



A Portrait *by Any Other Name...*

An Arts and Letters Exhibit, April 4 ~ May 1, 2024


Open to the public:

Saturday April 6, 2 – 5 pm

Wednesday, April 10, 4 – 7:30 pm

and through April by appointment:

contact rentals@heliconianclub.org

 Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Ave, Toronto



THE HELICONIAN CLUB
WOMEN LIVING IN THE ARTS

A Portrait *by Any Other Name*

Heliconian visual artists were invited to contribute portraits of any subject in any media, to explore how portraiture is still relevant in an age of selfies and AI. The art on display may originate from encounters between the artist and herself, her subject or her imagination.

We also invited Heliconian writers to contribute pen portraits, or character sketches, to the exhibit.

Portraits, whether in words or in images, can embody an essence or an idea. They also reflect, to some degree, a portrait of the maker.

~ Dougal M.Haggart and Brianna Caryll

Participating Artists and Authors

Linda Briskin	3	Keith	
Worn		<i>by Ellen Michelson</i>	26
<i>by Linda Briskin</i>	4	Teaching Career - Final Year	
Brianna Caryll	6	<i>by Ellen Michelson</i>	28
Self Portrait in Stress		Barbara Muir	30
<i>by Sharon Crawford</i>	9	Patricia Stamp	33
Dougal M.Haggart	11	Rosemary Tannock	36
Portrait of Momma Cat and Rose		Things I still don't understand	
<i>by Bianca Lakoseljac</i>	17	<i>by Karen von Hahn</i>	41
Catherine Maunsell	19		
Nola McConnan	23		

Linda Briskin

lbriskin@yorku.ca www.lindabriskinphotography.com

Portrait of a Wild Hyacinth is in the tradition of environmental portraiture which uses surroundings to illuminate the character of a human subject. However in this image the 'figure' is a wild hyacinth growing on the Andreas Canyon Trail (California). The figure-ground shift positions the human in the background and offers a political statement about foregrounding the environment.

Linda Briskin is a writer and fine art photographer. She is inspired by the fluid crossover between the imagined and the real, the natural and the constructed, and the authentic and the fabricated. She exhibits widely, has had numerous solo exhibitions, and participates in many group shows. Recently, Briskin's images have been chosen for online juried shows including *Urban Landscapes* (NY Photo Curator : Honourable Mention) and *The Same But Different* Exhibition (NY Center for Photographic Art: Honorable Mention.). Upcoming in 2024 is a solo exhibit at The Rushton (Toronto).



PORTRAIT OF A WILD HYACINTH, archival digital print,
15 x 11 in unframed

Worn

by Linda Briskin

The cowboy boots had been carefully placed at the edge of the sidewalk. Tooled and red, the leather scuffed, the toes curled up. They had the stillness of waiting, of certainty. She slowed the garbage truck and peered sideways. The boots were really there. An invitation. Not a garbage-induced mirage.

The junk she had seen at the side of the road: broken toilets soiled wedding dresses, their tulle ripped old lampshades chairs missing a leg stuffed teddy bears with matted fur and no eyes food debris spilling from cracked plastic containers mattresses stained with too much life once-white dressers, drawers askew a giant panda covered in Remembrance Day poppies empty guitar cases mirrors cracked and dangerous. But red boots, cowboy boots at that—never.

Usually she was surly, indifferent to life. Earlier that morning the sun coming through the blinds was an annoyance. She had grabbed a Pop-Tart on her way out, not bothering to toast it. She couldn't work up the energy to be annoyed by the barking of the neighbour's two terriers, irritatingly called Tik and Tok. She walked the two blocks to the garbage depot without registering the fresh morning air. Once there, a few drivers nodded at her but she ignored them. She hated their eyes on her. She'd given up on socializing years back, aware she had nothing to say and never got their jokes. She picked

up her collection schedule and set out. The power of the truck, once a pleasure, was now an oddly unattractive extension of herself.

*

A sudden swell of desire: I want those red boots. She slammed on the brakes. The growl of the engine stopped and the chatter of squirrels filled the sudden silence. She opened the door and leapt down. As if she were meeting a new friend, she adjusted the suspenders on her faded denim overalls and ran her hands through her cropped greying hair. She crouched, knees cracking. The leather on the red boots was soft and happily worn, the heels down at the edge.

She untied the knotted laces on her garbage-collecting Timberlands and set one beside the other. They looked like her feet even when she wasn't wearing them. Familiar, they were, comforting even, but she didn't feel any attachment to them.

Like an awkward ostrich, she stood on the sidewalk in her threadbare grey socks with the white bands and blue stripes. She eyed the red boots. Of course they won't fit. She was all too familiar with disappointment and didn't expect even tiny miracles.

She pulled on one red boot and then the other. They hugged her feet like a welcome. A surge of uncommon joy. The blue of the sky, the yellow

crocus heads breaking through in the garden next to the truck, the early green froth on the trees: it was spring.

She couldn't resist clicking her heels. With a fist in the air, she hooted as loud as she could. An old couple, holding closely to each other, turned to stare. Unusually for her, she didn't mind the attention.

She casually tossed the old Timberlands in the back of the truck and moved toward the front, tapping the side of the vehicle in a staccato rhythm. At the door, she grabbed the handle and was halfway into her seat when she stopped and stepped back down. She lifted one foot and looked at the red boot, almost smiling.

Slowly she returned to her discarded boots which were already sinking into piles of garbage. She leaned in and retrieved them, shook off a bit of apple peel that had stuck to the sole, and set her old boots on the sidewalk.

Two worn work boots, weathered steel toes pointing forward, sat waiting. Perhaps an invitation.

Back in the cab of the truck, the red boots were singing Patsy Cline's 'Walkin' after Midnight.' She found herself humming along as she drove to the next stop on her route.

Published in *Fictive Dream*, April 2023.

<https://fictivedream.com/2023/04/28/worn/>

LINDA BRISKIN

www.lindabriskinphotography.com/pdf/writing.pdf

Linda Briskin is a writer and fine art photographer. In her fiction, she is drawn to writing about whimsy, fleeting moments, and the small secrets of interior lives. Her creative nonfiction bends genres, makes quirky connections and highlights social justice themes—quietly. Her writing has recently appeared in *South 85*, *Fictive Dream*, *South 8*, *Barren*, **82Review*, *Masque & Spectacle*, *The Schuylkill Valley Review*, *Canary*, *Tipping the Scales*, *Montreal Serai*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Rise Up Review* and *Cobalt Review* among others.

Brianna Caryll

brianna.caryll@gmail.com

Brianna Caryll is a painter and photographer living in Toronto. She paints with oils, applying traditional techniques to create contemporary compositions. Her work explores archetypal and spiritual themes. In these three works, she allowed her creativity to be guided by the emotional essence of her subjects.



TENDERNESS, 2024, Oil on Canvas, 24 x 18 in



COURAGE, 2024, Oil on Canvas, 24 x 18 in

Brianna Caryll

A Portrait *by Any Other Name*



MESMERIZED, 2024, Oil on Canvas, 24 x 18 in

SELF PORTRAIT IN STRESS

by Sharon Crawford

Part 1 - Repetition

Some days my mind recycles its content,

Over and over, then again.

Worries, problems, fears, minor or major,

Regurgitate and rot.

A garbage bin of junk

Overflowing, spinning, shouting.

I need to hit the pause button.

Taking a deep breath, I walk away.

For now.

Part 2 - Turmoil

“I’m late. I’m late.”

The white rabbit screams inside my head.

Run to catch my bus, almost fall.

Saved by clutching a lamp post.

Stop! There will be another bus.

Breath slowly, deeply, and stroll towards bus stop.

Waylaid at curb by red light.

Shake fist and glower at two buses,

Zooming by in the bus lane across the street,

Second one hugging the tail end of the first.

Feel a thump against the back of my left lower leg

Nearly tripping me and sending fear

Hissing through my body, mind, and soul.

A loud voice behind whispers

“You’re late. You’re late.”

The crossing light flashes green.

I don’t look back

But charge forward across the street.

“I’m late. I’m late.”

SHARON CRAWFORD

www.samcraw.com

Sharon Crawford was born in Toronto and lived in Aurora, Ontario for 23 years, returning to Toronto in 1998. A freelance journalist for 35 years (*Newmarket/Aurora Era, Toronto Star, Globe and Mail, Quill & Quire*, etc.), Sharon now writes the Beyond mystery series: *Beyond the Tripping Point* (2012), *Beyond Blood* (2014) *Beyond Faith* (2017), and her memoir *The Enemies Within Us* (2020) all published by Blue Denim Press. With her main Beyond Books character PI Dana Bowman, Sharon hosted the *Crime Beat Confidential Show* on That Channel from 2018 until 2022, and a selection of her shows are now posted at <https://odysee.com> under Crime Beat Confidential. She also writes poetry, is an editor, and teaches writing workshops for Toronto Public Library. Sharon belongs to the Heliconian Club, Sisters in Crime, Crime Writers of Canada, and founded (in 2000) and runs the East End Writers' Group. She is currently writing *Beyond Truth*.

Dougal M.Haggart

dougal@dmhaggart.ca www.dmhaggart.ca

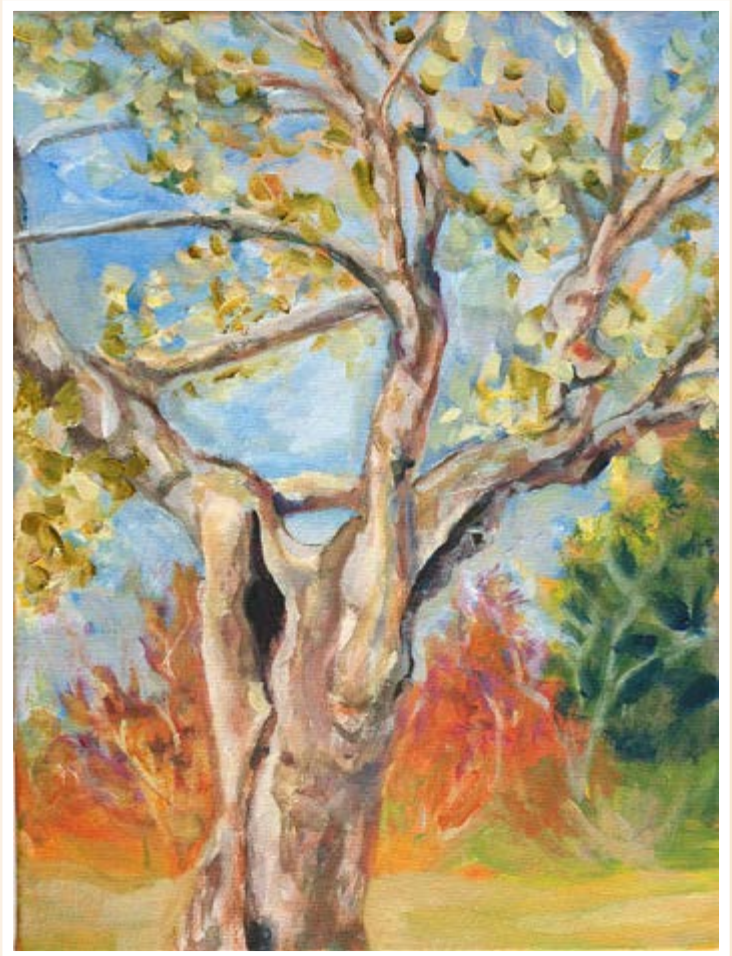
What prompts me to draw? Usually it's to depict a specific story, place and moment. Or to portray a memory.

You really *see* something when you draw it. Which is one reason I love to sketch from life, particularly when it gets me outdoors and I come upon a story by chance or design.

That is how I made *Sycamore Patches*. These are also called “plane trees” and can live for centuries. Trees are a solace to us all, but this individual is also home to our tiny neighbours – as I watched, little birds hopped in and out of the hollow left by a lost limb. I thought “AHA”.

—

Dougal worked as a lithographic stripper, typesetter, graphic artist and web designer. Since retiring in 2009, she has been exploring printmaking and painting. Dougal has not left print and web behind, however, she maintains a virtual gallery online and enjoys grouping images to make picture books. Her latest, *Thirty-Six Views: Adventures in Painting Toronto, 2012 – 2022*, is available at www.dmhaggart.ca.



SYCAMORE PATCHES, 2015, Acrylic on canvas, 16 x 12 in

This painting was made "In Memoriam." I sketched Sandi from life many times before she passed. She often posed with her own cloche and turquoise earrings, and embodied endurance and elegance.



INSPIRED BY SANDI ROSS, 2017, Acrylic on paper, 14 x 11.5 in

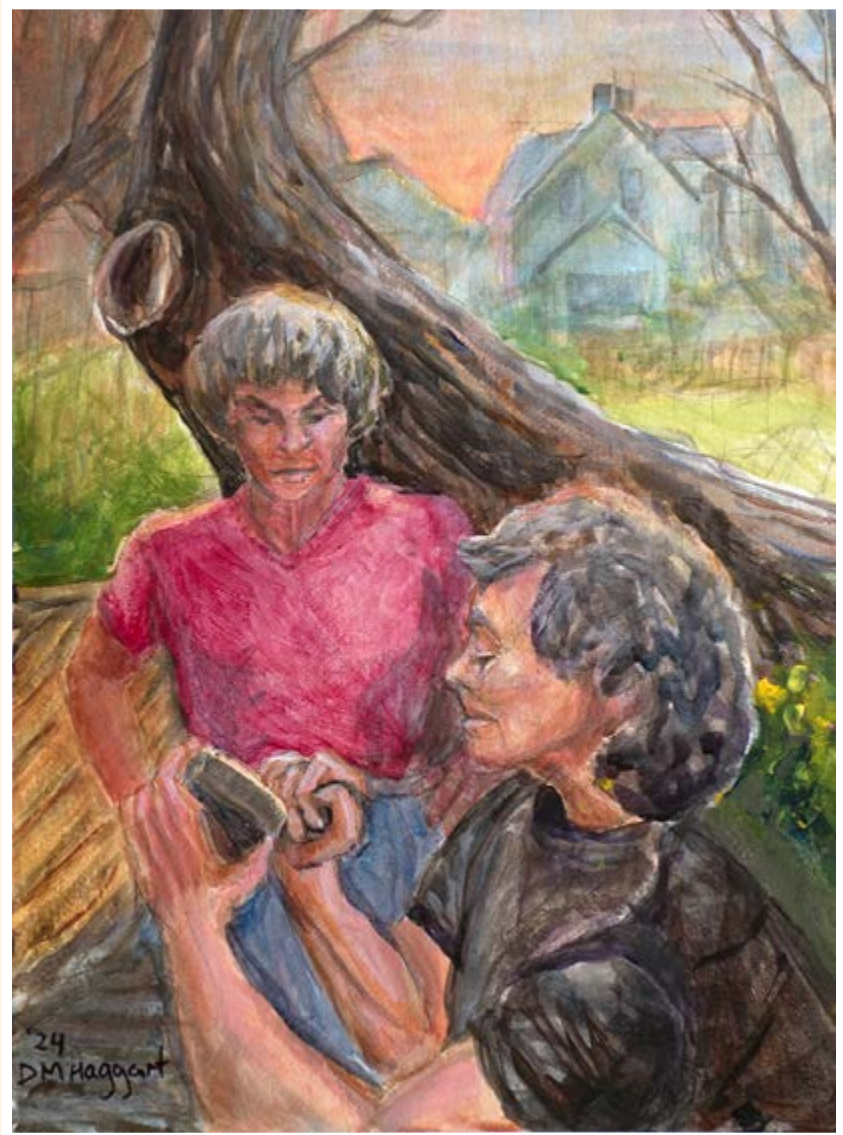
—
The original sketch is from March 2022 during our show "WOMAN." I really liked the juxtaposition of the model with Catherine's painting "*This from the mind of a woman*" in the background. "Born a Woman" and still judged by our looks, as Rita MacNeil sang; but every one of us has her world within.



JUXTAPOSED, 2024, Acrylic on panel, 12 x 9 in

I think it was nothing momentous - just a small camera my brother Laird was examining with my sister Leslie, on a rare visit from Nova Scotia. This was just a year before he left us, and a bookend to my painting "Discovery, 1949".

I substituted sundown for the mid day light of the photo - all very symbolic, dontcha know.



DISCOVERY, 1998, 2024, Acrylic on paper, 15 x 11 in

One of my tulips decided to
cuddle up with my Christmas
snowman / candle.



COMPANIONABLE GESTURE, 2023, Acrylic on paper, 12 x 9 in

Dougal M.Haggart

A Portrait *by Any Other Name*

Spring sunshine in the kitchen where I set up to paint draws Ranger, as always, to keep watch.



RANGER AND SUNSHINE, 2024, Acrylic on art board, 9 x 12 in

Three kids flung themselves into a companionable pile, while their sedate dams watched the passing parade of humans at Riverdale Farm, A preview of their future.



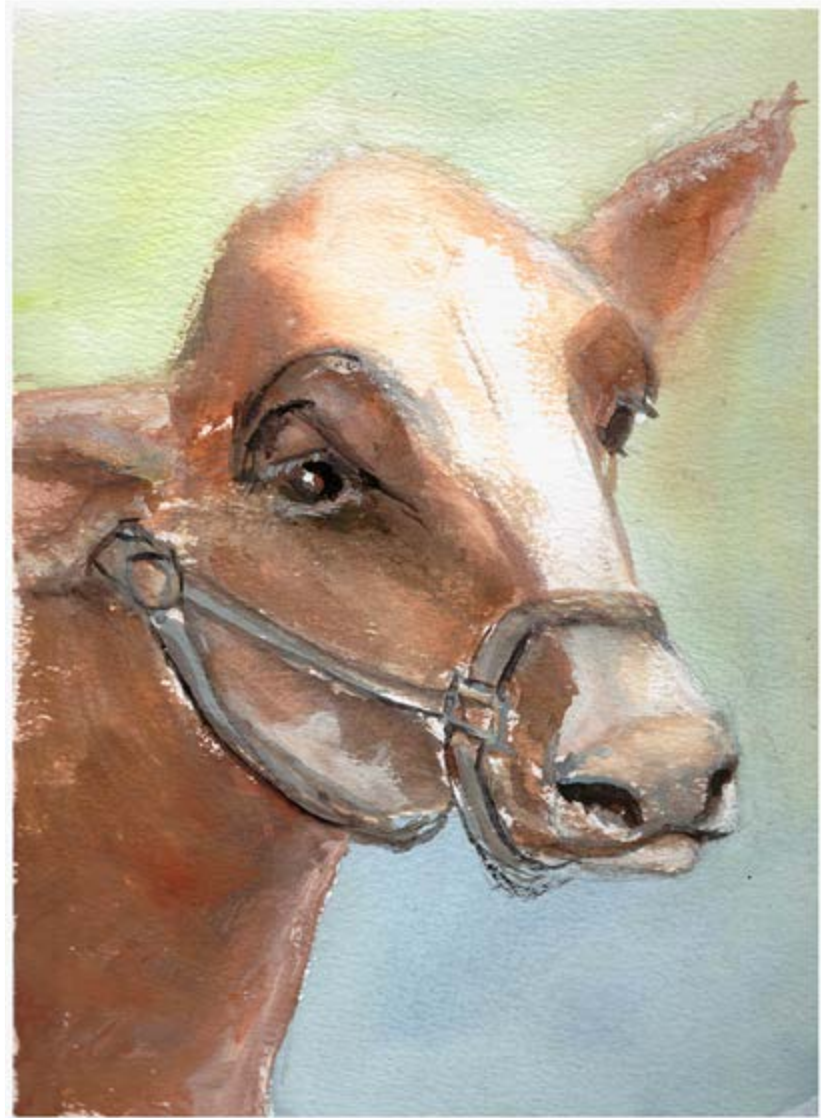
THE NEW KIDS ON THE FARM, 2023, Gouache on art board, 9 x 12 in

You can see why she was a goddess. She still is sacred to many.

Ruminating in this case is chewing her cud and it is indeed keeping her alive.

But what is she thinking?

How does one think without words?



RUMINATING IS MY LIFE, 2022, Gouache on paper,
12 x 9 in (framed 16.5 x 14 in)

PORTRAIT OF MOMMA CAT AND ROSE

by Bianca Lakoseljac

In the garden scented with late spring bloom,
a five year old girl crouches down,
grasping the rock she tries to push aside,
the rock she has named 'Turtle.'

When it does not budge, she kneels down,
with all her might shifts Turtle,
only enough to reveal what she is looking for.

With bare hands, she prods the moist soil,
unearths a worm, its pink string-like form
wiggling between slender fingers.

She holds it confidently, expertly,
deposits it gently in a white plastic cup
labelled, 'fruit bottom cherry yogurt.'

She stands up, smiling triumphantly,
eyes as green as the clumps of ornamental
grasses nearly as tall as her, sheaves of green
tinged with gold, announcing summer.

She brushes her hands against the
pink polka dots of her shorts, bits of
moist earth clinging to bare knees.

Her cousin, a ten-year old boy, picks up Turtle,
adeptly, its weight only a bit of a challenge.
He carries it, competently, testing his own strength.
He nods with satisfaction, eyes as blue as the
blooming forget-me-nots, self-seeded

the previous summer and now
scattered throughout the garden.

He drops it between the luscious pink
and deep-crimson clusters of peonies.

It lands with a dull thump, inaudible to anyone
but me observing this performance unravelling
more smoothly than any well-rehearsed play.

He pauses, admires the job well done, brushes hands
against his army-green shorts, then crouches down,
digs into the earth with fingers and pulls out
a few more wiggling critters. He drops them in the cup
and announces, jubilantly, "We'll go fishing!"

The girl agrees enthusiastically, their cheerful voices
drifting among the shrubs and swaying grasses
and fuzzy, pile-covered yellow and black bumblebees,
lumbering over the late spring blooms.

An orange cat with white patches
bounds out of the variegated weigela shrub,
releasing a flock of small creamy-white butterflies,
Pieridae, with black dots on wings.

The boy cries out, "Go, Momma Cat, go,"
as the orange cat pounces in the air,
white paw gripping a butterfly.

She nibbles at it, then sneezes and snuffles.

Whiskers twitching, she tosses it on the grass,

and the wings flutter feebly. With a paw,
she pushes it, propels it upward, daring it
to fly, but the insect falls back, defeated.

The cat leaps after another pair of creamy wings,
and is joined by her offspring, a grey tabby
named Rose. The orange patch of fur resembling
a ‘rose bud,’ the tabby sports proudly on her forehead.

After a few jumps, the butterflies soar out of reach.
Momma Cat, looking pensive yet triumphant,
lifts her tail high, walks away, proudly, her tail
held up like a flag. Rose trots behind, obediently.

Momma Cat leads the way to the plastic cup.
Reaching for the cup, she lifts her paw, slowly,
cautiously, testing. The children watch.
They sit on the grass, stroke the cats lovingly,
rub their tummies and explain that
the fishing trip is better left for another day.

After a brief debate the girl picks up the cup with
worms. The boy digs up some soil with fingers.
The worms, released, burrow quickly into the
moist earth. The children wait, patiently,
then place Turtle back over the patch.
Compliant, the cats rest and observe.
Momma Cat loafs, squinting dreamily,

paws folded under her—an air of disinterest.
Next to her, Rose sits upright, poised like a vase.
The ‘rose-bud’—a jewel on her forehead.
Tail neatly wrapped around her.

The girl runs up the porch steps, pushes open the
kitchen door, runs in, and is back out in a flash,
with two drawing pads and a set of colouring pencils.

‘Let’s draw them,’ she exclaims,
and the children are fast at work:

Portrait of Momma Cat and Rose.

BIANCA LAKOSELJAC

www.biancalakoseljac.ca

Bianca Lakoseljac is an editor of *Rudy Wiebe: Essays on His Works* (Nov. 2023, Guernica Editions). She is the author of two novels: *Stone Woman* (the Book Excellence Award winner), and *Summer of the Dancing Bear*; a collection of stories, *Bridge in the Rain*; and a book of poetry. She received the Matthew Ahern Memorial Essay Prize from York University. Her work has been anthologised widely, including in *50+ Poems for Gordon Lightfoot*, (the Stephen Leacock Museum). She is past president of the Canadian Authors Association, Toronto. She was a writer in residence for Open Book Toronto. Bianca taught communications at Humber College and Toronto Metropolitan University.

Catherine Maunsell

cath.maunsell@icloud.com www.cmaunsell.com

For me painting is sensuous, visceral and intuitive. I love the feeling of pushing paint around. I begin with a very limited idea - a mood, a feeling or perhaps an experiment with line or some other mark - anything more detailed and concrete derails my process. I generally choose a dominant colour palette. I set down my first marks, usually with some idea of whether I want this to be a primarily organic or geometric painting. I lay down some lines and shapes and I'm off!

I am an emotional painter who responds to the marks and the colours, as I paint, never certain where I will finally land! Sometimes the initial marks get to survive as laid down but as I engage in the process of reviewing and revising, painting over and scratching through, reworking shapes and adjusting colour, they may disappear or change beyond recognition. Creating a finished painting is a process of addition and subtraction. Having spent 36 years of my working life in a rigid, rule-bound, para-military organization I delight in making changes to a work: scrubbing out, painting over, scratching in, covering up with collage... rules be damned!



PORTRAIT OF OCHRE AND HER FRIENDS #1, Acrylic and Collage on paper, 22 x 22 in



PORTRAIT OF OCHRE AND HER FRIENDS #2, Acrylic on Paper, 14 x 20 in



PORTRAIT OF OCHRE AND HER FRIENDS #3, Acrylic and Collage on Paper, 14 x 20 in

Catherine Maunsell

A Portrait *by Any Other Name*



PORTRAIT OF OCHRE AND HER FRIENDS #5, Acrylic on Paper, 8 x 10 in



PORTRAIT OF OCHRE AND HER FRIENDS #6, Acrylic on Gallery Mount Wood Panel, 20 x 20 in



PORTRAIT OF OCHRE AND HER FRIENDS #4, Acrylic on Paper, 10 x 8 in

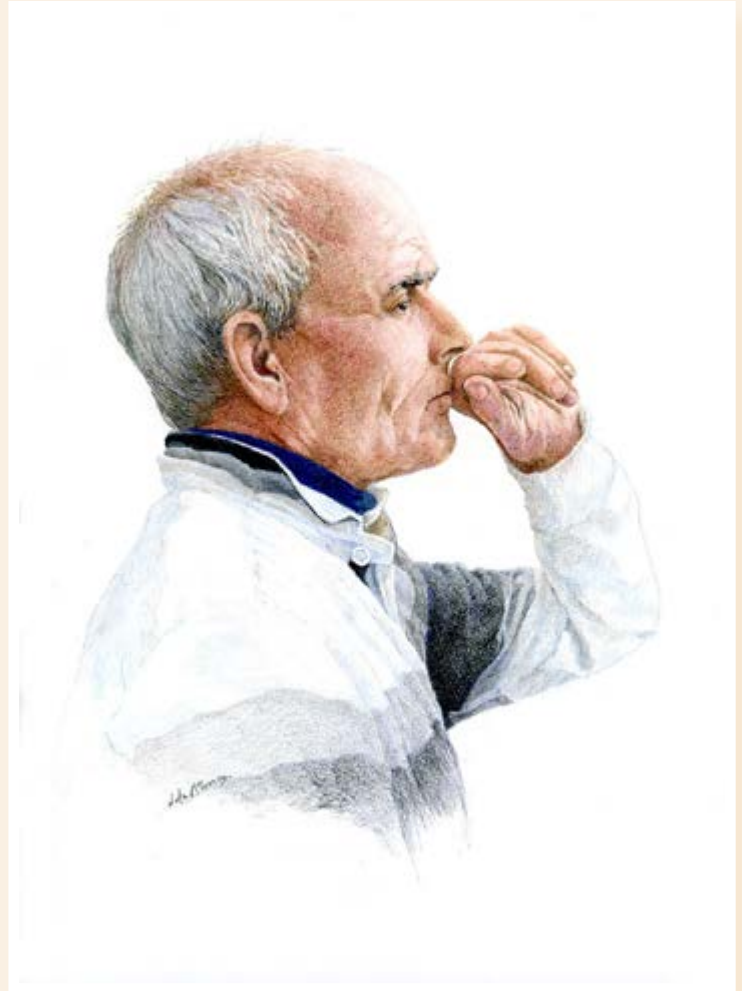
Nola McConnan

merriweather@sympatico.ca www.merriweatherdesignstudio.com

Capturing the personality of our non speaking four footed family members while depicting furry coats inspires me. Horses were my driving inspiration for drawing. 10,000 hours of drawing horses taught me to draw. Their shining coats a colour challenge. Later dogs cats and people were included in the sketchbooks and finished works, but always horses were the core.

The works submitted for this exhibit depict coats and person hair with four different methods. Finding, depicting, coat textures in with a variety of mediums is a continuous challenge. Especially when those textures happen in Watercolour. Wishy washy is not my thing. Capturing texture with a brush, that's satisfying. Life drawing a subject that is not going to hold a pose for twenty minutes, another challenge. Combining two mediums can be the best of both worlds.

"Contemplation" Some humans just don't want to pose, they fuss and fume. You have to sneak up to capture a moment. This is a Valentine. A heart formed by the negative shape contained by the hand reaching back to rest contemplatively on the lip. Pencil crayon allowed me to examine just how much colour there is in grey hair.



CONTEMPLATION, 2023, Coloured Pencil, 11 x 8.5 in, NFS

Llamas and Alpacas are cute.
Even when they spit. These
were at a farm in Mulmer.

—



WE'RE SO CUTE, 2018, Watercolour, 10 x 14 in

Capturing Hwin was truly
an adventure in horse
personalities.

Her mother was frankly nuts.

Hwin was very embarrassed.
She stood like a rock while
her mother charged about,
screaming.



HWIN, 2019, mixed media, ink and coloured pencil, 10 x 14 in,
study "Inspired by Colour Theory" (pri coll Tottenham)

Our family member Turpentine (named the artist's studio cat) was a fierce guard of her territory. This work really grabs her truly terrifying glare as she growled off any cat who dared come near *Her Chair*.

Turpie went to her reward in her favourite sun spot last summer. She remains in our hearts.



TURPENTINE TRIUMPHANT, 2022, Watercolour, 8.5 x 11 in, NFS

KEITH

by Ellen Michelson

Keith, failing Grade Ten history, was absent often. Every phone call home brought him the next day, sometimes several days in a row. He strolled through the classroom door as the bell rang, dark t-shirt, neckband awry, tucked haphazardly into nondescript denims. His earbuds dangled, meaning he respected the rule against music in class.

Earlier arrivers grabbed armloads of textbooks to distribute to classmates. Keith sat, didn't even look around to see when someone might bring him a book.

Once, early in the semester, he slid along his chair so he could lean back and straighten his legs under its attached desk. Dreamy-eyed, he gazed toward the wooden cupboard next to the chalkboard. Its flat, smooth door was closed. Wriggling about made his narrow shoulders wobble against his chair's back until his skinny rump slipped off the edge of the chair's seat, landing him on the floor. With students thumping texts onto desks while others rooted around in backpacks for pens, pencils, the right binder, no classmates reacted to Keith's fall. He didn't react, either. He stayed down there, one foot flat, knee jutting into the air, other knee also bent, resting on the worn floorboards.

When his teacher came to ask if he felt okay, he looked up with a pleasant expression, gave a peaceful nod. To the suggestion that he take a book,

he climbed back onto his chair, reached out to a classmate carrying texts, and accepted help finding the day's first page. The sweet, pungent smell of cannabis surrounded him.

He didn't fall off his chair again. The boy was short, underweight, and his faint mustache needed no grooming yet. By law, he had to be in school because he was only fifteen.

A couple of others' attendance was even worse than Keith's. One, a friend of his, was sixteen, already becoming the burly size and shape he'd be as a man. Sporting a thick, neatly trimmed goatee, he wore t-shirts with large graphics instead of plain tees like Keith's, the latest style in jeans, and a garish earring in one earlobe. He munched jellybeans or gummy bears he thought he was sneaking.

Neither responded to calls for volunteers to read aloud, and both avoided involvement in class discussions. Whenever Keith attended, he followed along, and if the bigger fellow came with him, he sometimes copied Keith, sometimes not. A few times, Keith got his friend's attention by touching a blank space on the fellow's copy of the assignment sheet, then touching a spot on a textbook page. The bigger boy then read and wrote a bit.

If alone, Keith rarely started the day's written work on his own. As other class members began, he sat still, mentally far away. When his teacher spoke

with him, he looked from adult to assignment sheet, straight blonde hair swinging. After a pause, one of his hands squirmed into a pocket, fished around, and extricated a pencil stub.

He wrote little. Encouraged, he sometimes wrote more, not always. One day when his friend wasn't with him, his early quitting left time for a make-up assignment before the bell ending class. It was based on a newspaper article rather than the textbook, so there were two handouts, a familiar-looking question sheet with blank spaces for answers, and a photocopy of the article.

Holding a page in each hand, the boy looked from one to the other several times, then reached the article toward his teacher.

“S — t, I have to read this?”

His tone held neither anger nor provocation. He'd gone whiny.

Most students censored expletives when they conversed with adults or used them in defiance. Keith never acted rebellious, yet the single profanity could be grounds for suspension.

Softly, back to the rest of the class, his teacher asked him, “You know we don't use some words here, don't you? You've learned what ‘foul language’ means in our school?”

Keith's head moved down, then up in a slow nod. The article, unlike the textbook, engaged him. What he wrote that day showed he was capable of passing the course, thus earning the credit required for graduation, but again, he stopped attending. Another phone call home did not bring another promise to send him to school. It revealed that he was in hospital, had been attacked and beaten unconscious in a squabble over twenty dollars. He'd given a glimpse of his potential for success in school, but his seat remained empty.

ELLEN MICHELSON

<https://ellenmichelson.ca/>

Ellen Michelson has been a Heliconian since 2008. She achieved her career goal, teaching high school students how to succeed in the courses she taught, is proud that most of them did. Now retired, she's working on a memoir about her students. A freelance writer, too, she served on the Professional Writers Association of Canada Board that helped reinvent the organization; PWAC became part of the Canadian Freelance Guild formed in 2020. She's now seeking a publisher for her children's picture book, inspired by her grandson. An avid balcony gardener, she's proud of the red amaryllis whose blooms brighten the winter and whose foliage has been adding height to plantings every summer for years.

TEACHING CAREER - FINAL YEAR

by Ellen Michelson

Carrying library books up and down stairs,
their aroma unique and familiar, evoking anticipation of
how students will react to the stories, portraits, maps within,

Toting foolscap reams to my classroom,
knowing a few of my charges will write little of what's asked,
leave most of the long sheet blank,
while classmates will fill line after line with observations and insights,
some mundane, some astonishing,

Yanking file drawers without roller tracks open,
removing, refiling lesson plans and assignments, quizzes and tests,
some long since proven effective, thus faithful friends,
others, newly-created, poised for use and assessment,
shoving the file drawers shut again,
readying my ears for the raucous squeaks each time,

Rehanging favourite posters after summer school teachers have gone,
standing on a desk,
rubbing corners firmly with a metre stick end
so masking tape circles on their backs hold to the wall,
re-taping, climbing, and pressing whenever any fall,
glad to get the room looking like mine again,

Dragging desks into place after they've been rearranged in night school classes,
so the room is ready for my students,

Wheeling video equipment through the halls, over thresholds,
peering around the tall TV on the cart to avoid collisions,
feeling silly for my pride in learning how to
connect the cables, use each item, cope with their quirks and demands,

Watching assignments grow on my computer screen,
hoping the format my students know well will encourage them,
not bore or stifle them,
popping in a question on
what they would have done if faced with a historical figure's quandary,
or how they would have voted in a long-ago election,
and why,
glancing through bifocals at my knuckles moving up and down,
keyboard comfortable under my fingertips,
tapping too hard as they remember decades-past typewriter days,

Scissoring and jigsawing newspaper articles to fit onto single sheets,
sticky-taping them for photocopying,
wondering if as a toddler striving to complete a wooden puzzle I'd felt
such satisfaction,

Clumping around the room in comfy teacher pumps,
bending down to check students' progress,
murmuring words of praise, asking questions meant to spark reflection,

Slapping my pocket to make sure my classroom and history office keys are safe,
thinking often, all through the year, of the pang to come in June
when I take them off their ring and return them.

Barbara Muir

barbara.muir@sympatico.ca www.barbaramuir.com

My paintings and drawings express the joy I feel looking at the world. Whether I'm creating portraits, landscapes, or still life images; I want to share the beauty I see. I've been a commissioned portrait artist for more than 15 years. My work attracted Oprah Winfrey's attention in 2009. And drawing her live via Skype on her show was one of the highlights of my artistic career. I've shown in Florence, New York City, and in the Louvre in Paris, three times. I'm excited to be part of another wonderful exhibition at the Heliconian Club.

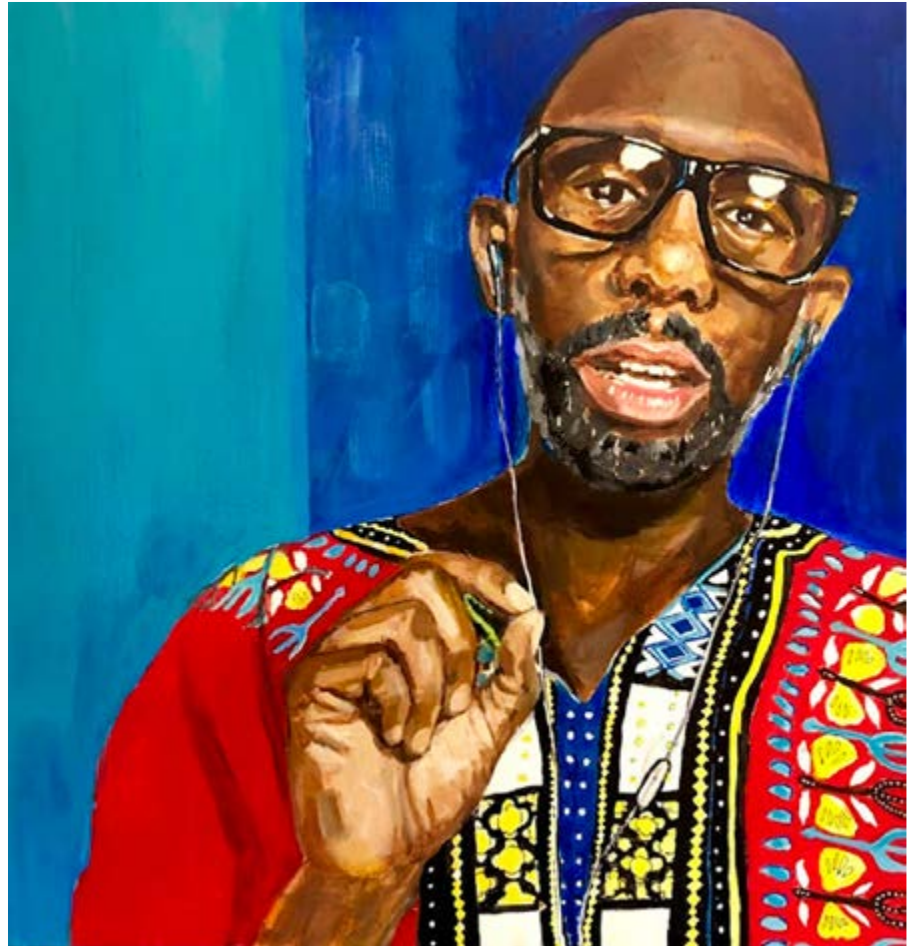
—

The inspiration for this painting came from a dream I had after reading about Sargent's *In A Garden Corfu*. In the dream I saw my friend's daughter as the model, and couldn't wait to begin the painting. Sargent painted the work in 1909, the year the Heliconian Club was established. So the painting honours Sargent and the Heliconian Club. I love the light in Sargent's painting.



OUR GARDEN after John Singer Sargent's "*In A Garden, Corfu*",
2024, Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 36 in

If you don't know the work of this artist, look up Michael Gibson on Instagram to see his astounding portraits, frequently accompanied by deeply moving poetry. I don't know what made me think I could paint Michael, but I wanted to honour him for his amazing work. My portrait is based on a video he did about his work and took me awhile to complete. The wonderful thing is that Michael gave me permission to paint him, and he liked the painting.



ONE OF THE BEST (Michael Gibson), 2022, Acrylic on canvas, 24 x 24 in

The painting has been hanging inside our front door -- reminding me, the grown up, supposed adult, that this is my essence — a happy kid who loves to play, and read, and loves beauty. Being at the cottage when I was a child was the easiest place to find equilibrium, because the setting was beautiful, and my parents were happy, and distracted. In other words no one paid attention to me so fun was possible and readily available.



READING ON THE DOCK, Revised 2024, Acrylic on canvas, 24 x 24 in

Patricia Stamp

pstamp@yorku.ca www.patriciastamp.com

The photographs in the series "*I'm Looking At You*," are an exploration of the idea that ego is not purely human but is shared by at least the warm-blooded animals: mammals and birds. I exhibited these works in the Scarborough Arts Annual Juried Show in 2012, where the theme was "ego": artists were challenged to react to the concept. We were asked the questions: Is ego a human phenomenon? Is the human ego an essential ingredient in the art making process? My attraction to the theme of the Scarborough Arts show then – and to the theme of our Heliconian show "*A Portrait by Any Other Name*" now -- is deeply rooted in my upbringing in, and life commitment to Africa.

As a child growing up in South Africa, and adult with a career as an African Studies professor, I had the opportunity to be in the presence of animals constantly; animals not our pets, animals with their own negotiated boundaries around human contact. I have found that ego does indeed matter – but not my own.

From the beginning, I was fascinated by the look in their eyes as they encountered us. There is one level of awareness for their own kind, and yet another for us humans. Now



I'M LOOKING AT YOU #1, Thomson's Gazelle, Nairobi Park, Kenya, 2012, framed limited-edition print on fine art photo rag paper, 19 x 16 in.

that we are in many places no longer their predator; they have the chance to think about us before fleeing, especially if their species has chosen to cohabit with us, and even take advantage of the new ecosystems we create.

An antelope; a small rock-dweller whose closest relative is, paradoxically, the elephant; a fun-loving bird of a robust, world-wide genus; the species who allow us to approach, or even seek out our places for entertainment or food, are ambassadors from the animal kingdom who remind us that they, too, are curious, playful, engaged with those around them – even with a rather bossy and dangerous species, us.



I'M LOOKING AT YOU #2, Red-winged Starling, CapePoint, South Africa, 2012, Framed limited-edition print on fine art photo rag paper, 19 x 16 in

The three photographic portraits in this series explore animal consciousness as ego, purely defined as "I Am."

When these three animals – two mammals and a bird – look at me, the consciousness in their eyes shows that ego belongs indeed not just to humans. If they say with their eyes "I'm looking at you!" they are also saying "I'm looking at **you!**"



I'M LOOKING AT YOU #3, Rock Hyrax, Boulder's Beach, South Africa, 2012, Framed limited-edition print on fine art photo rag paper, 19 x 16 in

Rosemary Tannock

tannockr@gmail.com www.instagram.com/rostan9

As an enthusiastic but largely self-taught watercolourist, portraiture has both intrigued and intimidated me. But, after watching the movie: 'Portrait of a Lady on Fire', I became fascinated by gaze in portraiture. The eyes are the strongest focal point and emotional indicator when observing a portrait to try to find out more about that person and what they are experiencing at that moment.

None of these five paintings are classic portraits, in that I have portrayed a full body portrait. Moreover, there is no reciprocal eye connection between the person portrayed and you, the viewer: the person is not looking at you. Rather, my goal was to explore the emotions implied by closed eyes versus directed gaze, as well as the role of body gesture in interpreting emotion.

I hope you enjoy viewing these portraits as much as I enjoyed painting them.

—

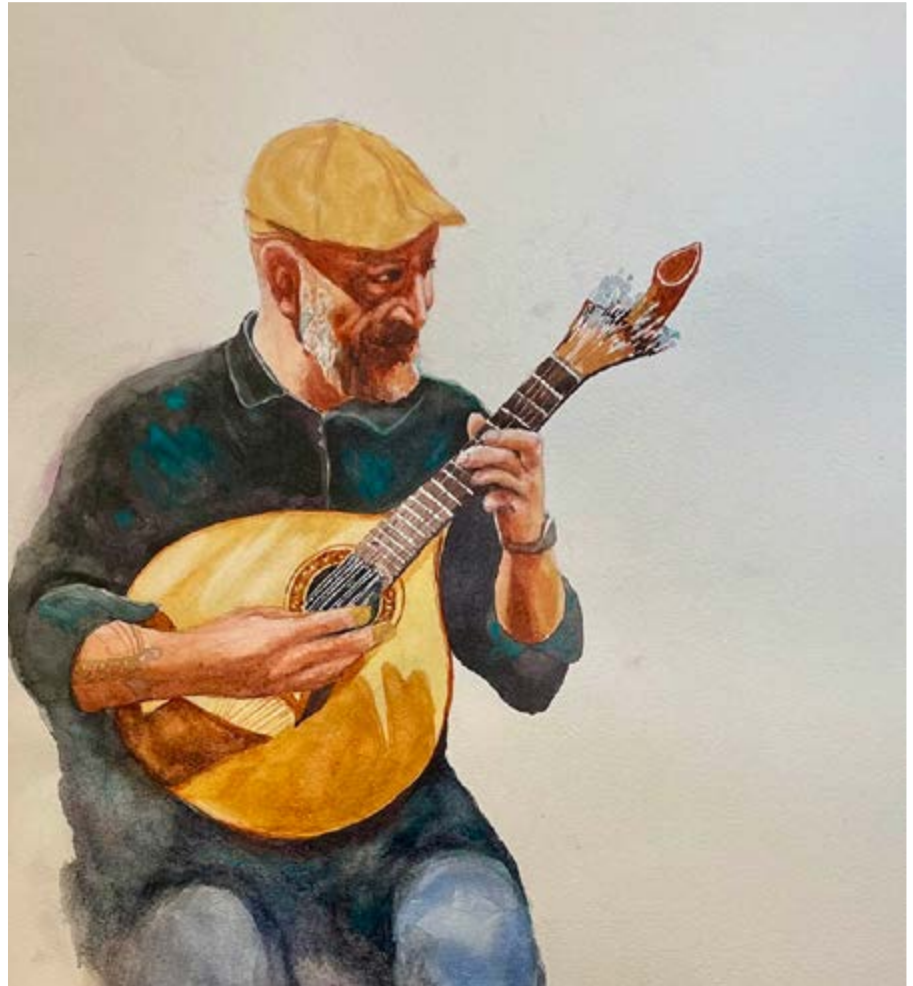
The painting "Holding on" is based on my bedside sketches of my 81-year old sister in hospital, with her eyes closed, yet always holding on to the arms of her recliner. Not an easy painting to look at for sure, but one I had to paint to help process my experience of her horrendous experience.



HOLDING ON, 2023, Watercolour on Arches cold press paper, 37 x 29 in framed, My sister, who did hold on. NFS

The paintings of two fado guitarists and the fadista were based on my photos taken during a recent trip to Portugal, where I heard my first fado concert and began to understand the meaning of *'saudade'*.

The fadista sings her lament about lost love with eyes shut, whereas the guitarists' eyes are open. But at whom or at what [if anything] are they looking? What are they each experiencing?

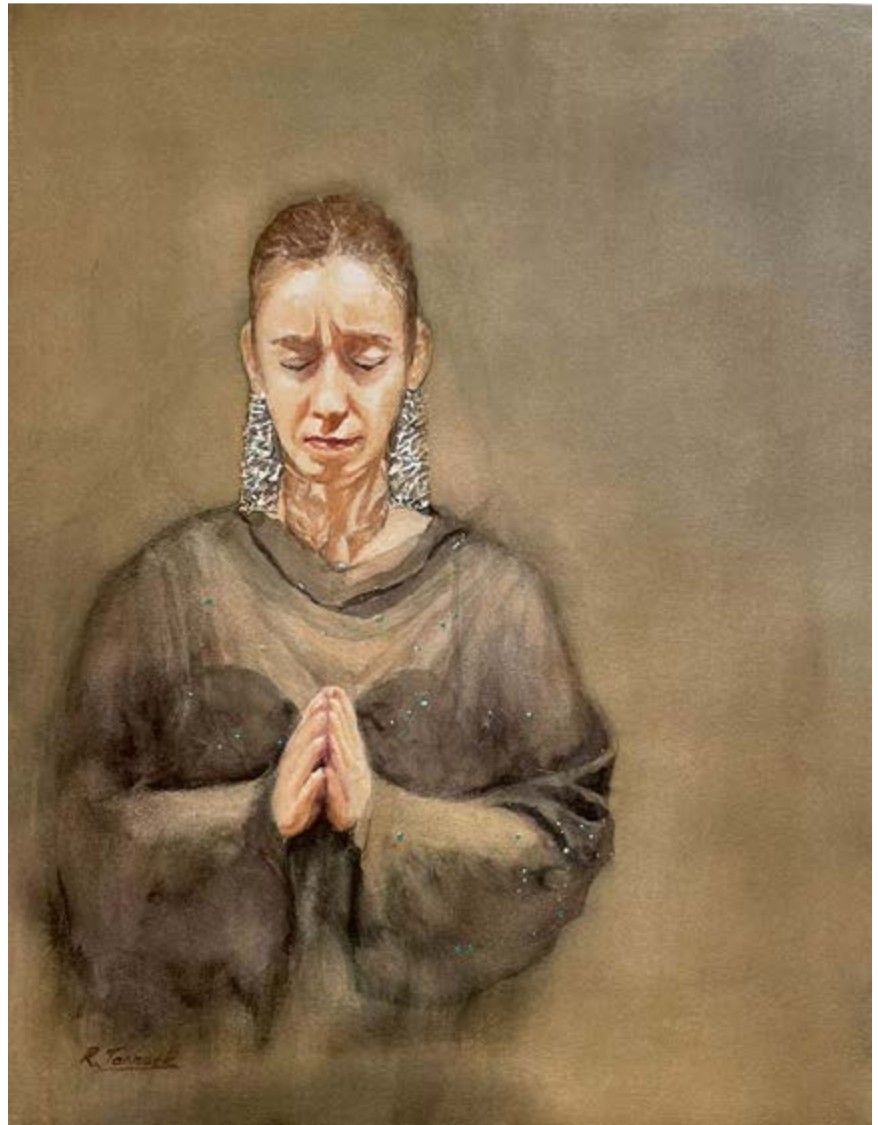


FADO GUITARIST-I, 2024, Watercolour on Arches cold press paper, 28 x 24 in, framed, Based on my photos taken at the concert, with permission.



FADO GUITARIST-II, 2024, Watercolour on Arches cold press paper, 28 x 24 in framed, Based on my photos taken at the concert in Portugal with permission

Based on photo taken at the concert in Portugal, with permission



SAUDADE: THE FADISTA'S LAMENT, 2024, Watercolour on Arches cold press paper, 28 x 24 in framed

The young woman with '*The Yellow Tinted Glasses*' [also based on my photos taken in Lisbon], casts her eyes downwards, smartphone in hand.

The positive and negative impact of smartphones is a topic of frequent debate: while they may increase connectivity and productivity, they may also increase the risk of increased social isolation, online abuse, and depression. What are your thoughts about this young woman's intense focus on her smartphone?



THE YELLOW TINTED GLASSES, 2024, Watercolour on Arches cold press paper, 28 x 24 in framed

THINGS I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND

by Karen von Hahn

I don't understand why young people with their beautiful bodies and their whole lives ahead of them are so unhappy and have all these eating disorders. I myself still wake up hungry every day. Of course I always eat the same thing every morning. I like this type of bun from Costco but they only come in these large bags so I keep them in the freezer and take one out at a time. I know exactly how long it takes in the oven now to warm up.

I've never liked eating in restaurants. I don't understand how people can go to restaurants all the time when you have perfectly good food at home in your refrigerator. And then there are these horrible waiters who introduce themselves to you and say I'm so-and-so and talk on and on at you as if they would want to sit right down with you at your table. And then you have to sit there waiting and the food doesn't come for hours.

Another thing that seems crazy to me is why anybody would go out and buy new garden furniture. It's true that there are some problems now with the set I bought a few years ago at Canadian Tire. But I found some pieces of wood in the basement and I was quite proud of myself for making a little splint for the broken leg on that one over there. Maybe it doesn't look as good as new but I find I quite enjoy little projects like that.

Why do you think it is that people go out and get all these piercings? There was a girl at the checkout at London Drugs and she had one inside her mouth in some way so she was hard to understand when she asked me a question. And these terrible tattoos! When I was a girl it was only very rough people, sailors or men in the army who would do a thing like that. One wonders what will happen to all of these young people's pictures on their bodies when they get to be as old as I am.

And how would you ever choose what kind of picture you would want to have printed on you for the rest of your life?

One thing I don't understand is why people no longer seem to read newspapers or watch the news on television. Don't they worry about not being informed? One of the most frightening things about living through the war was that you never knew what was going on. There were rumours, of course, that the Russians were getting closer from the east, and that you shouldn't go to such-and-such town, or take such-and-such bridge, but the scariest thing really was not knowing anything all of the time.

It's still amazing to me considering how much effort goes into it, that people still get married and have children. Mine are old themselves now, with children of their own, but still, I somehow can't believe that I did it not just once, but five times! I must say it's a

lot easier giving birth when you do a lot of physical labour. With my third, I was working on that farm picking tomatoes all day in the Okanagan. That was my first job after we came to Canada. And then we had to can them. I had to pull the little skins off with one hand like this.

One thing I don't understand at all about the world is what everyone is talking about on their cell phones. Especially taxi drivers. One would think it would interfere with their jobs of driving people around, but they always seem to be on the phone the entire time.

I really don't see what all the fuss is about drinking water. I'm 94 years old and I don't drink any water. I'm perfectly fine with juice and coffee, and of course my house drink. Half vodka and half of the red vermouth.

I make one for myself every night even when I'm on my own. I sit down and read, look at the garden, drink it with maybe a small bowl of potato chips. It's wonderful. I still look forward to it every afternoon.

KAREN VON HAHN

2moreeggs@gmail.com

Toronto-based author and journalist Karen von Hahn writes on material culture and trends in the art of consumption. Her memoir, *What Remains: Object Lessons in Love and Loss*, published by the House of Anansi Press, was one of the CBC's top 10 non-fiction releases of 2017. For more than a decade, her column, "Noticed" for the *Globe & Mail*, was closely read for its keen observations; her long running column "Super Shopper" for *Toronto Life* garnered numerous awards. As host of the television program *The Goods*, she examined social trends through the material world. Karen is also the author of one earlier book, *The Hip Guide to Toronto*.

A Portrait *by Any Other Name...*

Notice to Collectors

Art works are available for sale during the show run but are released to purchasers after the show closes and the artist is paid.

Please arrange a purchase with staff at Heliconian Hall or via email with the artist. Make cheque or e-transfer payable to the artist.

© 2024 Toronto Heliconian Club
Heliconian Hall
35 Hazelton Avenue, Toronto
www.heliconianclub.org

Artwork, stories and poetry copyright
© of the individual artists or authors.