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Edward Dare Gallery

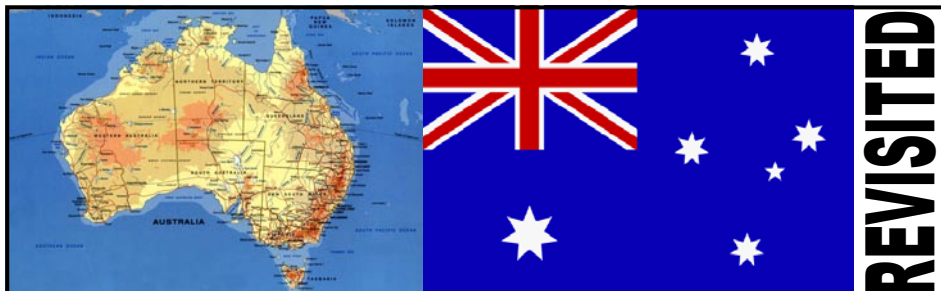
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that occurred in his personal life, Ruby was motivated to step away from human figurative paintings and lift his spirits by painting an image that always brought a smile to his face - the adoring snout of his twelve year companion, Smooch. Discovering how others connected with that single painting was the catalyst to James' journey of capturing the emotional bond we have with human's best friend. Dealing with the loss of Smooch earlier this year was a difficult time for Ruby, but he is back to the easel and has just recently completed 19 portraits that have brought joy to numerous families and Ruby as well as he completed each piece.

Ruby's painting process was featured on the PBS series "Applause" in 2013 and

his work has been featured in numerous publications such as *The Houston Press*, *Dogster*, and *Dog Art Today* who said, "Ruby's Pop-Realism inspired oil paintings capture the wet-nosed joy of high noon on a salty beach. I can almost smell these hot dogs". However, the best quote of all is from Ruby himself, "As I explore the emotional bond we share with our loyal companions, my vision is to capture an image that every pet owner can connect with - the face we see each morning as we lay in bed, while our best friend anxiously awaits to begin the day," says Ruby.

For further information check our SC Commercial Gallery listings or visit (www.edwarddare.com).



A Few Words From Down Under

Editor's Note: Judith McGrath contributed her writings about exhibits and events taking place in Western Australia to *Carolina Arts* for about a decade. Although she was writing about events taking place thousands and thousands of miles away, they seemed relevant to what was going on here in the Carolinas. Her contributions were very popular when we first ran them and continue to be popular on our website's archives. We've decided to revisit them from time to time.

**A Few Words From Down Under
Classical vs. Contemporary**

by Judith McGrath, first run in our June January Issue 2007

Got tired of singing the same ol' tune, you know the one, "where have all the artists gone?" It was depressing so I went on a Roman Holiday to lift my spirits! Unlike that skinny waif of an actress in the old movie, I didn't find a tall, dark and handsome man (wasn't looking) but did find beautiful art.

My return to the Land Down Under was just in time to catch the end of year

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university art schools' graduate shows and I was ready to address their efforts with a new insight. The result had me changing my tune. I now chant "where will all the artists come from?"

Contemporary artists in Italy are surrounded by ancient art that involves ideal proportions of the figure and integrated decoration on architecture. This classicism seeps into the subconscious. It is the language of art and, like proper grammar, is employed when communicating via the visual medium, even in modern times. Italian art schools demand students spend hours of drawing, from life and art, to learn the visual voice that expresses their ideas.

Although Australia and the United States have a long history of Indigenous culture, we both count our Nations' Birthdays from the time of European settlement (US got the Pilgrims and Pioneers about a century before Australia got the Prisoners). As our nations grew with the arrival of new migrants, we based our respective "cultures" on an amalgamation of various foreign heritages. What both our relatively "new" nations lack is a long, singular line of artistic tradition, one that can be documented back to antiquity. And that could be the problem with my (and perhaps your) town's art today.

When in Rome I did what Romans do; visited commercial galleries and conversed with practicing artists in their studios. The language barrier was breached by the well-made art works. Some artists were sculptors, others painters, some works were abstract, others figurative, some innovative, others traditional, all revealed respect for the subject, medium and viewer.

When I came home I set out, refreshed and ready, to meet the local art scene head on and appreciate it anew. After attending a few exhibitions I realized what was wrong. It seems the lack of "classical" tradition has penalized the descendants of this penal colony as waves of migrants, in an effort to fit into a new culture, divested themselves of their past heritage, condemning our cultural future to hard labour.

I would venture to say the same for the US as various waves of immigrants sought new lives there.

As a result, there is no definitive reference for our current art students, no benchmark to refer to as they try to advance artistically. The problem of lacking a "past perfect" as a measuring device is exacerbated by a generation of art teachers who were nurtured in the "conceptual" art movement. They may be able to think and talk and write about art very well but they can't paint a picture or draw a conclusion on what constitutes a work of good art.

When it comes to figure drawing, art students today are not taught there is a skeletal framework that supports a network of muscles which will constrict or stretch accordingly in different poses. Students rarely draw from life models or cadavers, more's the pity! When set a still life subject, emphasis is put on expressing how one feels about, or relates to, the object rather than how to re-present it in paint, pencil, clay or stone. They can not translate what they see into a work of art because basic colour theory and design principles have been superseded by technology. I've had more than one student justify poor drawing skills as "expressive" or a splotch of vomit green as reference to his distaste for the subject, a plate of avocados.

If we transfer this modern approach to visual arts to contemporary writing, then I should be allowed to type this commentary with my fingers on the wrong keys, because sometimes that's just how I feel about contemporary art. If I were permitted to do so, you wouldn't understand what I have to say, just like I can't comprehend what these modern art graduates are trying to tell the world. Sometimes I think they're saying; *O s, sm styody O jsbr s [orvr pg [s[rt yjsy dsud dp.* (See *below.)

Take me back to Ancient Rome. They had running water and some really good contemporary art in those days.

*(I am an artist, I have a piece of paper that says so.)

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