

A SHARED JOURNEY

The Portraits of David Goatley - A Retrospective



THE NANAIMO ART GALLERY

SEPTEMBER 1 TO SEPTEMBER 24, 2011



I am delighted that the Nanaimo Art Gallery is the first public gallery to stage a retrospective of the portraits of David Goatley. In the 19 years since he arrived on the Island from England, Goatley has established a strong international reputation as a portraitist, with portraits in private, public, corporate and government collections in Britain, the USA, and all across Canada.

The paintings selected for this exhibition are all from the Artist's work with people in, or from, British Columbia. BC is central to the development of Goatley's art – it was here that the years spent training in England developed into the career he has now.

Portraits matter. They are a record of people at a particular time and place in history. More than just likenesses of individuals, they reflect who we are and how we live. As a key to understanding the present they will be invaluable in the future, when generations to come look back and wonder what it was like to be here at the turn of the 21st century.

The Board and staff of the Nanaimo Art Gallery are proud to show this retrospective in our Gallery. Our thanks to all those who were kind enough to loan paintings from their collections for this very special exhibition. Our thanks too, for the continual support of the many sponsors whose contributions make our operations possible.

Welcome to "A Shared Journey", I hope you will enjoy it.

*Ian Niamath,
President
Nanaimo Art Gallery*

Foreword

A portrait, when it is well done, gives us special access to the person who is its subject. Something of enduring human significance is disclosed even as, simultaneously, we learn about ourselves through our response – whether we are affected, captivated, or even disturbed by what we see. A successful portrait is thus a revelation which also makes a demand on us.

Catching this combination of effects requires a special talent whereby unusual psychological perceptiveness is matched by the highest technical skill. As one of Canada's pre-eminent portrait painters, David Goatley in this remarkable exhibition puts his own special talent to work in introducing us to an extraordinary variety of people in whom we discover a true human complexity, at once intensely individualized and yet, also, hauntingly and movingly like ourselves.

Although a successful portrait causes another person to be present in a special way, the best portraits also have a retrospective dimension. That is, they convey some insight into how the people depicted have come to be as we now see them. Clothes, furniture, ornaments, setting, as well as the skilled deployment of tone and value can build a mood, atmosphere, and narrative suggestiveness that give depth to the person or (especially in the case of children) an indication of the social values that shape a person's place in the world. As the portraits in this exhibition show, David Goatley's remarkable sensitivity to the social and psychological complexities of the people he paints imparts to his work a depth and range that only the best portrait painters can achieve.

The retrospective dimension which is such an effective aspect of David Goatley's portraits is complemented by the fact that this outstanding exhibition is itself retrospective. The artist's career as a painter during the last nineteen years is represented by the present selection of his work, dating back to his arrival in Canada from his native London, England. The story these paintings tell is therefore also a story of his own evolution, both stylistic and personal. Through the rich variety of people, mostly Canadian, whom we meet in his paintings, we come to see something revealingly new about their humanity as well as our own, bound up in the artist's evolving vision of what makes us human together.

Schopenhauer once said about distinguished works of art that we should "*stand quietly before them and wait till they speak to us*". In the present case, they wait for us at the Nanaimo Art Gallery, and when we come to stand before them they will certainly speak to us, unforgettably.

Dr. Patrick Grant
Professor Emeritus, Department of English,
University of Victoria



Introduction

When I walked through immigration at Vancouver Airport on March 18, 1992, tired after the flight from London, with my baby daughter asleep in my arms and my two year old son and his mum valiantly struggling to stay awake at my side, I had no idea what kind of journey I was beginning or who, besides my family, would share it with me. I had hopes, ambition, faith and dreams, but no waiting clients, no gallery eager for my work. Apart from my wife's family, we knew nobody here – it was both frightening and exhilarating.

Since then I have painted hundreds and hundreds of people – new friends, models, students, families, children, politicians, business people, artists, dancers, singers, leaders, and street people – people from all walks of life and ethnic backgrounds. It has been fascinating to share a little of each of their lives. Their stories have added so much to my own.

The 60 or so paintings in this retrospective exhibition have all been chosen from my work in BC, because it was BC that gave me the chance to build the career I longed for. It was here that I had the opportunity to leave my former life in advertising behind and realize my dreams. I may have been born in England but I feel I was made in Canada.

Some of the paintings in this exhibition date from my first months here, as I was finding my feet, trying to establish my style. These early works are often loose, sometimes a little clumsy, as I was working to solve tonal problems and find a voice. My work tightened up a little over the years as I gained control and confidence, but I look back on these early works with affection, even as I see their faults. The hope is that one never stops learning, never stops growing; that there is a slow – sometimes agonizingly slow – progress towards becoming the painter I long to be.

Over the past 19 years I have painted more than 300 commissioned portraits for clients all across Canada and in 22 states of the USA, as well as countless sketches, personal portraits and gallery pieces. I have been very lucky. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have been able to make a living doing something I love, in a country I have come to love.

There are three people without whom none of it would have been possible: Deborah Tilby, the landscape painter who was my wife and is now my friend, Johnny Jonas, the English painter who mentored and believed in me and gave me the courage to do this, and my fiancée Sharon, who makes it all worthwhile today. Thank you. And thank you to all those people I have painted, all those who made this shared journey the rich and varied one it has been so far.



Shawnigan Lake, BC August, 2011

Just because...

I have often said that there is no one who would not be interesting to paint, that each and every one of us is of value and has a story that deserves to be told. Sometimes there are people I simply have to paint because something about them grabs my attention, or I see an opportunity to experiment with technique, or perhaps I need a sample – or a chance to practice.

So many people slip by, opportunities lost. There were so many more I wish I could have captured, but occasionally I get the chance to paint purely for pleasure – to paint someone just because...

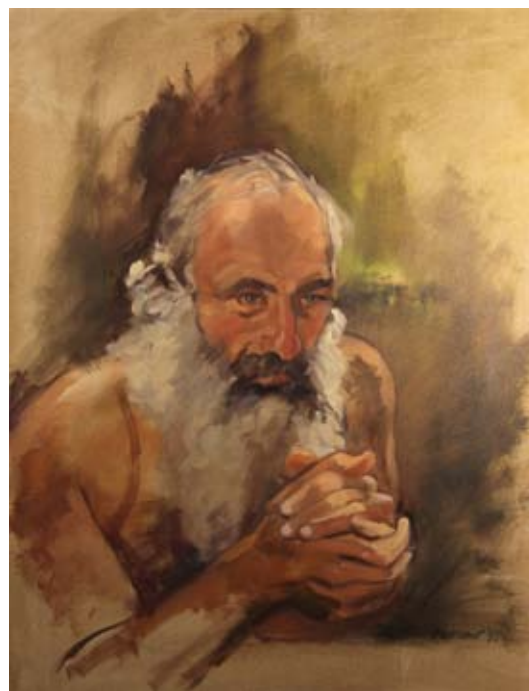
Moss Street 1992

Oil on Canvas
28 x 22 inches
Collection of the Artist

This very direct, loose, unfinished study is typical of my oil sketches of this period. The model was a favourite of mine at the time – he was a one-time draft dodger who got a lot of work as a film extra, donning biblical robes or mountain man costumes.

He posed for me at the Moss Street Paint-In, a street event in support of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. We worked in the shade of a tree as the crowds wandered by, taking in the art happening up and down the street.

Whilst some of the value changes in this sketch are crude, it has a spontaneity and freshness I quite like. I keep it because it takes me back to those uncertain first days in Canada.



A Touch of Dickens 1993

Oil on Panel
24 x 22 inches
Collection of the Artist

Sometimes a chance meeting suggests a painting. The combination of angularity and broad planes in this man's splendid head, combined with the longish hair and immense greatcoat, seemed to me straight from the pages of Charles Dickens. I knew I had to paint him, the moment he walked in to my exhibition in Sooke, BC.

Anthony Smitherman turned out to be an English sculptor and he agreed to pose, just as he was, a week later. We made this study in about two hours trying to nail that first impression, then he was gone. I never saw him again.





Sandy 1992

Oil on Canvas
30 x 24 inches
Collection of E. Sandalak

When I first arrived in Victoria I painted my new extended family as a way of quickly building a number of samples that I could exhibit. Sandy's was the first full portrait that I completed here.

Painting this good-humoured former hockey player from life was a real pleasure – the warm reds of his skin contrasting with the blue of his shirt, made for rich colouring and I loved painting his hand – a hand big and powerful enough that he could pick up a watermelon with it.



Private Dancer 1997

Oil on Canvas
24 x 24 inches
Collection of the Artist

Here the square format creates a box, the top edge pushes the model's head lower, as though the edges of the canvas created the pose. It makes for a contained, intimate, composition. The equal size of the negative shapes above and below the extended foot create balance.

This was my favourite of four paintings I made of this girl; her mother, the painter, Anne Hunter - who commissioned me - chose another version.



Donna 1995
Oil on Panel
24 x 15 inches
Collection of the Artist

I had spotted this girl singing in a gospel choir and asked my wife to approach her with the idea of modelling for me. I made several studies of her, enjoying her colouring and terrific physical presence.

The pose begs a question – perhaps:
“Who are you looking at?” or *“Why are you painting me?”*



Ashleigh 2004
Oil on Canvas
20 x 20 inches
Collection of the Artist

A beautiful girl, confident in her own femininity and the power it gives, yet perhaps a little uncertain faced with this kind of scrutiny.

The square format keeps the viewer within the frame, making an encounter with the painting quietly intimate.

**Our Songs Don't Bring You
Home Anymore 1999**

Oil on Linen
30 x 30 inches

Collection of the Artist

I like designing with squares, they compress, concentrate, and frame a thought powerfully. The discarded tapes and CDs, dead plant and cool light, all add to the feeling of melancholy conveyed in this painting. The picture tells the story of what my model was living through more accurately than the full-length nude we had begun earlier.





Seventeen 2011

Oil on Panel
36 x 30 inches

Collection of the Artist

Another of those paintings done just for the pure pleasure of doing it. Megan is the daughter of a friend of ours, who had kindly agreed to pose for me so that I could work from life more often.

This painting came out of an afternoon's drawing session on her seventeenth birthday. Painting it was one of the highlights of this summer.

Doug 1999

Oil on Linen

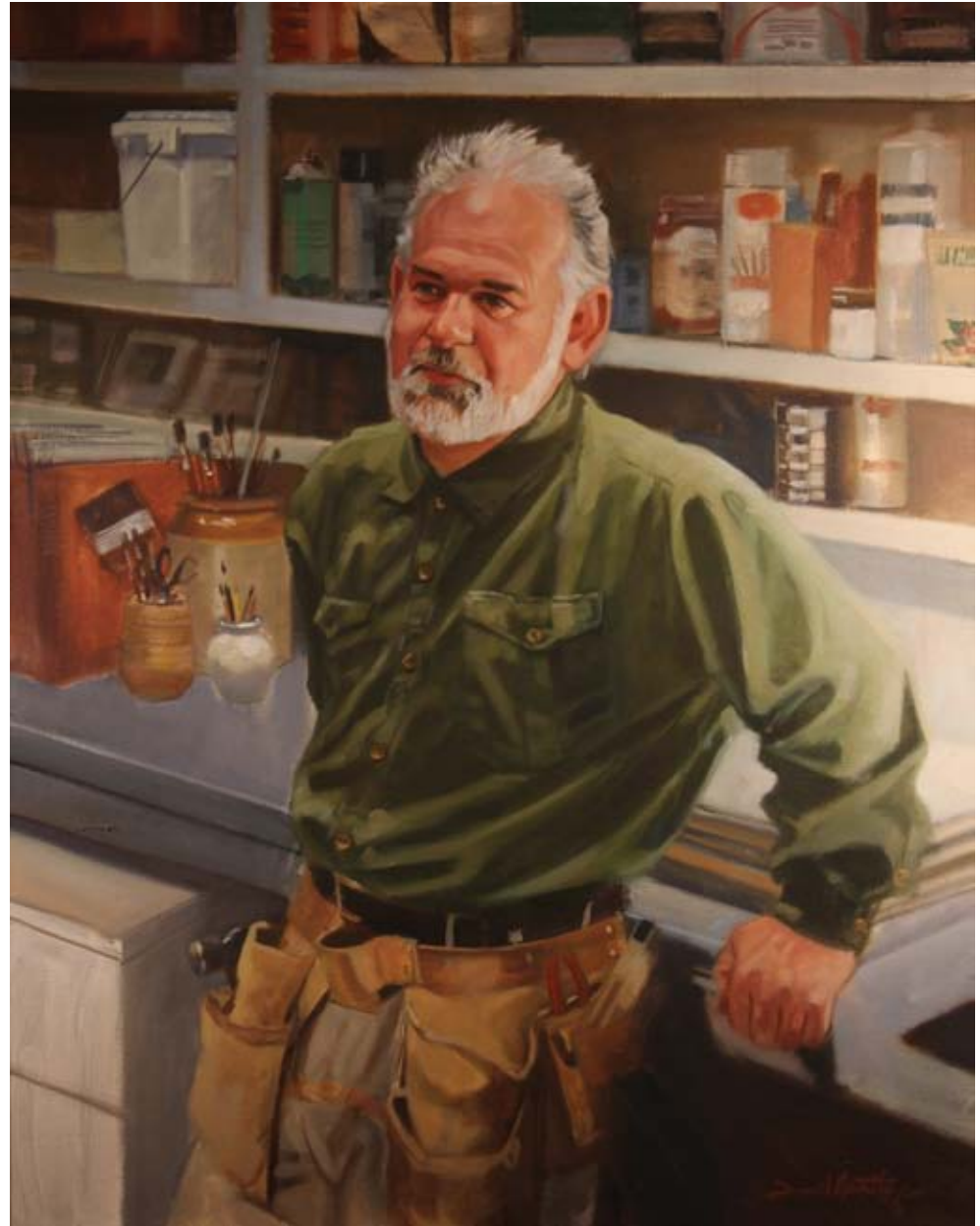
40 x 32 inches

Collection of Doug Seeds

Because of time, location, youth, or personal preference, many subjects choose not to sit for portraits these days, electing to have me photograph them and work from those photographs. I am happy to do this, but always jump at the chance to work from life.

A visit to my studio, during a break in his work day, gave me a chance to begin this portrait from life of my friend Doug. The tool belt and clutter of my studio shelves suggest his profession, while the tension in his arms and hands hint at capability and strength. The warm good humour of his face speaks for itself.

I painted over three or four visits, photographing the painting as I worked, to illustrate an article on my work for International Artist Magazine.





Keeper of the Light 1995

Oil on Canvas

20 x 40 inches

Collection of the Artist

One of a series of paintings I made of lighthouse keepers as part of a campaign to keep BC's light stations manned. Posing against the rain-lashed sweep of the beach at the very ends of Vancouver Island in his weatherproofs, Peter Redhead, the Cape Scott Keeper, looks every bit the resourceful, independent spirit he is. The red flashes on the luminous yellow of his jacket are the only warm notes in a cold wet scene. Combined with the classic, golden mean, positioning of his head they lead you right into his searching gaze.



Greater Love Hath No Man Than This 1994

Oil on Panel

24 x 20 inches

Collection of the Artist

How do you paint a face that is both so familiar and yet completely unknown? For this portrait of the suffering Christ (one of several of the same subject) I began with a model, but relied upon my own internal vision to make this face. There is no attempt to make this image contemporary. With its black background it is deliberately classical.

A viewer looks right into this face and it looks right into you.

The Rev. Ron Corcoran asked to use this image as the cover of his book *Jesus Remember Me*. I was happy to see it there, especially on the Russian translation, where the Cyrillic script combined with the image to powerful effect.

Portraits of Leadership

Meeting and painting people in positions of leadership, whether in politics, business, academic life or law, is one of the great privileges of my career.

These people give so much of themselves in serving the wider community it seems fitting that their achievements be honoured in portraits that will serve as reminders through the years ahead of the contributions they made.

James Burnett 2003
Headmaster, Collingwood School
Oil on Panel
24 x 22 inches
Collection of Collingwood School

Mr. Burnett was the third Headmaster I painted for this prestigious Vancouver school. A former Olympic athlete, he seemed constrained behind his desk in a formal academic gown. We talked about the heavy administrative load his position carried and how little time he now had for teaching, which he missed. I asked what he most enjoyed and he told me he occasionally made time to coach the basketball team.

I immediately said *“Take off the gown and jacket and let’s go down to the gym.”* As soon as he picked up the ball this portrait was born.



Nick Geer 1998
Founding Chair, Collingwood School
Oil on Canvas
28 x 22 inches
Collection of the Artist

The founding Chair of the Collingwood School Board of Directors, the former Chairman of ICBC was Vice-President of the Pattison Group when I painted this portrait.

I photographed him in his office there, then had him come to my studio so that I could paint his splendid, leonine, head from life. I greatly simplified the background so that nothing would detract from his powerful figure, and introduced the falling diagonal shadow to balance the opposing diagonal his crossed leg makes.



Rt. Hon. Kim Campbell PC, CC, QC 2004
19th Prime Minister of Canada

GICLEE PRINT

Original: Oil on Linen Panel

48 x 36 inches

House of Commons Heritage Collection

Although brief, the Hon. Kim Campbell's term as Prime Minister is the pinnacle of a remarkable political career. She was the first woman to be Minister of Indian Affairs, the first woman to head the Ministry of Defence, and our first female Justice Minister. She remains the first and only woman to hold this country's highest office. How to tell so remarkable a story in a painting?

I wanted a portrait that conveyed her achievements, drive, and the seriousness of the Office, but also revelled in the fact that she is a warm, witty and attractive woman.

The academic gowns, First Nations Cloak, and casually draped QC's robe hint at the offices she held, and identify her as being from BC, while the dramatic deep reds and blacks throw her face and blond hair into brilliant contrast for maximum impact, balanced by the white tabs of that legal collar.

This portrait was begun from life in Massachusetts and continued in sittings in Victoria and Vancouver.





Eleanor Minish 2010

Chair of the Board, Collingwood School
Oil on Canvas
36 x 30 inches
Collection of Collingwood School

Eleanor is a successful business woman and decisive Board leader but she is also a warm and lively personality and it was this I wanted to capture.

The essentially black and white colour scheme of this painting gives the colour in her skin and hair added warmth, while the vase of her favourite flowers adds a feminine touch.



The Hon. Iona Campagnolo, PC, OC, OBC 2005

27th Lt. Governor of BC
Oil on Canvas
24 x 24 inches
Collection of Government House

Have we ever had a more elegant Lt. Governor? In the spectacular uniform she designed herself, Iona Campagnolo brought a beauty and grace to the Office that would be hard to match.

Wanting to include her hands, I chose a square format for this portrait, breaking with the line of her predecessors, all of whom are painted 24 x 18 inches.

Her head, hat and the moulding on the wall, make a cross shape that breaks the square into four, vertically and horizontally, creating a tension that adds to the presence she has.

Chief Robert Martin 1999
Hereditary Chief, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation
GICLEE PRINT
Original: Oil on Canvas
28 x 22 inches
Collection of Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation

This posthumous portrait is a careful assemblage of many elements. The Chief's striking head came from a black and white press photograph, the headdress from a later picture of his son – the next Chief, the cedar bark cloak from a small colour shot the family was able to give me, and the talking stick was created from studying the totem in his honour in his community near Tofino. The large painting that symbolizes his life story, on the wall behind him, as though on a traditional house, was taken from an image painted on a large sheet the community pins to a wall during ceremonies.

Combining all these reference sources was an enjoyable challenge and his sons, who commissioned this in his memory, were moved to tears by seeing their father so convincingly recreated.



The Artists

I have always enjoyed painting other artists; there is a freedom to explore and experiment that I truly like. This retrospective includes some of my favourites. There have been so many others, including Richard Margison, the Cantelon Brothers, Ron Stacy, Andy Wooldridge and Jack Wilkinson, but space precludes showing them all.



My Mentor 1993

Johnny Jonas, Portraitist
Oil on Panel
14 x 11 inches
Collection of the Artist

Without Johnny Jonas there is no Me. When I was struggling to rediscover myself as a painter, after years in advertising, this gifted artist helped with advice, support, encouragement and faith. We painted together many times as I fought to learn, and he believed in me when I did not believe in myself.

A great painter, a kind and generous soul and a marvellous friend.

Colin Skinner, Actor 1992

Oil on Canvas
36 x 30 inches
Collection of Margaret Skinner

When I first arrived in Canada I knew I had to make an impact fast in order to survive. I chose to paint a series that took you back stage in theatre, music and dance. The resulting exhibition, Stage Stuck, was mounted in Victoria's two main theatres, the Royal and the McPherson. The McPherson Foundation pointed out that no such show could be complete without a painting of Colin Skinner.

He heartily agreed!

Colin and I talked about how he might like to be portrayed and I suggested he pick a favourite role. "Can I be anyone I like?" he said, "Then it has to be Don Quixote." He posed in the ruff collar and large sleeved shirt, hand poised on sword (the breastplate I drew from other references). He sat beneath a spot lamp that threatened to singe his hair, his hearing aids shrieking feedback, suffering for art. We worked entirely from life and became firm friends in the process.

Looking back, there are things I might refine now, but then, both he and I were thrilled with the dramatic effect. It was a wonderful opportunity to attempt a costume piece Velasquez might have recognized, and even if I am no Velasquez, this remains a highlight of my early career.



After Colin's tragic passing, the painting was used in his memorial at the McPherson Theatre - it was gently lowered center-stage to rest above his director's chair, upon which sat a single red rose in the spotlight.

Robert Bateman, OC, OBC

Artist 1995

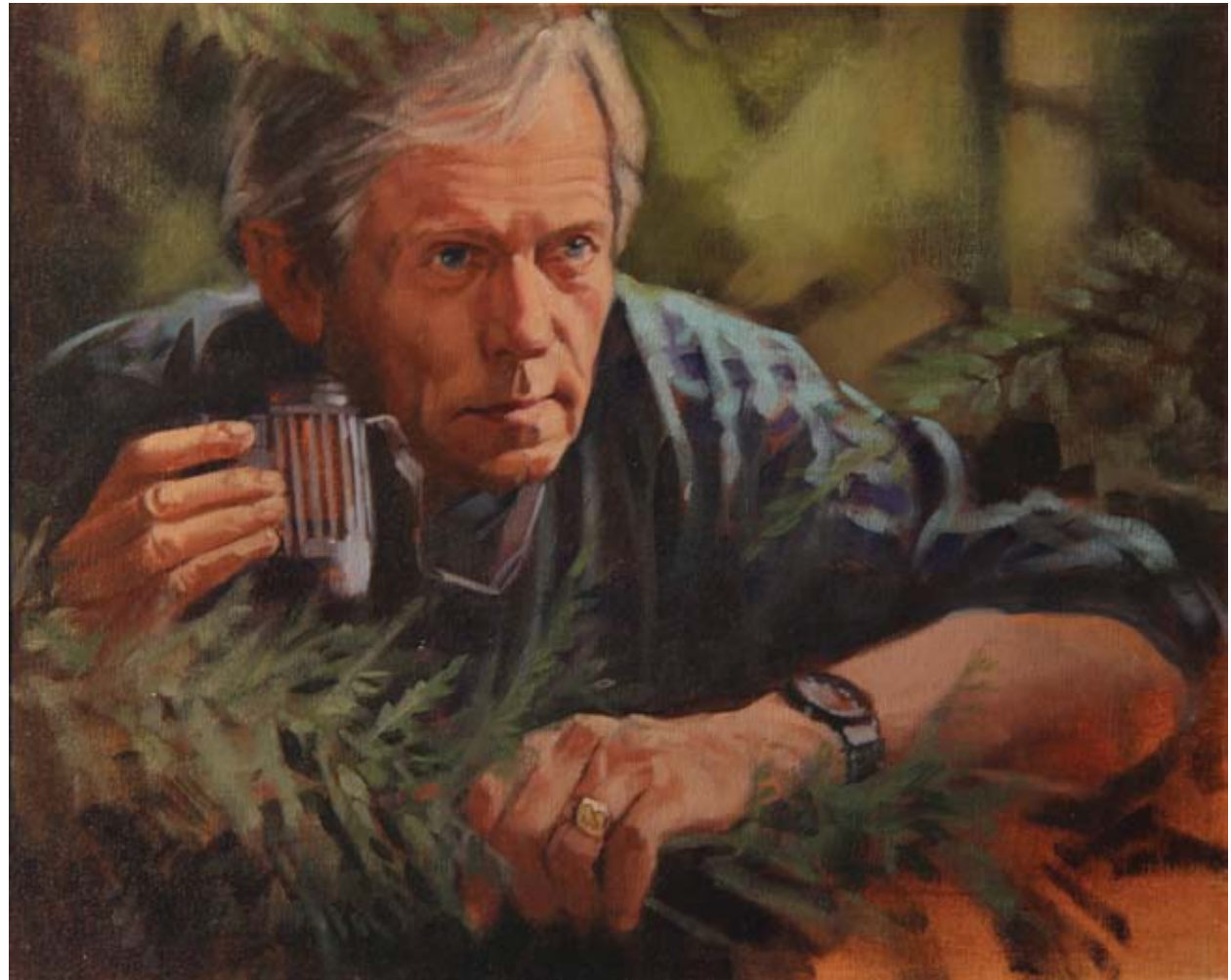
Oil on Canvas

16 x 20 inches

Collection of Robert Bateman

I wanted to turn the tables on Robert Bateman and paint him where an animal might be in one of his own paintings, as though caught in the act of observing us. Luckily for me he liked the idea. The result captures his penetrating gaze, much as his own work allows us to gaze into the eyes of the wild.

The loose paint handling and unfinished areas of the painting are typical of work I enjoyed at the time.





Glen Howarth, RA Artist 1994

Oil on Canvas

36 x 30 inches

Collection of Rhiannon Williams

Glen and I sometimes shared models, painting in his Fan Tan Alley studio home. I loved the place and enjoyed the man. I wanted to paint him framed by these two tall windows, partially-backlit with the light of the skylight illuminating him. To get the height of the room I had him sit in a low chair then sat even lower, on a wooden block, myself. This wasn't comfortable but gave the composition the height it needed.

We worked on this painting from life over several days, Glen complimenting me on my use of greys which pleased me very much. I was delighted when he suggested we do a trade for the finished piece – I chose one of his Wreck Beach series in exchange, a small jewel in oil. Now that he is gone I treasure both his painting and the memory of making this one.

Ted Harrison, CM Artist 1994

Oil on Panel

36 x 30 inches

Courtesy of Maltwood Gallery, UVic

Ted Harrison is a fellow Englishman, a generous host and a great story teller. I loved painting him in the clutter of his studio.

This composition gains much of its power from the blue “V” shape made by his sweater, his water bucket and the painting on his easel. The easel itself takes the “V” in one direction while Ted’s backward lean completes it in the other.

I was honoured when he insisted the picture be shown at his own retrospective, and also when it went to the Maltwood Art Gallery collection at the University of Victoria.





Catherine Moffat, SFCA Artist 1993

Oil on Canvas

36 x 30 inches

Collection of Catherine Moffat

This painting of my dear friend and fellow artist set out to celebrate her exuberant personality. We worked from life, while her raised feet went numb. I wanted the sweep of her skirt and the denim jacket, which suggested a country music singer (we added the guitar as this idea took hold).

I surprised Catherine by including elements of her own painting in the background, after the live sittings were complete. Stripes and eggs were signature motifs in her work at the time.

Valdy, OC Folk Legend 1994

Oil on Canvas

20 x 24 inches

Collection of Valdemar Horsdal

Valdy agreed to pose for me way back in 1994 after a friend introduced me. He was very generous with his time and I spent two days photographing him and painting him from life, while he performed a concert for one, perched atop a stack of amplification equipment, spot-lit with lights I had brought to create a stagey setting. I made several paintings then and in subsequent weeks, without feeling wholly sure I had captured the moment.

At last, in a fit of frustration, I began this one, using the others and my photographs as reference. Because I was now so familiar with his face, it almost painted itself. Three hours in, I had the sense to stop, recognizing that the unfinished areas gave it movement and that I had him. This was the man who played for me. I was delighted when Valdy used it as the cover for one of his CDs.

The painting was a finalist in Artist Magazine's Portrait of the Year competition in 1995.





Miso Artist 2005

Oil on Panel

24 x 20 inches

Collection of the Artist

I'd seen this fascinating looking man downtown several times and resolved to ask him if he would sit for me, but he disappeared before I plucked up the nerve.

Several weeks later I was working on a mural project in a rented space at Xchanges Gallery when I became aware someone was watching me. I turned and Miso was standing there. This time I was ready, and asked him to sit before he could slip away again. We visited back-and-forth over several weeks, getting to know each other. I learned he is a painter himself, who escaped China after the Cultural Revolution, when his parents suffered horribly.

I painted this piece from life over two afternoons, asking him to sign his name to it in Chinese as I felt the calligraphy would balance the piece. No sooner was it finished than he was gone.

Hanif Kureishi, CBE 2010

Novelist, Playwright and Screenwriter

Oil on Canvas

40 x 20 inches

Collection of the Artist

The first likeness I ever made was a pastel sketch of Hanif, when we were 16 year old schoolboys. I have followed his wonderful career as a novelist, screenwriter and playwright over the years. Last year I read his then-latest novel, which seemed to come full circle to earlier themes. I thought I would complete my own circle with him by revisiting my first portrait after all these years. When I was in England last spring, we met for dinner, then at his London home, where I watched him, photographed him and made mental notes. I painted a series of studies when I returned home – he has one, I kept this one.

The narrow format, the gravity of the silhouetted head, and losing so much into shadow, creates a thoughtful, contemplative mood.



Celebrations of the Family

We are all unique, each one of us is worth celebrating and, to our families in particular, we are very special indeed.

We do not need to be important, powerful, or look like super models. All we need is to be ourselves.

That is what makes family portraits so valuable – they are celebrations of love.

Marion 1996

Oil on Panel

16 x 20 inches

Collection of The Clark Family

There was a time when I felt my portfolio needed a touch more glamour. Marion – the daughter of good friends of mine – seemed to fit the bill. I painted several portraits of her over the years, this one was her parents' favourite.

The soft hair contrasted with the tougher sheen of her leather jacket imparts a feminine/masculine contrast.



Flower Girl 2010

Oil on Panel

24 x 20 inches

Collection of the Artist

I came upon this little angel quite by chance. She was the flower girl in a wedding party at the Empress Hotel. I knew at once she'd make a beautiful sample and asked for permission to photograph her. Her parents were happy to show her off - and she loved to pose.



The Van Gyn Girls 1995

Oil on Canvas

45 x 60 inches

Collection of Dr. F. Van Gyn

By choosing to dress all three girls the same, and using a very simple background, we created an immediate harmony. Placing the twins back-to-back to highlight their closeness, and then placing their younger sister to one side, introduces a note of tension that makes the painting interesting.

The shadows link all three of them together, but the pose hints at the dynamics between them.





Angus 2006

Oil on Canvas
48 x 30 inches

Collection of the Silver Family

I like to use natural light in my paintings whenever possible. Here, the soft light from a window combines with the harmonious gold, soft reds, blue and white for a very calm effect. I like the self-confident pose, the shirt that is just a little big, and the tousled hair.

Angus seems like he could uncross his feet and walk out of this painting at any moment.



The O'Donnell Children 2001

Oil on Canvas
40 x 30 inches

Collection of the Artist

I had planned the picture carefully, wanting to use the parasol to frame the girl, and to use a model boat to both make sense of the pond location, and to give the boy something to do. In my experience, many girls can pose quite naturally and unself-consciously, whereas many boys are happier to be pictured doing something. Props can help. These gave me the opportunity to really have fun with the reflections in the water.

For once, I was glad to be working from photographs – I wouldn't have wanted to set up my easel in the middle of the pond, where I had waded to shoot my photos.

The Considine Family

2005

Oil on Canvas

56 x 72 inches

Collection of Christopher and Susan
Considine

Mr. Considine commissioned this family portrait to celebrate his 50th birthday. We chose the beautiful beach by their home as a setting and I zeroed in on this group of rocks, which gave me the opportunity to build a composition that compensates for the difference in height and age of the four children.

The diagonal rock, falling in a gradual curve, helps complete a protective circle begun by Chris' tall figure at left, descending through his son, his wife, their daughter, the boy in green and back up to Chris through his youngest boy, leaning against his father, whose hand is on his shoulder.



The Wheaton Children 2009

Oil on Canvas

52 x 48 inches

Collection of the Wheaton Family

Soft natural light creates an interesting interplay of shadows in this group. The neck of the guitar serves to guide the eye through the essentially circular composition, balanced by the strong, straight-edged shapes of the window frame, the rug, the picture frame and the black cube the youngest girl is sitting on. Hard and soft, light and dark, warm and cool, each play off against the other.





The Chwyl Children (Triptych) 2005

Oil on Canvas

36 x 72 inches overall

Collection of Ed and Mary Chwyl

Three very talented children. All of them are gifted, it was a question of choosing the gift that best expressed them at the time. Christina chose harp, which she was exploring instead of her usual piano, Brendan chose his cello. Thinking Rob would pick something similar I asked him if he played an instrument, or if he would like me to somehow hint at his talents in maths and sciences, he laughed and said he'd rather be playing soccer.



Christina 1999

Oil on Canvas

36 x 30 inches

Collection of Kim Pullen

In her billowing white dress, hair band and matching shoes, Christina is already pretty as a picture. Putting her on an outsize chair, in this corner with its hint of panelling and antiques, bathed in sunlight and shadow, she seemed to me an Alice in her own Wonderland. A magical little girl.

This painting, although done locally, opened many doors for me in the USA where this type of portrait is very popular.



Alan & Ewa Lupin - Morning (diptych) 1999

Oil on Canvas
40 x 68 inches

Collection of Dr. and Mrs. Lupin

Alan is the inventor of a cochlear implant designed to repair hearing. Ewa, a concert pianist, is a delight to hear. As a couple they are great supporters of the arts in general and chamber music in particular.

Ewa is the more extroverted of the two, and it was the vision of her in a black gown and feather boa that inspired me to create a first diptych of the couple in evening dress, posed in their library. This second version, painted in their conservatory, captures them in white, in contrast to the black of the evening dress.

The challenge of both pairs of pictures was to design them so that they work together either as four separate paintings, or as two diptychs.

In this pair, the table and fruit serve to link them together, but if you just look at one, you will see it works perfectly well without the other – though as a pair they balance, just as Alan and Ewa do in life.



Colin and Erica 2007

Oil on Canvas

60 x 36 inches

Collection of the Ross's

Playing a standing figure looking in one direction off against a seated one facing the opposite way – one looking into the light, the other turned away from it – creates a nice dynamic tension in this otherwise calm painting. Seating Colin, who is very tall, made sense – it allows Erica, who is petite, equal space in the composition.

The couple are keen art collectors and the Jack Wilkinsons on the wall behind them are fine examples of his work. As he was a friend of mine, I was very pleased to include a hint of these in my own painting. They also allowed me to play the light of Erica off against dark. The empty wall at right allows us to feel the window we do not see, and hints at the open space beyond it.

Patrick & Gloria (diptych) 2008

Oil on Canvas

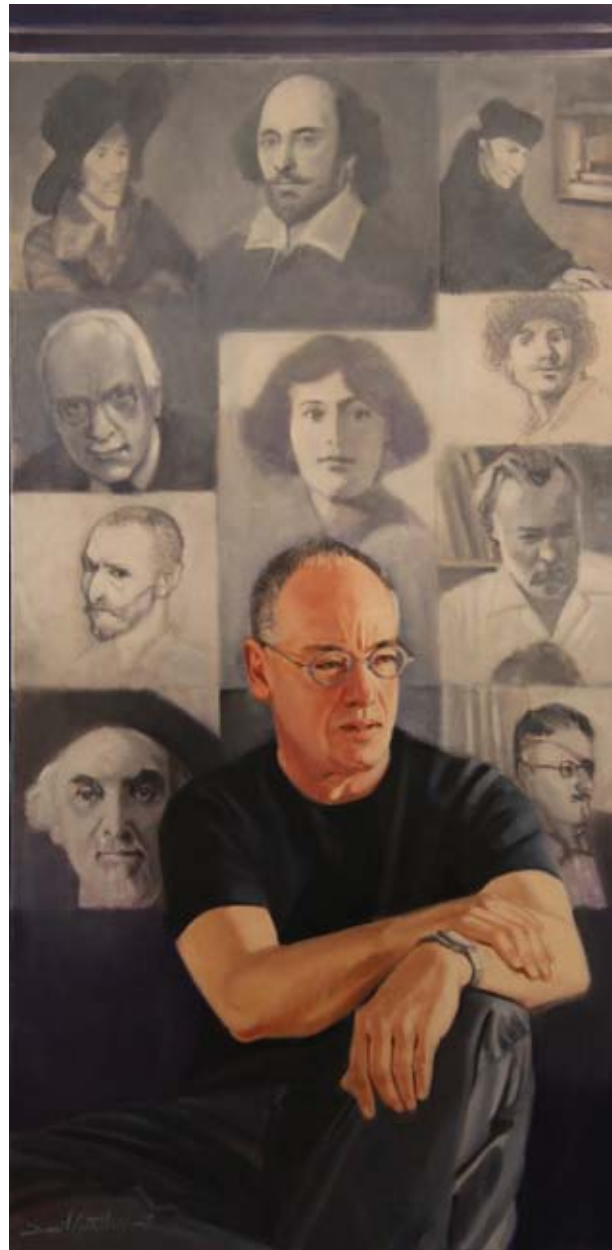
48 x 24 inches each

Collection of the Grants

Patrick is a professor of literature and a much-published writer. In his book-lined office he has a small framed montage of images of the people who have inspired him and shaped his thinking. I took this as my theme, blowing it up and rearranging it to frame him – a man among his heroes. The tall, narrow canvas echoes the shape of some oriental art, one of the couple's many interests.

In a way, Patrick's portrait is a landscape of the mind - for Gloria's I chose a physical landscape based upon the Antrim Coast. Gloria's career was in social welfare management but I knew she loved the beauty of nature and the greys of the clouds pair well with the black and white background of the other picture.

These paintings were designed to hang together and complement one another, yet to be very different.



Personal Portraits

The desire to paint my children as they changed and grew needs no explanation. As a proud parent it came naturally. With my own kids I could take an honest, direct approach that was not always possible when painting other people's children, when sometimes making them beautiful is the primary concern. I painted my son and daughter often, sometimes to capture who they were at a given moment, sometimes to explore the dynamics of the family and sometimes as models to populate scenes that were about childhood in general rather than theirs in particular.

Ryder at 7 1996

Oil on Panel
24x 20 inches
Collection of the Artist

This simple triangular composition, with the tilt of the head balanced by the abstract streak of off-white, remains a personal favourite of all my paintings.

My son, home from school, sick and not particularly happy, agreed to sit for me. I painted very fast before he could become bored and captured the essential spirit of an intelligent, sensitive, slightly troubled, little boy in about two hours. The portrait was not finished – I took a photograph so that I could complete it later – but the face was there, the truth of him was present.

People have said it seems sad, but childhood is not all uncomplicated happiness. This is who Ryder was at that moment.



Sasha at 5 1996

Oil on Panel
22 x 24 inches
Collection of the Artist

My daughter was rarely still when little, and never capable of holding a pose. I photographed her sitting at the kitchen table eating her apple, just after she got home from school. It was an entirely spontaneous moment. A gift.

I pushed the darks to create softer edges in the shadows, and simplified the background, playing dark against dark and light against light until all the edges, but the point where her hair meets her cheek in a crisp shadow, were soft. The dark panel and table form an “L” shape that gives the composition formal strength.





Skater Boy 2002

Oil on Canvas
48 x 24 inches
Collection of the Artist

Here my son serves not just as himself, but as a type. It is certainly a likeness of him, but it is as much an exploration of the skateboard culture, his passion at the time. The hoody, the attitude, and the graffiti, combine to say something about urban life for a teen in the early years of this century. I particularly liked the graffiti behind him that suggests a clenched fist. These are angry times.



Prince and Princess 2003

Oil on Panel
24 x 30 inches
Collection of the Artist

Sasha had been riding since the age of seven. A full-sized horse dwarfs a little girl, so when she began training this pony for its owner their comparative sizes seemed balanced for a portrait conveying her love of horses.

The magic of late afternoon autumn light made an idyllic backdrop. Backlighting children makes sense – strong light makes them squint and creates awkward shadow shapes if it is in their faces. I had her pose bent forward onto the pony's neck to highlight the bond between them. Keeping her full-face, while the pony is in profile, keeps the focus on Sasha.



Sasha at 13 2002

Oil on Canvas

24 x 15 inches

Collection of Deborah Tilby

This painting strives to capture the moment of transition when my daughter crossed over from being a pretty little girl to a beautiful young woman. It can be a startling transformation.

Here the interplay of warm and cool light add drama, while her hair and makeup, done especially for a dinner she was to attend, bring a surprising maturity to a girl suddenly no longer quite a child and yet still a long way from an adult.



Ryder at 14 2002

Oil on Canvas

24 x 20 inches

Collection of Deborah Tilby

Eight years later my son is sitting again, this time for money. I had offered to pay him to sit for a class I was teaching and I painted this as a demonstration.

This painting gains its drama from a combination of lighting and defined and lost edges. The crispest edge – where the dark of the background is cut by the sharply-defined light of the lit side of his face, brings us right into his face and holds us. The close values of tone in other areas of the painting allow shoulders, elbows and much of his hair to all but disappear, leaving you in no doubt where the focal point is. Here's looking at you kid.

London Calling 2010

Oil on Canvas

40 x 30 inches

Collection of the Artist

I had not painted my children together in years – my son works as a photographer in Vancouver and is rarely on the Island. I wanted to play with light to create a piece that conveys a definite mood.

This picture is full of attitude, a certain toughness, that says we are not children anymore. It implies distance, almost defiance. It's a piece of pure theatre, completed by the poster for the Clash's classic London Calling on the wall behind them. The harsh top light suggests a street or stage door light giving an air of urban menace.

My children love this picture.



Self-Portraits

Why paint self portraits? Sometimes to record the passing of time – on a key birthday for example, sometimes to experiment with new materials or ideas, often because I am the only available subject, and occasionally, to understand some part of this journey, or to come to terms with it.



Self at 17 1971
PHOTOGRAPHIC PRINT
Original: Oil on Panel 24 x 18 inches
Collection of Joyce Wood, London

My first ever portrait in oil - painted from life one winter afternoon, in my bedroom, as an assignment from Camberwell School of Art.

From this distance, I can't quite believe I painted this - I had no idea what I was doing - but it is certainly me.



Self at 40 1994
Oil on Canvas
18 x 12 inches
Collection of the Artist

A black and white study, painted on the afternoon of my fortieth birthday. Taking stock.



Self on Plywood 1997
Oil on Plywood
22 x 18 inches
Collection of the Artist

I visited with Daphne Todd, then President of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters, when back in England in 1997, and was amazed to discover she painted all her works on unprimed plywood. I determined to try it when I got home and here is the result. One of those self-portraits that happen because no other model is available and I wanted to experiment.



Self on Blue 1998
Oil on Canvas
24 x 20 inches
Collection of the Artist

An experiment in colour. I noticed that the dark blue walls of our bathroom had the curious effect of making skin appear orange in the mirror and set out to play with this. I painted while the children were at school and had them banging on the bathroom door when they came home.



Self at 50 2004

Oil on Panel
24 x 20 inches
Collection of the Artist

Over the years I've taught many classes in portrait painting, including several on painting self-portraits. This painting began as a demonstration piece for one of those classes, which I then completed at home under similar light conditions. The vignette effect, suggesting where my palette was, gives the whole thing a rakish air that is quite fun.

Winter of My Discontent

2007
Oil on Canvas
30 x 24 inches
Collection of the Artist

One of very few self-portraits I have made using photographs. I had been alone for two years at this point and was not content with the way things were going. I wanted to paint that aloneness, but put it in a context where you would expect there to be company.

I asked my son if he would photograph me wandering the streets alone, explaining the mood I wanted to create, and he agreed.

In this portrait the strong vertical solids at right anchor the figure, whilst everything beyond it is cool and simplified to suggest, rather than specify, the empty street. All the detail work is in the figure, and the warm colour of the face pops against the cool blues of the background.





The Artist's Family 2003

Oil on Canvas

48 x 36 inches

Collection of the Artist

In this painting, which was painted largely from life, I wanted to explore the depth of space mirrors can create. Velasquez's *Las Meninas* and Pink Floyd's album *Umma Gumma* were the unlikely influences that came together as I was planning this composition.

My then-wife and our daughter are in real space, while I am behind them in the mirror with our son over my shoulder in the portrait I had just completed of him. In this painting, I am perhaps unconsciously already outside the family circle; in the next two that separation had become a reality.



State of the Union 2006

Oil on Canvas

24 x 24 inches

Collection of the Artist

Living alone, with my marriage ended and my once-strong faith in tatters, I revisited the family portrait I had painted three years earlier. It hung on the wall in my apartment coincidentally reflected in the square mirror on the opposite wall. Positioning myself mid-way across the room put both the family and my portrait of Christ behind me in the mirrored image.

I drew a grid on the mirror, and a corresponding one on a square canvas, to help me place all these complex elements, and painted this from life over two afternoons as a meditation on the place I found myself in.

The paint handling in such a small work is loose and exploratory; I was more concerned with the idea than the finish of the thing.

Loss 2009

Oil on Canvas

36 x 36 inches

Collection of the Artist

Mid-summer 2009 brought the end of a ten year cycle of continuous losses. My brother and father had both died, my marriage had failed, my faith and my home were gone and so was the person I had believed would be in my future. I was reeling, and began this painting as an act of catharsis, to say all of this is behind me, I will survive.

It incorporated not only the earlier portrait of my family, but those I had painted of my brother, father and ex-girlfriend, as well as my house and a small statue of Jesus. As a technical exercise, balancing all these elements proved a challenging piece of design. I worked on this from life - and from the paintings - for days. It proved emotionally exhausting but started me on the road to healing.

On completion I put the painting away and did not look at it for two years.





Sharon 2009
Oil on Linen
24 x 18 inches
Collection of the Artist

Sometimes it takes painting someone to really see them. As I painted this sketch of the woman who is now my fiancée, early in the first summer I knew her, I began to truly see her. To see not only how beautiful she is but how I was beginning to love her.



Balanced 2010
Oil on Canvas
24 x 24 inches
Collection of the Artist

With my life back on track, joy in my new partner, and a new booklet about to be published, it was time to revisit my battered remains and paint myself at 56. A simple examination of aging and the effects of life on a face. It made a nice business card too.

Bio

David Goatley, SFCA is widely recognized as one of North America's leading portrait painters, with a strong following in both Canada and the USA. Born in London, England, in 1954, the son of a commercial artist, he trained at Camberwell School of Art. He began painting full time in 1990 following a successful career in advertising. He came to Victoria in 1992, from where he travels all over the continent, fulfilling commissions – around 300 to date.

His sitters have included the official Parliamentary portraits of Speaker Gilbert Parent and Prime Minister Kim Campbell, Lt. Governors of BC their Honours James Dunsmuir and Iona Campagnolo, artists Robert Bateman and Ted Harrison, folk music legend Valdy, the internationally acclaimed Tenor Richard Margison, Rod Frazer, President of the University of Alberta, Ron Lou Poy, Chancellor of UVic, Judge Douglas P. Woodlock, for the Boston Federal Courthouse and Peter Deveaux, Chairman of the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Library. Much of his work has been a celebration of the family, painting children and loved ones all across the continent.

David has also painted several large scale works for churches, private homes and public spaces, including the mural “Letters from the Front” on the Post Office in Chemainus, Canada's famous Mural Town.

He was awarded the prestigious Early Achievement Award by the Federation of Canadian Artists for gaining international recognition in a relatively short time. He has been featured in International Artist magazine five times and in numerous press and TV features in Canada.

David says: *“A portrait is a celebration – it has absolutely nothing to do with ego, and everything to do with the fact that each and every one of us is worth celebrating. We are all so special to someone and our stories deserve to be told. After all, there will never be another quite like us – isn't that reason enough to capture who we are?”*

Highlights of 2011 include the first official portrait of a BC Premier in provincial history, Premier Gordon Campbell, as well as portraits of the Founding President and CEO of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Larry Goldman, and His Honour Steven L. Point, OBC, Lt. Governor of BC.

David's non-portrait work is represented by the Morris Gallery in Victoria, Gallery 8 on Salt Spring Island, and Qualicum Frameworks in Qualicum Beach. He is represented in the USA by Portraits Inc., Portraits North and The Portrait Group.

To see more of David's work visit
www.davidgoatley.com

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Thank you to all those generous patrons who so kindly loaned their paintings. It was wonderful to paint these pictures over the years, and it is like visiting old friends to see them again. So many fond memories are on these walls and in this book.

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Thank you to Dr. Patrick Grant for his perceptive and insightful foreword.

And thank you to Sharon Dean for her love and support, for putting up with me on a daily basis, and for working tirelessly to put this book together.

Thank you all.

David



When I think about what I do, every portrait seems like a fresh journey, a voyage of discovery, as I am privileged to explore the uniqueness of others. Portraits have absolutely nothing to do with vanity and everything to do with the value of each and every one of us. Dr Johnson said : *“portrait painting is a reasonable and natural consequence of affection”* I can only agree.

David Goatley

A SHARED JOURNEY: The Portraits of David Goatley - A Retrospective

THE NANAIMO ART GALLERY SEPTEMBER 1 TO SEPTEMBER 24, 2011