Burnham, sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Director of Decoration Frank Millet and landscape architect Frederick Olmsted. These men chose eminent professionals to develop individual commissions, not via competitions, but based on past performance and evidence of commitment to high standards of artistic excellence. Owing to the grand size of the works, these professionals in turn had their own crews of young apprentices, eager for the opportunity to prove themselves, gain experience, develop connections and rise by merit.

This hierarchical structure produced a vast army of workers able to create a glorious array of unparalleled beauty, that while diverse, did not lose the thread of time-proven standards of excellence. The Exposition marked the turning point for many artists' careers, and the works produced embodied qualities that I believe are vital in public art: beauty; the ability to uplift and inspire; and a joyous or reverent attitude toward life.

Why are these qualities in public art, accepted as normal for a millennium, suddenly regarded as archaic or no longer important? Why has self-condemnation or rebellion against purity and honor become standard, so much so that to rebel has become boringly predictable in modern art?

To illustrate my point, I offer the following summary of my recent attempt to put timeless values back in today's arena:

As background, while growing up in Chicago, I developed a love for beautiful outdoor sculptural fountains and works. Over the years, I developed both the desire and the ability to create these kinds of large architectural works and sculptural fountains.

In recent years, I've realized that my home city of Minneapolis, a world-class city in most ways, has few examples of truly world-class public outdoor art. We do have the deeply spiritual oversized *Spoonbridge and Cherry* fountain by Claus Odenburg, whose visions for contributions to other major cities include a huge toilet bowl float ball suspended in the River Seine. (Fortunately, that project went down the tubes.)

I decided that I ought to get involved.

"In recent years, I've realized that my home city of Minneapolis, a world-class city in most ways, has few examples of truly world-class public outdoor art."

I took steps that soon propelled me into involvement in a project to produce a sculpture that might be placed in a Minneapolis urban park. Although I had the enthusiastic support of some key city planners, the bureaucratic process for public works created this snag: The project needs Park Board approval, contingent upon strong support from the arts community. "Arts community" translates to the Minneapolis Arts Commission. The Commission needs evidence of strong neighborhood support before even looking at a proposal. "Strong neighborhood support" translates to a specific citizens group composed of those in the neighborhood whose interest level is strong enough to endure periodic meetings, and whose lives seem to revolve around officiating at such meetings.

After observing the particular site I had in mind, a park situated at a major crossroads that had once been named Central Park, I considered a visual icon that would give a sense of identity to the term "Twin Cities" (Minneapolis and St. Paul). I developed the idea of archetypal Twin Flames—Alpha and Omega, personifying the cities, emerging joyously with creative energy from the central sun of creation. Additional elements include light, color, water and natural as well as geometric forms related to Minneapolis geology.

I devoted more than a month to constructing the scale model and photographing it for slides (at my own expense). I finally presented it at one of the numerous neighborhood meetings I had the pleasure to attend. Now, a year later, the project still has not received the necessary endorsement from this group. However, the meetings have yielded strong opinions both in support and in opposition to the work. Bear in mind that I have not proposed one penny of

Looking east from the Grand Plaza. In the foreground, the two electric fountains flank the Colombian Fountain.

financial support either from this group or from city funds. My plan is to find financial support from private parties in the Twin Cities who have available resources and who share my vision for restoring beautiful, enduring and timeless artistic value to the domain of public art.

In an effort to educate, forewarn and prepare my colleagues who may be entering the arena of public art, I present some verbal highlights from the public debate that focused on my proposed sculpture:

"I object to your having a man and a woman, who seem to enjoy each other's company. I feel alienated from the piece because of it."

I forgot to tell him that without such experiences he would not be here, which would have led to a more agreeable meeting, but not allowed for such an interesting point of view. I shudder to consider the vast body of art that would not exist if, in the interest of not alienating him, we eliminated all works celebrating male/female relationships.

"You're moving too fast. We should first decide if we even want a fountain, then we should hold a competition and open it up to more artists. If people just come in with an already complete idea and we just let them build it, then we'd have chaos."

Actually, my involvement was in response to the chaos I've seen in public art resulting from her way of doing things. A competition implies the ability to award a contract; i.e., funding. They have no way to fund a work of this magnitude. (Incidentally, my proposal with its two, 15-foot-tall bronze figures, a 33-foot-diameter basin and a host of other elements creating an intricate water, lighting and sculptural effect with a variety of water sounds is budgeted similarly to *Spoonbridge and Cherry*.

"I object to your having a man and a woman, who seem to enjoy each other's company. I feel alienated from the piece because of it."

Therefore, the budget supports fabrication costs of a complex work rather than the lifestyle of a complex ego.) So if, as a committee, they deign to approve adding a fountain, perhaps it will have to be a drinking fountain, once they've examined the budgetary priorities.

Next comes jury selection. Following post-1940s precedent, this will include "experts" who write much about art theory and style, but have little personal experience creating major works. You know the type—writers of long, vocabulary-inventive paragraphs exalting the deep esoteric significance of, say, a ceramic armchair with alligators for legs sitting in a bowl of tomato soup. For the privilege of having such jurors, the artists who enter the competition will be charged an entry fee besides the time and

> *"A work has merit not because it came about via a so-called democratic process, but by its inherent qualities and its effect upon others."*

energy spent on their design. Thus this system may attract naive, despondent, or unoccupied artists willing to gamble their talent, while perhaps the most qualified and skilled artists are either too busy or too jaded from prior experience to not waste their time on speculation.

How many truly great works of art have come through this kind of system? Was the Sistine Chapel a product of art by committee? It seems to me that works of genius are the products of geniuses at work, not the luck of the draw. A work has merit not because it came about via a so-called democratic process, but by its inherent qualities and its effect upon others.

"The faces look too Eurocentric. Too Western-European."

Pardonnez-moi, boobala, I'm an American, not a Western-European, not a product of your hyphenated-Americanism divide and conquer bickering that pits one race or category of Americans against another. As an American, with my unique perspective as an individual, I have sculpted archetypal figures generated by my personal sense of beauty without even considering race.

Apparently, since Western Europe has disproportionately dominated world art in the last 1,000 years, it's time to equalize things with art from cultures that haven't developed art to the same degree or emphasis. Maybe we ought to equalize other cultural institutions, too. Fewer Chinese restaurants and more Irish take-out joints for starters. And our cars look too Western-European—let's drive more Mongolian cars. As for our airplanes, let's add at least a 30 percent inclusion of Air Botswana prototypes.

Bon voyage!

"The Park Board may not look favorably upon another fountain. We find them costly to maintain. You'll have to at least include in your budget a trust fund for maintenance."

Thank you very much. Besides spending creative time and energy at endless bureaucratic meetings, running around like a madman trying to do fundraising, and working for peanuts for a couple of years to produce the work, it is presumed that the artist must also spearhead the financing of maintenance to a cultural gift to the city. (No wonder there's a lack of world-class fountains in Minneapolis.)

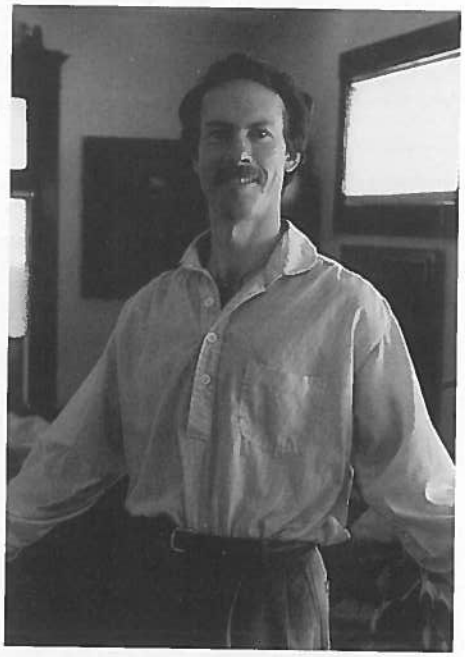
How can civilization flourish and strive for greater heights with such attitudes? Imagine Grant Park in Chicago without Buckingham

Looking west from the Grand Plaza showing the back of the statue of the Republic.

Fountain because the city did not have the heart to maintain it. Imagine Rome without fountains. Imagine Paris without Notre Dame because it's too hard to keep the darn thing clean! Some things are worth the sacrifice—if enriching a city's cultural heritage is considered a sacrifice.

More could be said, but I'll close with a note of hope. I'm still willing to do my part to make great things happen in the realm of public art, as others have and are doing. I hope that artists who share the vision of beauty, purity and honor in artistic creation will keep the faith and continue to create the golden age art that lives in our hearts.

"I'm still willing to do my part to make great things happen in the realm of public art, as others have and are doing. I hope that artists who share the vision of beauty, purity and honor in artistic creation will keep the faith and continue to create the golden age art that lives in our hearts."



Glenn Terry sculpts in marble, bronze and wood; paints oil portraits, murals and landscapes; and designs homes and offices from his studio in Minneapolis. His article Le Sculpteur de la Mort: Leonardo Bistolfi, *appeared in the previous issue of the* Journal.

Notes on Training and Teaching

by Peter Bougie

As a long-time painter and teacher, I've found that the dedication and re-dedication of painters, teachers and students to the task at hand is paramount. I have chosen to make that dedication within the context of a specific tradition. This tradition provides me with training, skills, insight and a specific context from which to work. To this, I have to bring my own energy and vision.

> *"If a man draws with a stupid, insensitive line it is because he is not able to perceive sensitively and intelligently the factors that make a line meaningful and interesting. How then can he point out those factors invisible to himself so that the student may become aware of them? How can he educate the student's eye to perceive things his own eye has not been educated to perceive? It has been, and is being, demonstrated over and over again that he cannot."*
>
> — R. H. Ives Gammell
> *Twilight of Painting*

Head study by student Barbara Bjornson, 1993. The Bougie Studio.

I wonder how many current and potential art students know what to look for regarding their training and if they are truly ready to discipline themselves to the rigorous demands of their craft. Do students realize that the Old Masters' secret was that they knew how to draw? And not only did they practice it, they lived it in a way which I think must be almost incomprehensible to most people, especially young people, in this neurotic time. The pressures to achieve and succeed in our culture are enormous, and I think almost no one can resist them entirely. To become even a decent draftsman and painter requires an enormous amount of work and dedication in the face of a culture which is almost completely indifferent, and which equips students and everyone else with notions of instant gratification. The work to be done is not in the perusing of books, although that is an essential supplemental pursuit, but in the hours spent at the easel apprehending nature under the guidance of, in the early years, an experienced teacher. No student will experience real or lasting success until he or she fully understands and accepts that fact and makes it the fundamental axiom of his or her career. Then, if they have some talent and intelligence, students may have some success. And let it be clear that by "success" I mean success in the painting of pictures. I am not talking about selling them.

At this point I should say that the conclusions I draw and the foibles and ironies I am about to lay out are grounded in my own experience. I have been the foolish student I am about to describe, and I have encountered that student as a teacher. And I have struggled to be a good teacher. As a teacher I am instructed by all of my students but, ironically, it is the bad student who often delivers the sharpest lessons.

The elements of training are simple to understand but difficult to accomplish. Practice is paramount. Students must get to the easel and stay there, and listen to and trust their teachers. I hesitate to write that last phrase because, in our time, listening is devalued in favor of asserting, and trust is for the unsophisticated. But when young students find themselves doubting the motives or competence of their teachers, they might pause to reflect that no teacher gains credit or reputation if their students do mediocre work. Students

> ***"The most gifted [artist] will hardly achieve even mediocrity in painting until his natural gifts have been subjected to long discipline and until he has acquired a large amount of specialized knowledge."***
>
> — R. H. Ives Gammell
> *Twilight of Painting*

might also pause to ask themselves if they have mastered any aspect of their craft as thoroughly as their teacher has, and if not, they should assume that they still have much to learn. I say this not to foster a sense of inferiority in the student, but to encourage perspective. A student is, by definition, ignorant to some degree. In the realm of representational drawing and painting there are very definite skills to be learned: first, observation; second, technique; and finally, picture making. These are not learned through the study of theory, but by practice and application under the guidance of an experienced teacher.

There are all kinds of reasons why some students avoid direct experience at the easel or resist their teachers. There is the fear of failure and the dreaded judgment of peers. Most art students have invested a good deal of their sense of identity in becoming a painter (or, more often, an "artist"), and failure looms as devastation. There is lack of confidence and, even more destructive, excessive ego. A big ego is a terrible handicap, because what can a superior being learn from a mere mortal? Large egos are often (but not always) accompanied by large talents, and it is unfortunate that these talents often never learn what experience has to teach them.

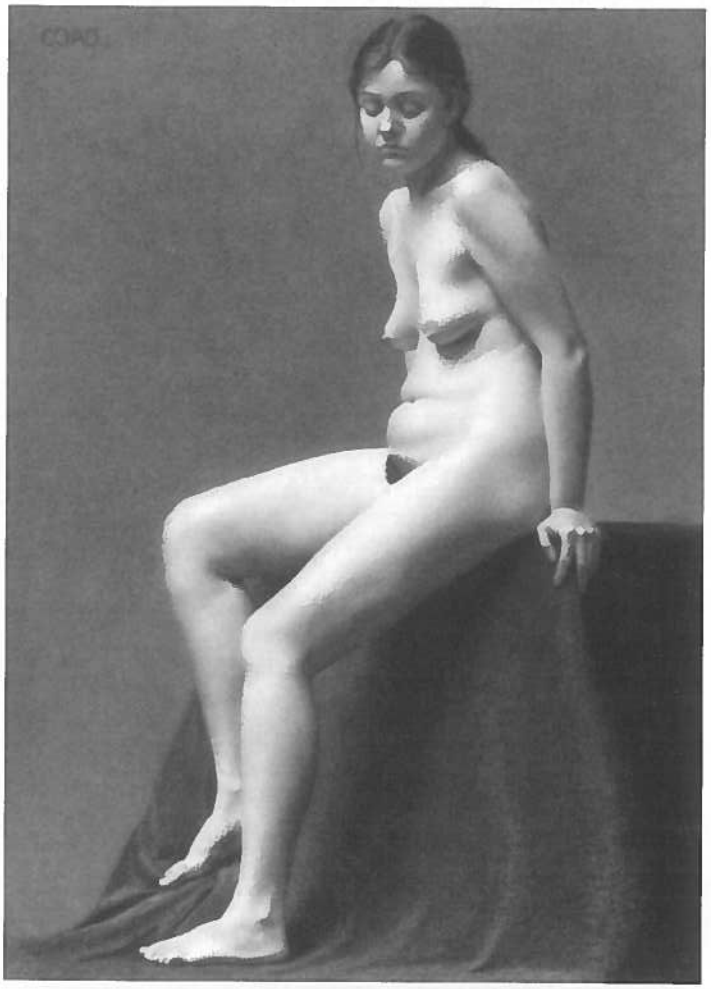
There can be plenty of personal/psychological baggage in the student-teacher relationship, impossible to comment on in general terms, though offering a convenient ditch in which failures can be laid to rest. Commonly, however, students are resistant to authority, especially younger males. Authority is widely trashed in the popular culture, to the point where the virtues of authority are forgotten: leadership, responsibility, security and continuity, to name a few. So while it is true that there have always been and are plenty of abusive and stupid authorities, it's also true that we have plenty of rebels without a clue. Criticism should always be constructive, focused and informed.

Students disengage from practice when they meet blocks in their progress which prove particularly difficult for them. For instance, students who are struggling with shapes sometimes begin griping about "pickiness" and "tightness" and express a desire to loosen up. Pickiness and tightness of course, are not the real issues; observation and true rendering are. The deciding factor when it comes to disengaging is the student's determination (or lack thereof) to master this problem to the best of his or her ability. At this point some students can't go any farther, and it becomes the teacher's duty to turn the students toward something they can do.

Some students also have lively and imaginative inner lives where their accomplishments and ideas exceed what is achieved in reality. Often these imaginings are fueled by an incomplete understanding of good books and ideas or uncritical acceptance of bad books and ideas, or by the need to exalt ideas opposed to those held up by the teacher. In these imaginary places, students eat make-believe apples and avoid cutting their teeth on real ones.

To teachers it is at times beyond understanding how a student of limited knowledge and little or no accomplishment feels competent to make judgments about the skills of the teacher. It's as if the apprentice carpenter walked onto the jobsite and offered opinions to the master craftsman about how to swing the hammer or handle the plane. In the trades, such presumption is quickly dealt with. In the world of the art school, ignorant but opinionated art students are frequently not only tolerated but catered to, cajoled and courted. Mere questioning is taken as a positive value, whether or not the questions are intelligent and constructive. It goes without saying that no student should be discouraged from asking questions, but I have to wonder why some students feel entitled to question the competence of the teacher, when often the student has accomplished so little.

Of course, art students have many positive qualities, and on the whole I have enjoyed working with them. Any honest relationship between teacher and student involves real give and

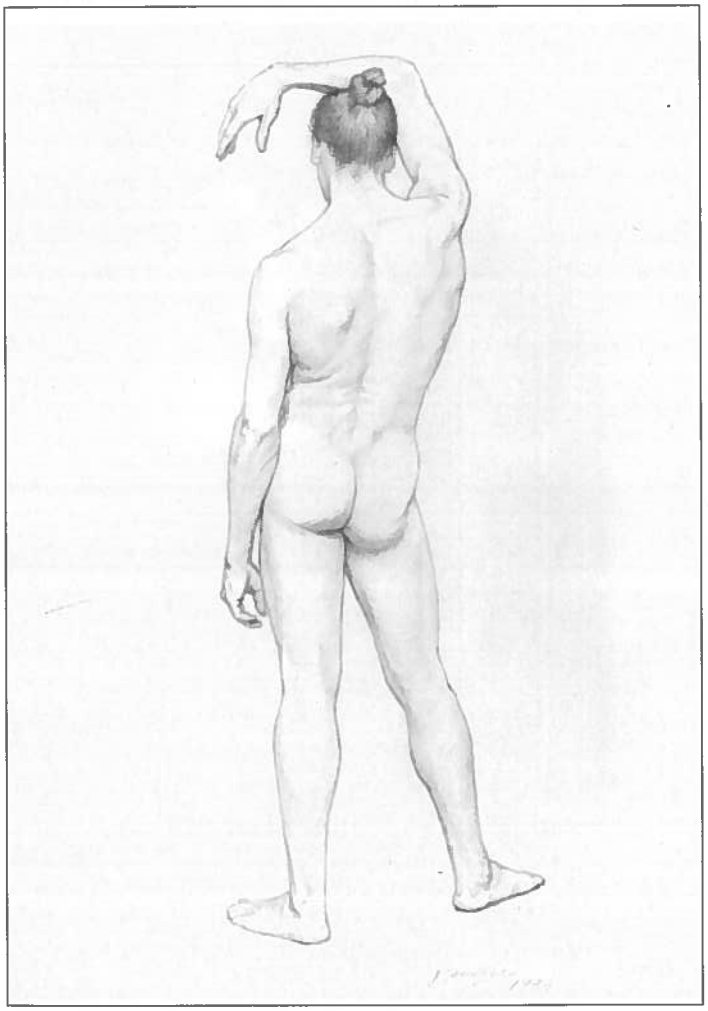


Charcoal figure study by RexAnne Coad. The Atelier.

Instructor Brian Lewis critiquing a student's figure work. The Bougie Studio.

take and ought to be satisfying and educational to both. But students with negative attitudes can be a particular problem in the studio or atelier setting. These students are not awash in a sea of faces as they are at a college or university. They are part of a small group of a dozen or so people and as such can exert disproportional influence, even ruining the experiences of their fellow students.

And lest anyone think I'm picking on students, it should also be clear that studios and ateliers have specific



Peter Bougie. *Standing figure study*, 1994. Pencil, 10" x 15".

> *"The carrying forward of knowledge that comes only from the accumulated experience of many paintings produced over generations is essential to picture making of this kind, and lies at the very core of what we mean by tradition."*
>
> — Richard Lack
> *Realism in Revolution, essay: Painting; Understanding the Craft, p. 89*

responsibilities. The emphasis in schools should be on fundamentals: cast drawing and painting, life drawing and painting, head studies preceded by some still life work to familiarize students with the palette and basic composition; instruction in anatomy geared specifically to the purposes of artists; design or composition; and sketching, especially landscapes. Students should not attempt advanced figure compositions until late in the third or the fourth year. In *Twilight of Painting*, R. H. Ives Gammell states:

"As far as I know, it was not until the beginning of the 20th century that any serious painter professing to prepare earnest young men to be professional painters ever soft-pedaled the importance of drawing and the absolute necessity of a careful grounding in drawing as the very basis of their training."

Schools that go lightly on fundamentals and rush students into creative work are cheating them, as are schools that break up the progression of tasks (from the relatively simple to the more complex) into categorized classes. This system assumes that the student rather than the teacher is better able to judge both a proper course of study and his or her own proficiency.

Facilities should provide adequate space and good lighting and an overall pleasant atmosphere, but anything beyond that adds to costs which ultimately the student has to bear. As Gammell points out in *Twilight of Painting*, schools that run on a for-profit basis must cater to a wide variety of interests to survive and the quality of teaching necessarily suffers. The pursuit of excellence in representational drawing and painting is not compatible with the demands of the marketplace. That is, only small groups of serious students may be served. Larger groups can only be served as hobbyists, or at the expense of quality.

Part-time students should expect to take longer than full-time students to complete their education. Teachers should not waffle about this fact. This may seem like an obvious point, but it is not uncommon to encounter part-time students who suppose that through some special secret virtue, they will complete the same program a full-time student undertakes by applying half as much time and effort.

Students who enter an atelier or studio program enter a world grounded and steeped in a specific tradition, one which can be traced directly, student to teacher, back to the early 19th century, and the roots of which extend even further back.

Teachers should make students aware of this tradition, and students should investigate it. Students also need to understand that a large part of the teaching process in this tradition involves making corrections in shapes and values. A teacher should say to the student, "Here is what is seen in nature, and here is what you have drawn. Do you see how what you have drawn is wider [or longer, or angled more precipitously, or curved more gradually or whatever the case may be]? Look at your drawing and compare it to nature. Then correct it." This must be done over and over again throughout the student's training. In order to accomplish this, the teacher instructs the students in methods of observation and analysis. Such instruction becomes increasingly difficult as the student progresses and the corrections become more subtle. In addition, the conscientious teacher slows the students who charge ahead too fast or fortifies the confidence of students who don't perceive that progress is being made.

Today it is not generally recognized how hard it is to draw well. It is not even generally recognized that good drawing has value. When art schools do try to teach drawing, they usually do it very badly. This is because most instructors don't know how to draw. It would seem to follow that they can't teach what they don't know, but this doesn't prevent many in the field from advancing their pet theories in lieu of real knowledge. Students pick up on this and bounce from place to place trying to acquire it in bits and pieces. When they bounce into an atelier or studio with the same idea in mind, they find that we take our drawing and painting seriously. Any student who doesn't shouldn't come to us.

All this is an American tradition of representational painting. The branch that I and many of my colleagues claim descent from are people who studied with R. H. Ives Gammell or one of his students. Gammell and his contemporaries came through Boston in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, after studying in Paris. While there they absorbed both the tradition of academicism and the revolution of impressionism. They brought this knowledge home, making a new kind of painting that was very different from its European counterpart. I don't claim that it's the only tradition, but it is the one in which I was trained and of which I am best prepared to comment on. The challenge is to carry this tradition forward and make a vital realism for the next century. To do this, a high standard of training must be maintained. I see no reason why good training should not equip talented painters to do exceptional work. After all, it is not good training that frustrates and inhibits the painter possessing a desire to apprehend the visual world, but bad training. I make no claims about the merits of nonrepresentational painting or the methods of teaching it, only about the inferiority of bad realism. Our idea which may (but should not) seem quaint is to give students skills and then turn them loose.

And in the hope that no one—students, painters, teachers and those who write on these subjects—take these aspirations too seriously, let me close with these words from *The Seven Story Mountain* by Thomas Merton:

> "The logic of worldly success rests on a fallacy: the strange error that our perfection depends on the thoughts and opinions and applause of other men. A weird life it is, indeed, to be living always in somebody else's imagination, as if that were the only place in which one could at last become real."

Peter Bougie. *Seated figure study*, 1994. Pencil, 10" x 15".

> ***"The history of painting records that the overwhelming majority of painters, including the very greatest, worked long years under competent teachers. But an artist cannot be held to blame if, during his adolescent years, he found no such teacher available. And, unfortunately, the young student is rarely able to judge between good and bad teaching."***
>
> — R. H. Ives Gammell
> *Twilight of Painting*

As an associate editor of the Classical Realism Journal, *I hope to deepen my understanding of the classical realist tradition by writing about how it is taught and about the experiences of both students and teachers. I also want to invite others from similar traditions to consider sharing specific information about their training, their aesthetics, their teachers and their artistic forebears. Collection and publication of this kind of information can only enrich all of our experiences as painters, teachers and students.*

– Peter Bougie

"There will be more and more talk about the end of painting in our era; but if this tragic occurrence does take place, it will be because the potential Michelangelo and budding Rembrandt of tomorrow were denied their birthright."

Richard F. Lack
On the Training of Painters,
1967

Please Note: Any mention of ateliers and studio schools in the CRJ should not be taken as a blanket endorsement of the credentials of the schools' directors or instructors, the curricula or of the quality of instruction students may receive. We encourage all students to thoroughly research any school of art they consider attending to ensure they will receive the best quality instruction for their investment of time, energy and funds.

–The Editors

Photo by Mark W. Stone

Charles Gilbert Kapsner
The Lindbergh Fresco

A 9- by 26-foot fresco by Charles Kapsner that depicts the life and work of Charles A. Lindbergh is the subject of this issue's Focus on Excellence. Lindbergh is renowned for the first transatlantic solo flight to Paris, but also came to be known as a prominent American statesman, philosopher and steward of nature. The fresco is located at the entrance of the Charles A. Lindbergh Elementary School in the aviator's (and Kapsner's) hometown of Little Falls, Minnesota.

Kapsner, 42, is well-qualified to take advantage of the resurgence of popularity that fresco seems to be enjoying, having created three other frescoes in Minnesota, not to mention one in North Carolina and another in Buriano, Italy. Kapsner's fine draftsmanship, evident in the fresco's cartoon, is testimony to seven years of studio drawing at the highly acclaimed school of the late Nerina Simi in Florence, Italy. In addition, Kapsner has collaborated on frescoes in Italy and the United States with Ben Long, an apprentice to the late Italian fresco master Pietro Annigoni. Currently, Kapsner divides his time between Minnesota and North Carolina, depending on his works in progress and the time of year. The Lindbergh Fresco Project brought him back to his home state for an extended period of time.

"I worked closely with Reeve Lindbergh [Lindbergh's youngest daughter] during the fresco's conceptual process. It was her idea to incorporate the elephants, as a tribute to her father's ties with Kenya's park system and his dedication to the plight of endangered species," Kapsner said.

Other elements in the work have to do with the themes of guarding the environment and the importance of art, music and education. In addition, the central image of the composition, a tree, was inspired by an aerial photograph taken by Lindbergh on one of his last flights over New England, and is symbolic of both life-giving and knowledge. The oval that surrounds the tree is evocative of the disks placed over maps to denote areas of potential nuclear destruction when Lindbergh was involved with Strategic Air Command planning. The tree could also be interpreted as a mushroom cloud.

The fresco, funded by private and public contributions, is the first of two that will eventually grace the walls of the Lindbergh Elementary School in Little Falls. The second fresco, for the school's auditorium, will be 18 feet by 41 feet and will depict regional history. Although Kapsner is in the beginning planning stages for the fresco, work won't begin on site until 1996, with 1998 as a tentative completion date. A public television video documentary about the fresco project has been filmed for regional, and potentially, national, distribution.

What's next for Kapsner? "Rest! And a little relaxation before starting in on the second phase of the project. I also plan to take time to work on a series of small oil paintings in order to explore spatial relationships in preparation for the big fresco." Watch for an update on phase II in a future issue of the *Journal*.

Some of the preceding information was provided by Mark W. Stone, an independent videographer from St. Cloud, Minnesota, who is producing a video documentary on The Lindbergh Fresco Project.

NOTES FROM ABROAD

On August 2, 1994, Steven Levin and Carl Samson boarded a flight from Cincinnati to Paris for a two-month painting sojourn to France and Italy. Here is Samson's brief account of their travels.–Ed.

A Liberating Experience

Upon our arrival in Paris, we rented a brand-new Renault Clio and drove to an estate in Vetheuil that I was familiar with from previous occasions. Our first 10 days were spent there, with a lovely bend of the River Seine nearby. We eagerly broke in our brushes and canvases. Steve started with some beautiful river scenes in silvery light, while I was more drawn to architectural elements. Another favorite spot was a grove of poplars just outside Giverny. Soon we were off to a rural cottage in a part of France I had only heard about, La Suisse Normande. The landscape initially seemed very similar to parts of Ohio and Kentucky. Happily, aspects that were uniquely French were not too difficult to find. Most of our paintings were done in an old apple orchard right outside our front door. Others required short drives to neighboring villages. The 50th anniversary of the liberation of France loomed large over our stay there. We learned a great deal about its importance to the French, and were especially moved by a visit to the Normandy beaches.

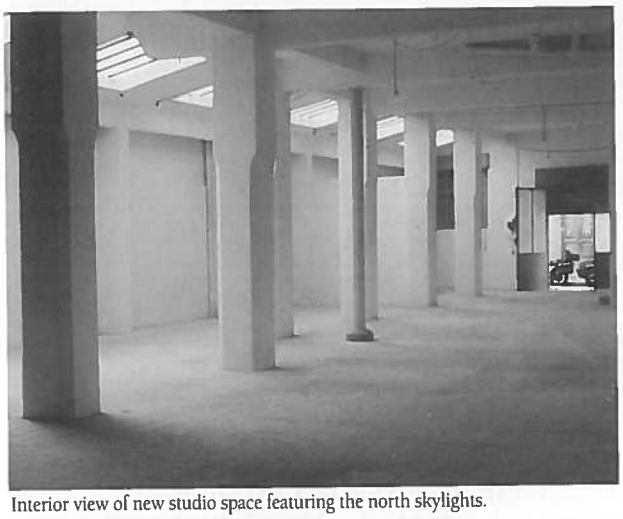
We spent the last few days in Paris, including six hours at the Louvre. We each had our favorites, but were more often than not in accord over those pictures that were truly remarkable; paintings by Van Dyck, Chardin, Guido Reni and Rembrandt stood out. Half the fun was hashing over why each of us felt the way we did. "On to Italy!" was the call, but we first stopped in a small town called Vesoul—the birthplace of both Dagnan-Bouveret and Gérôme. It was an absolute joy to see such a small museum full of the works of these two masters! Passing through Sargent's Simplon Pass in Switzerland, we made our way into Italy and the Chianti region just south of Florence, where we worked steadily in the middle of vineyards for another two weeks. I found this portion of our trip especially invigorating. It was not unusual to put in 13-hour days there, as the raw material for good landscape painting was nearly inexhaustible! The last week we squeezed in visits to Florence (where we enjoyed visiting Charles Cecil), Venice, and finally, three glorious days in Rome. We returned home on September 28.

Steve Levin (top) and Carl Samson (above) painting on location in Italy and France.

So much was gleaned from this trip, it is impossible in this brief account to fully convey its value. Certainly we'll both be better painters because of it. The stimulation of sharpening one's perceptions and clarifying one's positions while traveling and working with a fellow artist is priceless. Of course, minor stresses, fatigue and frustrations do occur. But after 10 museums, three countries, 35 paintings and being within earshot of each other a good part of the time, we came away with deeper respect, friendship and camaraderie for each other than before.

Kurt Anderson — painter, author and past editor of the *Classical Realism Quarterly*, the forerunner to the *Journal*

ASCR Associate Guild Member **Kurt Anderson** is the author of the recently published *Realistic Oil Painting Techniques*. Published by Northlight Books, the book is 140 pages and boasts 250 color illustrations. The book provides instruction on traditional realism techniques in a step-by-step, building-block approach, beginning with cast and still life drawing and ending with chapters on alla prima portrait painting. Anderson has also been busy with other projects, including a commission for Messiah Episcopal Church in St. Paul. He is painting 14 pictures depicting each of the traditional Stations of the Cross. Six have been completed and the project is slated for completion in March, 1996. Some of Anderson's recent portrait commissions include the chief executive officer of Hormel Foods Corporation, Richard L. Knowlton and his wife Nancy, and benefactor Carl Holmes, for the Carl Holmes Memorial Nursing Center of Abbott Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis.



Interior view of new studio space featuring the north skylights.

The Florence Academy of Art, Florence, Italy, has a new address in a newly remodeled facility. The building features private working sections, exhibition space, specially designed window coverings and lighting, and classrooms equipped for special lectures, demonstrations and seminars. Inquiries should now be sent to:

The Florence Academy of Art
Via delle Casine, 21
50122 Florence, Italy
Tel. 011-39-55-24.54.44
FAX 011-39-55-56.10.44

Opposite view.

Atelier du Nord students, Two Harbors, Minnesota.

Atelier du Nord School of Classical Realism

(formerly Atelier North)Two Harbors, Minnesota, has undergone major landscaping and remodeling, including expanded studio space, a new residence and a colorful "Monet" garden for students to paint and relax in. The residence includes an indoor gallery-garden with paintings, sculptures and an art library for student use.

The school's address remains the same:
1066 Highway 61 East, Two Harbors, MN 55616.

Atelier LeSueur is located in its new home at 2180 North Shore Drive, Orono, Minnesota. Known to long-time residents as the Old Hill School, the building has been significantly remodeled and repainted. Although tuition rates have gone up this year due to building renovation costs, a substantial tuition remission may be received in exchange for teaching, building maintenance or administrative duties. This year's faculty consists of Steven Levin, Michael Coyle and Jean Grapp, with Kim Beatty added as the newest faculty member. Alumni of Atelier LeSueur are invited to demonstrate their support of the school through individual or family membership. For more information, contact:

Barbara Kellam, 4177 Shoreline Drive #304, Spring Park, MN 55384; (612) 471-7242

Two important books now available through the *Journal*

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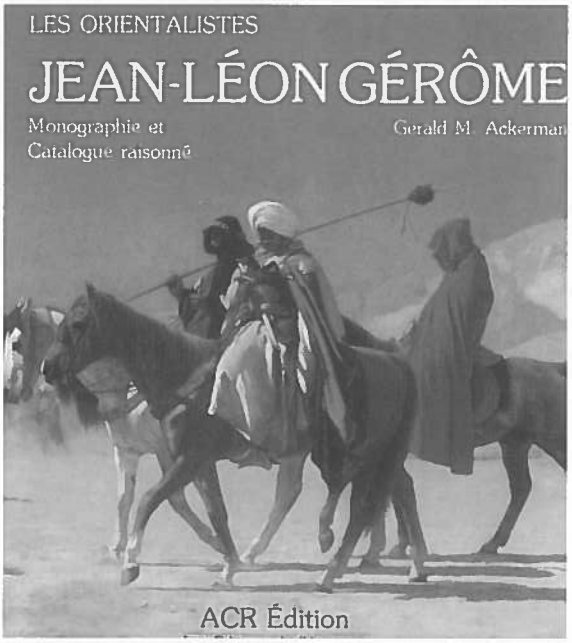

GÉRÔME, HIS LIFE AND WORKS

By Gerald M. Ackerman

Gerald Ackerman's book, consisting of a thorough biography and catalogue raisonné, provides the first modern study of the painter and his work. Beginning with Gérôme's childhood and his first studies in the ateliers of Gleyre and Delaroche, the author describes and evaluates the artist's career as a successful painter in the Second Empire: the State commissions, the Salon exhibits; the safari; his teachings at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris; his theory and practice of art. The lively narrative, supported by many quotations from letters, diaries, memoirs and other contemporary sources – some of which have never before been translated or published – reveals the painter in his many roles: a gifted and intellectual painter and sculptor, a family man, a witty companion, a *bon viveur*, a teacher and finally a powerful member of France's artistic establishment.

The second part of the book illustrates almost every known oil painting, watercolour, print and sculpture by Gérôme, with full documentation: description, province, history, discussion and biographical data, providing an exhaustive catalogue raisonné.

Published in 1986 and no longer available in bookstores, this book is often sold by book dealers for as much as $260 a copy. Only versions printed in French are available from the publisher in Paris; however, with special permission from the publisher and the generosity of the author, we are offering the French version with the original manuscript (in English) provided by the author. This manuscript was the last draft prior to its final editing by the publisher and contains a great deal more information than the printed version. A one-of-a-kind offer that every serious student and collector should have in their library. The manuscript comes with a heavy stock cover and plastic binding which allows it to lay flat while reading.

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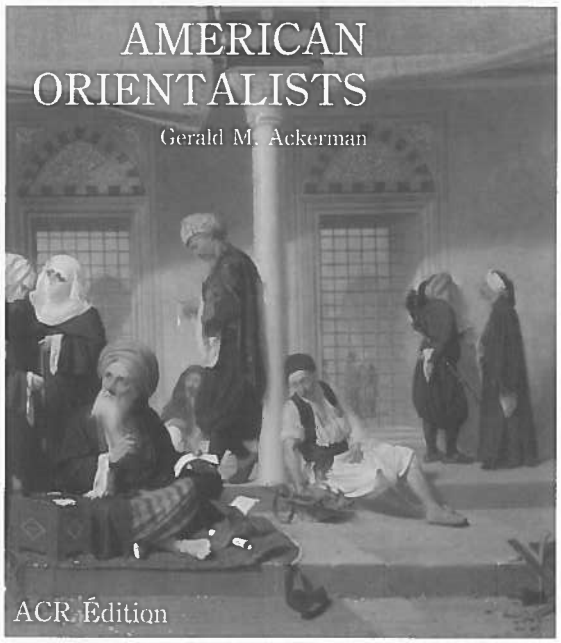

THE AMERICAN ORIENTALISTS

By Gerald M. Ackerman

During the nineteenth century a visit to Islamic lands gradually became an extension of the grand tour for artists, and many American artists, often residing or studying in Europe, crossed the Mediterranean to visit the Near and Middle East. The earliest American visitors were well prepared; they were primarily landscape painters, used to spending summers camping in the New England Mountains or the Western Frontier; good horsemen, experienced campers, they switched easily from horseback to camelback and followed original pursuits.

Aside from seeing the works of known painters in a new context and learning about several interesting, forgotten painters like Walter Gould, Walter Sartain and Henry Roderick Newman, the reader will learn more about the artistic activity of the United States than from many conventional histories of the period that isolate and heroicize "major figures." You'll learn about life-long friendships among artists who travelled and worked together, the society and clubs they belonged to, how they were trained to become painters, how they exhibited and sold their pictures, how they worked either within or without the academy. You'll learn about the artists' varied reasons for visiting the Near East and their individual reactions to a new culture and a different religion. Many of these painters will seem to come to life because you will be reading their own words.

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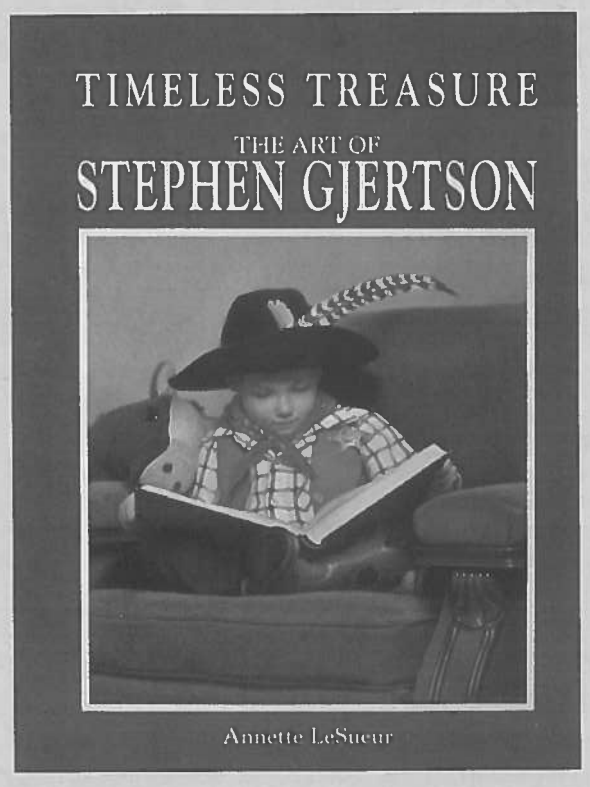

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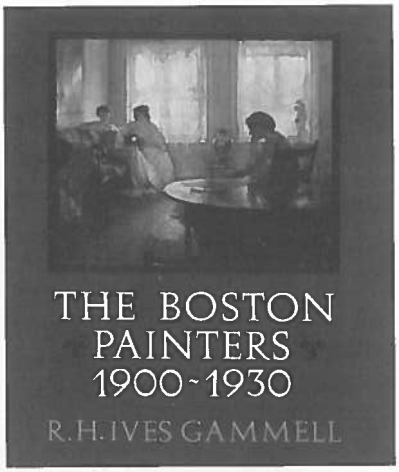

The Boston Painters -- 1900-1930

By R.H. Ives Gammell. *The Boston Painters* describes the life and work of the four leading Boston School painters: DeCamp, Benson, Tarbell and Paxton. Edited by Gammell's goddaughter, Elizabeth Ives Hunter. 208 pages with 41 color and 116 black and white illustrations.

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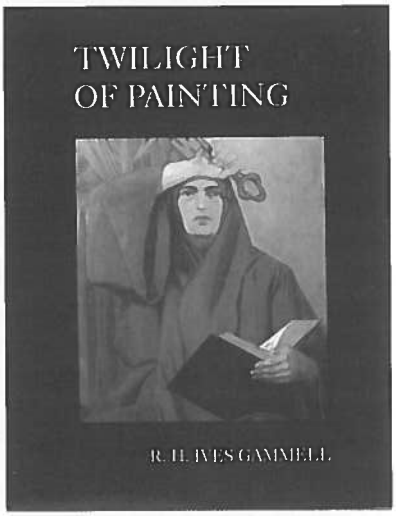

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Exhibition catalogs of today's classical realist artists including essays on their work

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Classical Realism: The Other Twentieth Century

Catalog with 7 color and 21 black & white illust. of 1983 traveling exhibition. Essays by Richard Lack, "Classical Realism: The Other 20th Century" and R. H. Ives Gammell, "Painting in Search of a Criterion." 32 pages. (Limited quantity.)

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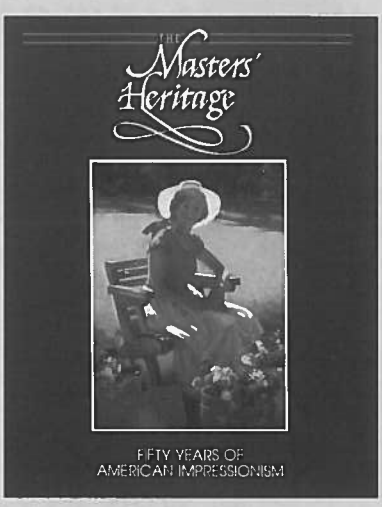

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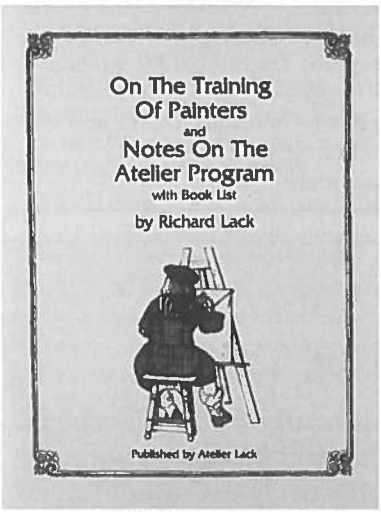

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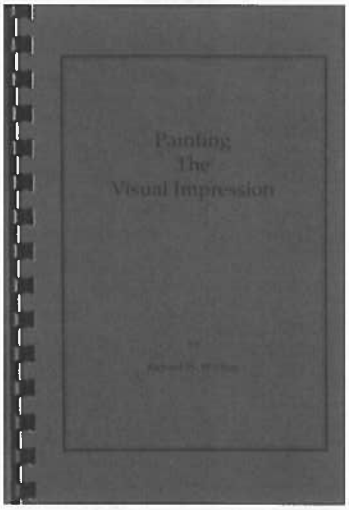

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by Richard Whitney

A must for every serious painter. "This overview was inspired by the teachings of R. H. Ives Gammell who studied with some of the most skillful painters at the turn of the century. The ideas presented here are therefore not mine, nor even his, but rather have been passed down from master to student for many generations. While studying with Mr. Gammell I wrote down much that he told me about these principles. I later organized my notes and added to them from extensive reading to produce this summary." (From the introduction by Richard Whitney.) Numerous black & white illustrations and quotes from masters on specific aspects of painting.

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Sir John Everett Millais, Bt (1829-96). *The Blind Girl, 1856.* Oil on canvas.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82). *Beata Beatrix* (detail), *1877.* Oil on canvas.

Visions of Love and Life

Pre-Raphaelite Art from the Birmingham Collection, England
March 9 – May 7, 1995;
The Seattle Art Museum
100 University St., Seattle, Washington

Premiering at the Seattle Art Museum are more than 12,000 works all drawn from the outstanding Pre-Raphaelite collection of the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery in Birmingham, England. This is the first time this collection has been exhibited in the United States. Both masterpieces and intimate sketches by these young English artists can be seen in this exhibition of drawings, sculpture and stained glass. Included are masterworks depicting romantic themes by John Everett Millais, William Holman Hunt, and Arthur Hughes; contemporary social issues by Henry Wallis; and the visionary and poetic symbolism of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Edward Burne-Jones.

The Pre-Raphaelites challenged Victorian codes of behavior in their personal lives and in their work revolted against the stale academic tradition. While they often took their romantic themes from the literature of Dante, Shakespeare and Tennyson, the images themselves were based in scrupulous observation of nature. The result was a disconcerting but enthralling combination of poetic, suggestive imagery rendered in sharp focus and vivid color.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue written by Stephen Wildman, and several special events and programs are planned.

Two Dennis Miller Bunker Exhibits in Boston

Dennis Miller Bunker: American Impressionist
Boston Museum of Fine Arts through June 4th.

Dennis Miller Bunker and His Circle
Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum through June 4th.

"I strive to work towards something distinguished that goes by the name of beauty."

— Dennis Miller Bunker (1861 – 1890)

Nicolas Poussin, *Moses Striking the Rock.* National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh. On loan from the Duke of Sutherland. Courtesy Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

Nicolas Poussin Exhibit in London

The paintings of Nicolas Poussin are on exhibit at the Royal Academy in London through April 9, 1995. This major exhibition features 240 paintings, twice the amount shown at the Poussin exhibition in Paris in 1960.

Among the works included in the show are both series of Poussin's *Seven Sacraments*, exhibited together and surrounded by related compositional drawings, and the familiar series, *The Four Seasons*. Visitors will become acquainted with Poussin's compositional techniques and will note his skill as a great chiaroscuro artist, evident not by use of brown, indoor chiaroscuro, but by a grey treatment of sunlight and silver shadows.

Admission to the exhibit is approximately $10; catalogue, $35 (soon available in American bookstores).

The next Journal *will feature an in-depth article about the Poussin exhibit accompanied by numerous reproductions. Guest writer will be Gerald Ackerman, art history professor for 20 years at Pomona College in California and author of* Gérôme: His Life and Works *and* The American Orientalists. *See page 50 for book offers.*

– Editor.

The Hound of Heaven: A Pictorial Sequence

An exhibition of paintings by R. H. Ives Gammell, based on the poem *The Hound of Heaven* by Francis Thompson, will be at the MaryHill Museum of Fine Arts, Goldendale, Washington, March 15–June 15, 1995; Appleton Museum of Art, Ocala, Florida, September 6–November 12, 1995; and St. Botolph Club, Boston, Massachusetts, December, 1995–January, 1996.

A tentative additional venue in St. Paul, Minnesota, may be added this summer.

Study for *The Hound of Heaven*, Panel VI

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