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Announcing the grand opening of the

Gallery of Canadian Drawing Masters

on Canada Day, July 1, 2003

a Canadian first, online educational
gallery of masters of the fine art of drawing
join the celebration at www.drawingsociety.com

Worth Waiting For

Well, it's been nearly eight months since the last issue of *Bottega*, but we decided to postpone the current issue until the great news of our online gallery was ready. It has taken us many months and the hard work of our webmaster Doug Jordan, to create this exciting new adventure for the Drawing Society of Canada, but it was **worth waiting for**. The gallery offers you primarily **educational services** such as: all about the gallery of Canadian drawing masters, who these Canadian drawing masters are, all about the artists, a selection of fine art images of great drawings, and about the Drawing Society of Canada.

About the gallery of Canadian drawing masters

This gallery began in 1998, as part of an arts and education vision of Canadian artists and drawing society founders Gerrit Verstraete and Peter Leclerc. It took five years to develop a framework within which the society undertook to discover who these drawing masters really are. Our discoveries remain an ongoing research program and the society is deeply grateful for the men and women who have helped us along the way.

Therefore, the *Drawing Society of Canada* is pleased to announce a Canadian first, namely, an online gallery of drawings created by Canada's drawing masters.

We sincerely hope you will enjoy viewing these works of art, as we continue to impress upon all Canadians, and those who visit the gallery from beyond our borders, that Canada indeed has a valuable and diverse heritage of fine art drawing.

The *Drawing Society of Canada* would like to make it clear that our online gallery is not a retail gallery, nor do we represent any of the artists whose works are exhibited. That we leave to the artists, their agents and galleries. We acknowledge that in many ways, this gallery will always be "incomplete" because our aim is to discover more drawing masters and no doubt there remain many to be discovered. As we work diligently to ensure that in whatever way we feature our artists, especially in their biographical notes, their material is accurate and complete, the amount and availability of material will vary. Bear with us, we're doing our best. The *Gallery of Canadian Drawing Masters* is an educational initiative of the *Drawing Society of Canada* and each artist in the gallery has given permission to show his or her work and publish their respective brief biographies. All rights reserved.

Welcome to our new Honourary Member

The *Drawing Society of Canada* is pleased to introduce our newest honorary member, **Michael Thompson**. He was born in Montreal in 1954. Drawing has always been a significant component of Michael Thompson's work and is crucially important to understanding both his process and creative intentions. He resides in Oakville, Ontario. A bio summary and more about Michael Thompson, will appear in our next *Bottega*.

"Pygmalion, Galatia and Carla" - by Gerrit Verstraete

from his series of writings titled "Essays" about the artist's journey

Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824 - 1904) was an academician of the French school who worked in a laborious technique that translated into very high prices. He, along with other academicians, catered to the hundreds of thousands of visitors who attended the Salons. The average size of crowd that came to see Gérôme's work, and the work of others, in the 1880's was forty thousand. That audience thrived on escapism and historical fantasy as Gérôme painted with great skill and abundant imagination. One of his most celebrated works was completed sometime after 1880. It is titled, "Pygmalion and Galatia," named after the ancient Greek myth of a sculptor named Pygmalion, from the island of Crete, who carved a beautiful and life-size female form. He fell in love with the woman of his creative talent and was rewarded for his love when Aphrodite brought the statue to life. Perhaps Gérôme's painting was more than just a portrait of a somewhat erotic subject in a historic setting. Perhaps it is a glimpse into the soul of every artist, as he or she imparts life into his or her work. For the true artist, each work is a bit of life frozen on a page, on canvas, or in stone. For those who choose to admire the work, that life is transmitted somehow to the viewer's soul. Not that the process is anything mystical or even mysterious. Instead, it is a way of bringing life into someone's world through *art of the spirit*. It is simply the purity of enjoyment of good art expressed in a holiness of

beauty and a beauty of holiness, as each work is set apart from the daily struggles and victories of life. Works that contain such a life become ageless wonders as we gaze for hours into the story and technique of each masterpiece, wondering who the artist really was and what made his or her life any different than the one we now experience years, even centuries later. Who are these Pygmalion and Galatia? And who is Carla? She is a very dear friend. However, such abandonment to beauty in a work of art is not an exclusive domain of the viewer and collector. Such beauty to behold is the domain of the artist as well. Once I worked on a series of drawings based on a poem I had written titled, "a bird with broken wings."

I am reminded of Gérôme's painting. His Pygmalion is my Carla, the bird with broken wings in my poem, and the subject of joy in a friendship that nurtured a young woman through a terribly difficult time. When at last the victory of faith enabled her to fly again, she left to soar with the eagles. As I spent hours and days on each drawing, somehow I am touched by the life poured into each work and the fruit it bears, namely a measure of love that fuels true friendship. As she touched the hearts of both my wife and I, her love has brought the drawings to life.

Growth of "Questions and Answers"

We get letters and emails from students, budding artists, and those who are interested in specific details about the art of drawing. "**Questions & Answers**" continues to be an exciting area of the society's educational development as we do our best to answer each question we receive. Those questions and answers we consider of valuable use for years to come to artists and students, we publish on our society website at www.drawingsociety.com. Follow the links to "Ask a Master."

An exciting drawing exhibition: **"DRAWING THE WORLD"** Masters to hipsters

June 28 to September 21, 2003

The **Vancouver Art Gallery** is pleased to announce their unique exhibition about drawing. "Drawing the World," features five distinct exhibitions including:

Italian drawings from the National Gallery of Canada; **"Power and Desire,"** South Asian paintings from the San Diego Museum of Art; **"Where the river widens,"** drawings by Baker Lake artists; **"Nk'Mip Chronicles,"** drawings from the collection of Osoyoos Museum, and **"For the record,"** drawing contemporary life.

Vancouver Art Gallery, 750 Hornby Street, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6Z 2H7
24-hour info: 604-662-4719, Offices: 604-662-4700, www.vanartgallery.bc.ca

"The Art of Drawing," - by Richard Kenin (con't)

A history of drawing presented in a series of scholarly articles based on *out-of-print* books about the art of drawing, specifically from "The Art of Drawing," by Richard Kenin, 1974.

Gothic Draughtsmanship

We no longer attach a pejorative connotation to the word Gothic as did Renaissance aestheticians. Time has revealed the Gothic world of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as a milieu of romance, courtesy, and idealistic chivalry. The traditional view is that Gothic art emerged under the patronage of Abbot Suger at St. Denis between 1122 and 1151. Regardless of the accuracy of such a date, it is clear that by the year 1250, fully one hundred years after Suger, European art in a variety of media had been significantly transformed. A distinctive Gothic style had been born which lasted over two hundred years, and had enormous impact on the intellectual and spiritual life of the entire European community.

Gothic draughtsmanship began to develop in a fresh direction when it attempted to do what was more traditionally appropriate for sculpture, tapestry, or enamel. The Italians were the first people of the Mediterranean to abandon the Byzantine style and adopt instead the conventions of decorative naturalism popularized in transalpine Europe. Gradually a theory of representational art evolved which commanded the draughtsman to recreate the impact of immediate sense-perception. Gothic drawings began to integrate figures with architecture and landscape motifs. Emotive gestures were introduced and three-dimensionality began to make itself felt. Individuals were portrayed as if on stage, and a background was introduced to cut off the supernatural space which floated behind each figure. Modeling appeared

and turned images into personalities made up of definable and recognizable parts. By the fourteenth century figure studies were executed in a delicate grisaille chiaroscuro contrasting with washed lines of surrounding areas. Men turned to the task of self-examination as humanism challenged scholasticism and as the symbol was replaced by the picture.

At the end of the fourteenth century elegant drawings were produced which show a careful attention to naturalistic detail. This approach is now known as the International Gothic style. So popular did it become that the remnants of International Gothic influence are found in certain parts of Europe well into the sixteenth century. This influence can be readily seen in the otherwise disparate work of Rogier van der Weyden, Gerard David, Albrecht Dürer, and Hieronymus Bosch, men who bridged the gap between the styles of medieval and Renaissance Europe, and carried the Gothic vision well into the modern era.

In Italy, International Gothicism was evinced in the drawings of Pisanello and his followers, who combined a profound sense of imagination and color with elegant linearity and a rigorous analysis of forms. The result was true virtuoso draughtsmanship that created in the spectator a heightened sensitivity to artistic fantasy while at the same time drawing his attention to the virtues of realism.

An enlightened and sophisticated aristocracy, together with the increasing patronage and interest of the city bourgeoisie, helped set the stage for the last great period of Gothic art. Slowly both

draughtsmen and painters were becoming aware of the expanded horizons of their art. As modelling in drawings became stronger so too did the single line lose some of its expressive force. However, this had a positive connotation in a new world of vision based on an appreciation of antiquity. There was an awakening to nature which found expression, not in endless symbolic repetition, but in a systematic method of draughtsmanship based on direct observation. In many ways the drawings of the International Gothic style convey a new language to the viewer, and there is much in the draughtsmanship of the period that is reminiscent of the *dolce stil nuovo* of Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

Drawings, particularly in Italy, attained a more organic sense of construction. Now qualities of drama and emotion conveyed the fervor of religious experience more directly than the abstractions of earlier generations. New goals and intentions were proclaimed as artists achieved aesthetic autonomy. The draughtsman came to value the essential dignity of physical excellence and strength of character. The fourteenth century was the time of the proto-Renaissance which opened the way for a true classical revival in which drawing occupied a seminal and central artistic position. Man was discovering a new role for himself in the cosmos, and for the draughtsman great vistas began to unfold as the modern world of artistic expression came into being.

Previously published in Bottega:

1. **Introduction** - Volume two, number 1, February 2000
2. **The Ancient World** - Volume two, number 2, June 2000
3. **The Ancient World** (con't) - Volume two, number 3, November 2000
4. **Athenian Drawing and the decline of drawing** - Volume three, number 1, April 2001
5. **The Drawings of Pre-Colombian Peru** - Volume three, number 2, September 2001
6. **Romanesque and Gothic Draughtsmanship** - Volume four, number 1, May 2002
7. **Romanesque Draughtsmanship** - Number 9, October 2002
8. **Gothic Draughtsmanship** - Number 10, July 2003

In our next issue: Persian and Mughal Illustrations

Drawing Society activities update:

Monday Nite Studio Life Drawing - now in its third year, continues to be a welcome place for fellowship and serious drawing. Artists of all ages and with various drawing skill levels gather every Monday evening in the historic **Occidental Hotel** building in the "old quarter" of downtown Nanaimo, BC.

A super-thank you to Doug Jordan who has done such a magnificent job of designing and managing the website of the *Drawing Society of Canada* and the *Gallery of Canadian Drawing Masters*. And he is for hire for creative computer work. Contact him at dougjordan@telus.net

Regional Chapters

The society continues to look for interested artists to form regional chapters for the specific purpose of helping us discover Canada's drawing masters, both past and present, as well as help us "spread the word" about the society's web page and internet gallery of Canadian drawing masters. The society has an existing chapter in Western Canada, facilitated by Peter Leclerc. In addition we are looking for those who would like to facilitate a regional chapter in the Prairie region, Ontario, Quebec, and the Atlantic Region. Write or email us if you are interested.

How to become a member of the Drawing Society of Canada

We do need the support of members to help us fulfill the mandate of the society, with its principal aim, to preserve and promote the fine art of drawing. Especially during the early, formative years of the *Drawing Society of Canada* (est. 1998), it will require patience and endurance to find and define our niche in the forum of voices for the arts in Canada. Support and encouragement is deeply appreciated. Membership is a one-time fee of \$50, and you remain a member for life.

Bottega is published by the **Drawing Society of Canada / la société de dessin du Canada**, P.O.Box 24, Gabriola Island, British Columbia, Canada V0R 1X0

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Bottega will continue to encourage an environment that nurtures creative growth and artistic excellence in the proven methods of centuries ago.

Bottega is a forum where artists gather to discuss the issues of life and their relationship to the arts.

Honourary members:

David Owen Campbell
Ken Danby
Eric Freifeld
John Gould
Tom La Pierre

Peter Leclerc
Peter Mah
John Newman
Myfanwy Pavelic
David Silverberg

Michael Thompson
Gerrit Verstraete
Stephen Warren