

Pastel Society of America

Pastelagram

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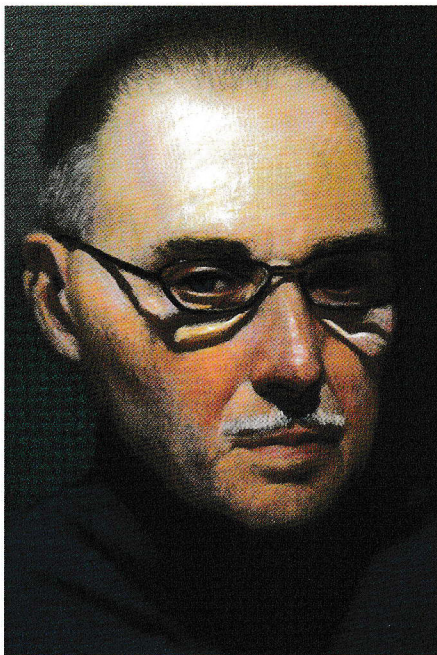
“Gateway,” pastel by David Garrison, from his one-person show at the David Strawn Art Gallery, Jacksonville, Illinois (see article on page 14).

Understanding the Planes of the Face

Cont'd. from p. 13

edges as they fall across any plane.

In terms of color, when painting in an indoor setting with artificial light, the planes facing toward the light are



Self portrait, pastel, by Dan Slapo

warm, and the planes turning away from the light are cool. However, there are exceptions. The reflected light, which is always in the shadow area, can be warm or cool depending on the surface that is bouncing back the light. A red blouse will project red into the shadow area. In addition, the temperature of the light source can change the color relationships. When doing a portrait out of doors, the planes facing toward the light would usually be cool, and the shadows warm.

There are values on some planes that are not completely determined by the direction of the plane. For instance, areas that have more blood flow will be darker and/or redder. This includes the flesh of the eye socket, the bulb of the nose, the cheeks, the lips, and the front of the chin.

Understanding the structure of all the facial planes does not exempt the artist from squinting at the model carefully and repeatedly to determine the correct value and color relationships.

The Agony of a ONE-

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BY DAVID GARRISON, PSA

I was asked two and a half years ago to plan for a one-person exhibit in the David Strawn Art Gallery by the Art Association of Jacksonville. This is a museum quality mansion donated many years ago by a strong supporter of the arts, David Strawn. The museum/gallery is located in a beautiful section of the busy little town of Jacksonville, Illinois, which is very near the state capital, Springfield. It is known mainly for producing Abraham Lincoln, our 16th president.

Since I had previous exhibits through the years, I thought little of

and Ecstasy PERSON SHOW



"Red Barn"

the discipline I was facing to put together a large exhibit of 50 high quality paintings for a one-month show. The discipline needed became crystal clear when I realized that my artwork had advanced in quality and when I began to understand how much I expected of myself. Slowly, without being conscious of it, I had become my own severest critic in producing a fine pastel. My throwaway pile far exceeded my small "keepers," and I was becoming a bear to be around because of it. To keep the creative mood intact I moved into my attic studio of the apartment

house I own. The 1894 Victorian house is located three miles from the Mississippi River, in Burlington, Iowa. Besides the apartments for rent, I have a fully equipped studio in the attic with living quarters. The main studio room is 35' by 40' with lots of atmosphere for inspiration.

Endless hours were spent at the easel. The hours turned into days and then months of creating everything from portrait studies and the nude figure to landscapes with moods of the weather for impact. My painting trips were intense, including painting on location

in all kinds of weather and migraine headaches I've suffered from childhood. Past friends would meet me on the street and not recognize me from my strained look. Seldom was I found without my drawing pad. But I was making headway in my effort to have a beautiful collection of pastels for the show. Total relief and ecstasy would flood my soul when I captured the feeling and beauty of what I was painting. I seldom left the studio except to paint on location and to buy food. I was totally captured in my efforts of painting.

I found I could not sleep when I



"Sir James"

days she wasted away in spite of our efforts to give her a reason to live. This took its toll on my ability to create with any strength. But I found my art was healing my pain and I recovered faster than I ever dreamed I could. The discipline I had learned in the past year and a half was my support and my teacher.

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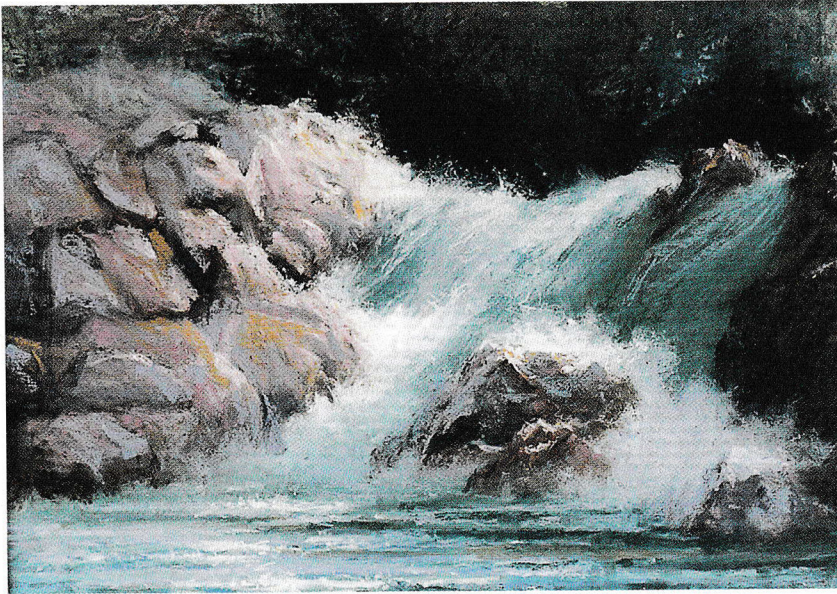
I was producing artwork that gave me peace of mind and had a power that I did not know I could create. My work and sleep habits leveled off; my creative energy increased, with more distinction of style and impact of color harmony

was satisfied with a painting because of the high it gave me, and I could not sleep when I had a painting go sour because of the depression it caused me. My mood swings were from high to low with very little in between.

My first year came to a close with only 15 works that I was satisfied with. I had destroyed 70% of my year's work. At this rate I would not be ready for the opening. My efforts doubled! I lost 5 pounds the next six months and, since I have a small-frame body, that was scary. That second winter my mother decided to stop eating. She had been in a care home for several years and so the aides and I worked together to feed her by hand. During the Christmas holi-



At the opening reception, the artist (left) converses with guests.



"Rocks and Rapids"

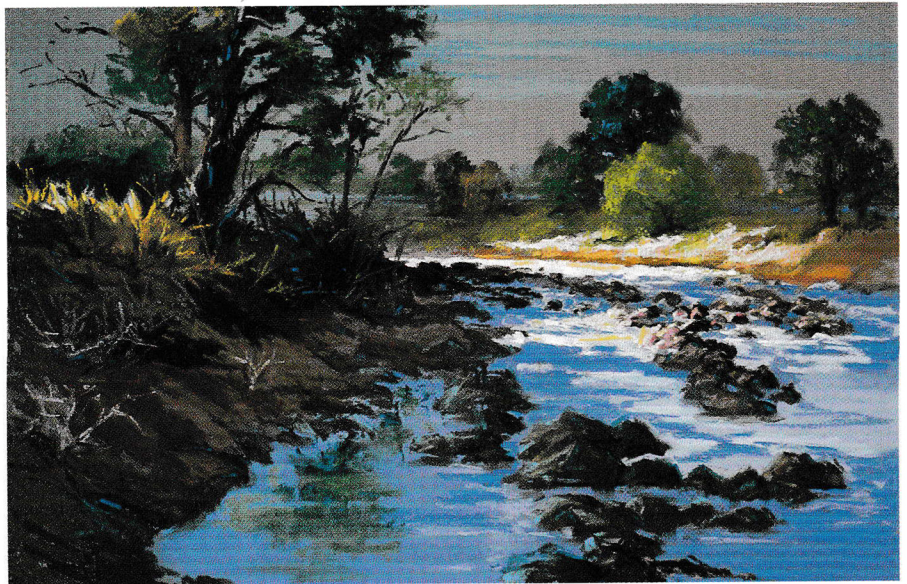
than I had ever known. The feeling of being an "artist" had never been stronger, with a collection of work that I was looking forward to showing.

At the same time I was able to send my works to national shows in Texas, New Mexico, California, and on the east coast with the American Artist Professional League, Hudson Valley Art Association and the Pastel Society of America annual.

I was asked to lead pastel workshops including a series of portrait/figure studies with the Pastel Society of America. I was floating on a high that I never thought possible. But it took going through agony and suffering to reach that high. I had always heard artists must suffer, must be tested to prove their worth, but never understood the "why;" now I understand!

The exhibit was an outstanding success! The opening was well attended — in fact, it had one of the largest gatherings on record. The only flaw was a freak snowstorm predicted for the day I was to deliver the paintings to the gallery 200 miles away. So I called Kelly Gross, the gallery director, about delivery a day early, which was no problem.

Very close friends and collectors of my work attended the grand opening. Friends from another town could see how nervous I was and drove me to the opening and told me to just relax and enjoy the glow of all my hard work.



One of my faithful collectors, Dale and Vivian Weber, bought yet another painting, their 34th. Since the exhibit closed I have been asked by the Prairie Art Alliance of Springfield, Ill., to lead a workshop in portrait/figure study this year. I received several commissions because of the quality of work I had on display. And the best news: the sales were good.

The agony and ecstasy of a one-person show can cause you to think about your life and how you are handling all the trauma and bliss, but then you realize it is worth it.

David Garrison in his studio



"Spring"