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drawingsociety.com

It's here at last, our new and exciting international website, including our very own domain. The site features a discussion forum, a gallery of Canadian Drawing Masters (so far, only their bio summaries), a list of honorary members, as well all sorts of potential for new ideas to develop the site. Get in touch with our webmaster Doug Jordan and let him know you're out there in drawing land.

Welcome to our new Honorary Member: Myfanwy Pavelic

Her passion for drawing as well as painting, was deeply appreciated by Gerrit Verstraete, founder of the *Drawing Society of Canada*, when he visited Myfanwy Pavelic in her Sidney, BC, studio. "Myfanwy and her work," says Verstraete, "are both encouraging and an affirmation of drawing's unique and valuable role in all visual arts."

Myfanwy Pavelic was born in 1916, in Victoria, British Columbia. She is one of Canada's best-known portrait artists. Her drawings, collages and paintings, bring together, with keen perception, rhythm and sensitivity, the artist's love of music, art and literature, and of people, life and nature. As a child she traveled extensively and made galleries and museums high on her list of places to visit. In 1924 Myfanwy first met Emily Carr, who in 1931 was the first

to invite Myfanwy, at age fifteen, to submit work to an exhibition she was co-ordinating. The recognition shown by Emily Carr was important and from it stemmed a relationship that would carry on to Emily's death in 1945. The subjects depicted in Myfanwy's childhood work reflect her later interests, including her first self-portrait, a drawing completed at age eight. People, herself and others, were and are of prime interest to her. The decade from 1932 to 1942 was a period of much travel during which she furthered her formal education in music and art. She attended Miss Edgar and Miss Cramp's School in Montreal as a boarder. In the mid-thirties she traveled and painted in England, Wales, and Brittany, after which she in 1940 lived in Vancouver. Her time in Vancouver brought her personal recognition as she received a medal for her work from the Vancou-

ver Art Gallery. While in Vancouver she met pianist Jan Cherniavsky, painter Lawren Harris and art collectors and musician Gustav and Marie Schilder. The Second World War and Myfanwy's work for the Red Cross marked another step in her formative career as an artist. In 1942 she traveled across Canada to do portraits to raise money for the Red Cross war effort. The period also resulted in a resolve to work for a period away from the West Coast. That decision brought her to New York in 1943, and later again from 1956 to 1969, a beginning of her important creative work. In New York she lived in the Algonquin Hotel which became both home and studio. During this time painter Victor Tischler became a support for her as well as daily critique from Vittorio Borriello. After a few months in Victoria she returned to New York in 1947, to attend Malvina Hoffman's studio for further training. The New York works continued to foreshadow her later intimate portrayals of personal space. It was in New York that Myfanwy met and, in 1948, married Nikola Pavelic, a Doctor of Law who had come from Zagreb, Yugoslavia. His interest and support of her work have been strong and important to her. Myfanwy's life became full and produced many portraits. In 1950 she returned to Victoria for the birth of her daughter Tessa. Her first major exhibition at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria was held in 1953. Family needs necessitated a return to New York in 1956, where her painting and drawing never stopped. In 1969 she returned again to Victoria where she built her spacious new studio on Spencerwood, the family's Vancouver Island property since her father first bought the land in the 1920's. In 1975 she was accepted as a member of the Royal Canadian Academy and in 1984 she received an honorary Doctorate from the University of Victoria and was awarded the Order of Canada. Exhibitions of Myfanwy's work have graced the walls of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Art Gallery of Greater Vic-

toria, Roberts Gallery in Toronto, the Pandora's Box, Utley Gallery, Backroom Gallery, and Print Gallery all in Victoria, a touring exhibition to Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia, Provincial Archives of British Columbia, the Shaw Rimmington Gallery in Toronto, Burnaby Art Gallery, Kamloops Art Gallery, Horizon Art Gallery in Edmonton, Barbican Centre in London, England, and many more, as well as studio exhibitions, with additional commissions from Victoria College, Her Majesty The Queen, and The Right Honourable Pierre Elliot Trudeau. Her work is created in all media including pencil, charcoal, oil, acrylic and collage. An important and central part of Myfanwy's work was her 1984-1985 "Relationship Series," a carefully planned significant body of work portraying a special intimacy between artist and sitter. A further degree of complexity was explored in her later "Mirror" series. Myfanwy Pavelic is celebrated as the woman who painted the estate portrait of Pierre Trudeau, a large painting now hanging in the House of Commons. Other subjects of her great portraits include legends of the 20th century such as violinist Yehudi Menuhin (the painting hangs in Britain's National Portrait Gallery), actor Katherine Hepburn, pianist Glen Gould, Russian cellist Mstislav Rostropovich and Indian sitarist Ravi Shankar. Critics and friends laude her as an artist blessed with the canny gift to capture the spirit - the very life essence - of the people she draws and paints. Although she's "tinkered" at times with abstraction, her style is unapologetically representational, something that's not particularly fashionable in the 21st century. It's brought her occasional criticism, although her friend, artist Herbert Siebner, contends that on Vancouver island she's "the only true artist except for Emily Carr." Myfanwy Pavelic is a truly gifted artist and one who will continue to make a significant contribution to Canadian art as she further penetrates the inner and outer worlds.

American Artist magazine salutes the Drawing Society of Canada

The February 2002 issue of *American Artist Magazine*, introduced American readers and artists to the Drawing Society of Canada. The issue which contained articles about narrative painting, Chinese artists who have discovered freedom in America, and the portrait painter of former president Bill Clinton, also featured a special one-third page

article about the Drawing Society of Canada.

Kathleen Baxter, the magazine's Associate Editor wrote: "*The Drawing Society of Canada takes their declaration, ('so much of our art, in all cultures, relies fundamentally on the imagination and skill of drawing' - a*

quote from Richard Kenin), as its directive and, through its very existence, is the modern manifestation of drawing's continuing importance."

The magazine is distributed to over 300,000 artists throughout the United States, Canada and around the world.

Welcome to Coast Paper, our newest corporate sponsor

The Drawing Society of Canada is pleased to announce their newest corporate sponsor. They are Coast Paper, whose head offices are in Vancouver, with operating divisions in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina, Winnipeg, and Toronto. They are "The Paper Specialists," and make some of the finest drawing papers available.

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

A series of scholarly articles based on *out-of-print* books about the art of drawing.

Romanesque and Gothic Draughtsmanship

Art is valid only if it is dedicated to the glory of God, the majesty of His Church, and the power of Christendom. Such was the over-riding aesthetic of medieval thought, and in no medium was this more apparent than in the art of drawing.

The draughtsman's creative ability was primarily directed toward the maintenance of a continuous religious tradition. Greater importance was attached to a faithful reproduction of iconography than to the development of a personal style. That is not to say medieval artists were expressly forbidden to attempt all personal interpretation, but it was true that their canons of aesthetic judgment were both rigorous and explicit in their conceptual vision.

Medieval intellectual theory was at one with itself. The architect, painter, draughtsman, and sculptor understood and accepted the precepts found in the philosophy, literature, and science of the time. Indeed, all the art forms were interdependent, and consequently similar characteristics appear in the drawing, embroidery, enameling, and carving of a given location and period. In essence, medieval art expressed an abiding confidence in its interpretation of the universal scheme of things as cre-

ated by God and promulgated by His Church.

It could be said that the very universality of medieval art was so all-encompassing as to be encyclopedic. Man was shown as a whole being. He was a creature whose emotional visions and ecstasies carried him to God, but whose component parts were not subject to individual analysis, as they were in the Renaissance, because he was seen as a single, spiritually complete unit. The essential grandeur of man's relationship with God, as expressed artistically, never placed the human element in isolation. Instead, every man was surrounded by the mysteries, pleasures, and sorrows of his environment, and was directed to find his own particular place as assigned by divine ordinance.

In essence, the medieval artist was confronted with a continuing need to depict the interaction of transitory man with an eternal God. This relationship manifested itself artistically as a representation of "time operating in an envelope of timelessness". There was no straightforward chronology but rather a static continuum of "now and later" or "before and after".

It must be remembered that the preliminary drawing or sketch had a very insecure place in the aesthetics of medieval Europe. It was never valued as highly as in the Renaissance, and consequently few such items survive today. Medieval man valued the draughtsman's art only when a finished product was presented, and this was natural given the medieval penchant for synthesis rather than analysis; for wholes rather than parts of things.

The artist was submerged in the craftsman. Scholars were trained to regard any occupation which involved manual work as somewhat degrading and unfortunately all the representational and mechanical arts fell within this range. Catholic dogma reinforced this prejudice by emphasizing contemplation over action and thinking over performing. The artificer was not considered as worthy as the artifact he produced, and even the object had to fit prescribed purposes by revealing some aspect of the eternal world and the nature of God. Clearly this was not an environment conducive to the development of an individual genius which could assert itself openly. Certainly the most important surviving examples of medieval draughtsmanship are the line drawings executed by monastic

scriptoria. The art of drawing found its initial home in these rich foundations endowed by princes and nobles seeking a means of saving their immortal souls. The artist-monks conceived the drawing as a necessary part of hand-written manuscripts, Bibles, psalters, breviaries, and bestiaries used by the Church as instruments of its teachings. Through such work draughtsmanship gradually evolved new forms. Individual objects were treated according to rigidly patterned master-plans in which everything from architecture to drapery to faces was constructed within a formula whose details had already been outlined and composed. No copying from nature was necessary. Instead,

schematic exempla were used to portray life in terms of geometry and calligraphy rather than texture and plasticity. In other words, naturalism was spurned and everything was represented according to its inner non-visual properties, since proportions based on divine canons were considered more beautiful than anything created by the accidents of nature.

Medieval drawings, particularly those of Celtic origin, convey a kind of supernatural and magical distortion of reality. They evince a neo-platonic emphasis on the spiritual nature of form based on concepts rather than perceptions. Draughtsmanship had become a central art governed by the com-

position and distribution of forms based on preconceived thought. Symmetries and repetitions were so arranged that a music of symbolic structure is what emerged to the modern eye. The world portrayed by the medieval draughtsman was one without space in which even human figures are phantom-like, surface ornaments devoid both of plasticity and a profound exultation of the beauty of the body. These traits are evident not just in drawings, but also in painting, stained glass, enamels, metalworks, and tapestry; in short, in all those areas where two-dimensional representation was appropriate. (to be continued....)

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- 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

In our next issue: Romanesque and Gothic Draughtsmanship (con't)

Winter blues on white paper – by Gerrit Verstraete

The winter blues are also known as SAD, *Seasonal Adjustment Disorder*, not that I consider myself a victim of such a disorder. Needless to say, as darkness has been the order of the day for a number of months, I long for longer days with stronger sunshine. We live between the 49th and 50th parallel, where winter means rain, wet cold, wild Pacific storms and some snow. Fortunately the snow usually lasts for a day or so before the rains melt it all away. This winter, however, was an exception. A

major January snowfall crippled the island leaving us without electricity for twenty-six hours. A huge wind storm in December knocked power out for seventeen hours. March has been bitter cold and snowy. Combined with long hours of darkness, beginning at around four in the afternoon, West Coast weather is a real stretch of my emotions. Whenever the weatherman promises a day's reprieve I try to make the best of it by going for a long drive on Vancouver Island. Sometimes it's due North to

Campbell River, other times it's due West to Pacific Rim National Park. When I need to replenish art supplies, I head due South to Victoria. Every drive is an opportunity to think about the next drawing and creative ways to translate winter blues into works on white paper. White paper is the most challenging of all papers. It offers me the most virgin ground on which to build a drawing. Coloured paper often determines the look of a drawing before I even touch the paper with pencil or chalk.

In early February, I finished my first "Signature Drawing" of the New Year. The results were extremely satisfying. It's called "The Dancer" and comprises a large black and white graphite drawing of a ballet dancer. Her name is Naomi, the daughter of a good friend. The drawing took some forty-six hours of "real time," as John Gould calls it when you clock the time only for the duration of pencil on paper and not breaks, meals, and other interruptions. "The Dancer" allowed me to escape into the beauty of drawing during a cold and wet winter. Because Naomi is not a model I worked from original photographs which I took in my studio. My "antique" Pentax system still does the job even though my cameras and lenses are over forty years old.

"The Dancer" is also a major part of my answer to the events of September 2001, when terrorists blew up the World Trade Center in New York, killing nearly three thousand people with the collapse of both towers.

"The Dancer" offered me an escape into beauty as she is a picture of quiet discipline and a re-

laxed resolve despite some much needed rest. She remains true to the traditions of classical dance with legs and feet poised and ready to dance. She ponders her future, assured the roots of her classical past are good foundation stones for a modern life. Her drawing is a celebration of line and form and a tribute to the disciplines of classical drawing.

Both winter storms made it impossible for me to work in the studio as it was too cold. Once power resumed, my trusted dehumidifier kept moisture levels low. Sometimes I feel like I have nothing left to draw. Other days I feel as if I have at least four drawings ready on the runway of my mind waiting for takeoff.

Many times I travel to one place where budget is not a consideration and the sky's the limit. All that without ever leaving my studio. I travel to the deep recesses of the human spirit to discover emotions I barely knew I had, yet emotions that fly with wings of eagles to places of discovery on surfaces of white paper. I truly manage to "get lost" in a drawing as hours pass without notice and

spirit and soul find peace and joy while my body dutifully places pencil, chalk and brush on a piece of paper. Sometimes the rain taps a gentle rhythm on my studio's steel roof, but at other times the rain beats a steady drum. Sometimes the sun is so bright I am tempted to wear sunglasses in the studio, and other times it's a pale warmth that peers through two skylights. Sometimes I can draw peacefully for days. Many times I am interrupted. Regardless, whenever I book a flight to my studio or plan an excursion to Cathedral Forest, Englishman River Falls, Little Qualicum Falls, or Pacific Rim National Reserve, I know I will come back renewed and refreshed. Even the "coffeeshop people," small, quick thumbnail sketches, I began sketching two years ago have become my family-at-large, mostly drawn at *Tim Hortons* in Nanaimo or *Steamers* in Port Alberni. Sometimes I feel inspired to put flesh on those small bones and create more detailed portraits of my coffeeshop people. Somehow I manage to beat the winter blues with white paper as Spring appears outside my studio. (an edited selection from "Essays,")

Drawing Society activities update:

Monday Night Studio Life Drawing, which began in January 2001, continues to be a welcome place for fellowship and serious drawing. The group numbers over 40 people, who *"if they all attended at once, we would not be able to accommodate,"* says Peter Leclerc, fellow founder of the society. 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.

Introducing Doug Jordan, webmaster. Doug has been a major creative force behind creating our new website. The new site, **drawingsociety.com** (complete with our own domain), features a special "forum" where artists, educators, and those who love art, can register free of charge and participate in any art discussion they would like, especially about drawing. Interest in the forum has come from as far away as a highschool art teacher and his students at the *Tong Nam High School, Macau (Hong Kong)* China, as well as a group of artists known as the *Continental Art Centre*, in

the Netherlands. We still need to upgrade our small computer to a big one, to handle all the plans we have for the website.

John Gould nomination. In August of 2001, Gerrit Verstraete, on behalf of the *Drawing Society of Canada*, nominated society honorary member John Gould, for the 2002 Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts. According to the Canada Council for the Arts, *"this particular competition was extremely rigorous since the names of a considerable number of nationally and internationally highly respected artists were submitted."* Even though John Gould was not selected this time, his nomination will stand for the 2003 awards. Congratulations John for being well received by the selection committee for the awards. The Canada Council wrote, *"the selection committee recognizes the high quality of the work of John Gould and the importance of his contribution to the visual arts in Canada."*

The Drawing Center of New York is looking for artists who would like to participate in their Viewing Program, Slide Registry, *Selections* exhibitions and Drawing Room Projects. All interested artists must submit slides of their work to the

drawing centre's curatorial staff to participate in their selection process. For details please write: The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster Street, New York, NY 10013, USA.

Memorable Quotes

"Drawing is the precision of thought," – **Henri Matisse**

"My feelings about the place of drawing in my art are very similar to that of French nineteenth century Neo-Classical artist Ingres who called drawing 'the probity (the honesty and tested integrity) of art,' and to that of the twentieth century French Fauve painter Matisse who wrote: 'it is not possible to separate drawing from colour... and it precisely here that the artist's creative power and personality intervene'." – **Myfanwy Pavelic**, *Inner Explorations*, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1994.

"When you are learning to draw, it is most important to cultivate the habit of forcing everything you see into its simplest geometric form. Do this sort of thing continually. It enables you to feel a form in its entirety, disregarding details which are so loved by the beginner. Above all, it promotes the ability to think in mass, which must become an instinctive habit, the most important habit the student can acquire." – **Robert Beverly Hale**, *Drawing Lessons from the Great Masters*, Watson-Guption Publications, New York, 1989.

Regional Chapters

The society is looking 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 \$50. per year.

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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
Gerrit Verstraete
Stephen Warren