

Ed Stitt

My First Forty Years:
Paintings & Drawings



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cover:
Back Bay Skyline
1991
oil on linen
22x52"

Introduction

Karen L. Mulder

[A] tradition must be a living thing to which each generation of practitioners makes a contribution, otherwise it becomes an historic artifact preserved but ultimately no longer vital.

Art Historian Dorothy Abbott Thompson (1986)

Historians of American topics make note of one distinctively American trait: a tendency to revitalize old forms by synthesizing traditional and contemporary styles. Synthesis requires a seedbed of cultural support to take root. By the mid-twentieth century, realism had lost ground in the critical dialogue, colliding with an assertive if not absolutist stream of art criticism and practice that demanded independence from close observation and refined technique.

The Boston School painters, technically anchored to the seedbed of 19th-century French realism, attained distinction by combining strictly classical Beaux Arts standards with the lively palette and energetic brushwork of the Impressionist movement they absorbed in Paris firsthand, during the 1880s. By the mid-twentieth century, however, American realism had mostly lost ground to an assertive, if not absolutist, stream of art criticism and practice that pulled close observation and refined technique out of the picture by the roots. Critical respect for the exacting expectations of classical realism, which had been evaporating since the 1920s, entirely disappeared; elite commentators dismissed the life's work of several generations of pictorial realists as passé and *retardataire*. Confronting the prevailing tastes by chronicling the persistence of realism, art historians Mahonri Sharp Young and Dorothy Abbott Thompson identified Boston in particular as a stronghold for the legacy of realism well into the 1970s, thanks to Boston's stubbornly conservative aesthetic taste, in Young's *The Eight: The Realist Revolt in American Painting* (1973) and Thompson's *The Origins of Boston Expressionism* (1986).

Ed Stitt entered this contested fray in the early 1980s as an unapologetic realist hooked on streetscapes and urban parks. Providentially, he always managed to locate the last realist standing at pivotal moments in his development. During B.F.A. studies in the 1970s, Stitt managed to align himself with the two remaining stalwarts of realism at Kent State, professors Joe O'Sickey and Jack Beal—nationally respected painters who redefined realism after the 1960s.

In 1981, at a group show at Park Street Church, Stitt found himself mesmerized by a museum-quality portrait, and even more astounded that its creator, Paul Ingbretson, was only 32. Ingbretson, trained under a rigorous Beaux Arts regimen, generously agreed to help Stitt sharpen his figure drawing skills without requiring the usual five- to seven-year classical program, which permitted *plein air* painting only after students successively mastered cast drawings, sectional live studies, full figures, and finally, nude models.

Stitt's intensive figurative training under Ingbretson overlapped graduate studies at the Massachusetts College of Art, a stridently anti-realist milieu where Stitt, once again, located allies on the faculty. Paul Rahilly transmitted a method that Frank Reilly famously developed at the Art Students League of New York. Rahilly imposed a structuring armature over the drawn figure to exaggerate planes of light and shadow, but also used spontaneous strokes loaded with pigment to achieve what he called a 'believable illusion' of dimensionality—anathema to Ingbretson, who demanded accurately measured observations strictly from nature. George Nick's vertiginous, hot hued urban facades and Rahilly's fleshy, glowing nudes surely influenced Stitt's convex mirror streetscapes and Velasquez-like portrait finishes. Meanwhile, with Ingbretson's support, Stitt successfully applied for a coveted suite at Fenway Studios—a historic nexus for

realism since 1905, and one of the nation's oldest purpose-built artists' complexes. Its quaint clinker brick façade perches like a tiny Victorian asterisk over eight harried lanes of Mass Turnpike traffic. By the 1990s, teaching at Mass Art as well as the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Stitt often felt stretched between the rhetoric of his Fenway Studio colleagues, who derided "modern" art as "sloppy" and "worthless", and cohorts at Mass Art, who broadly discredited realism as irrelevant and expressively bankrupt. Still, he remained true to his own direction.

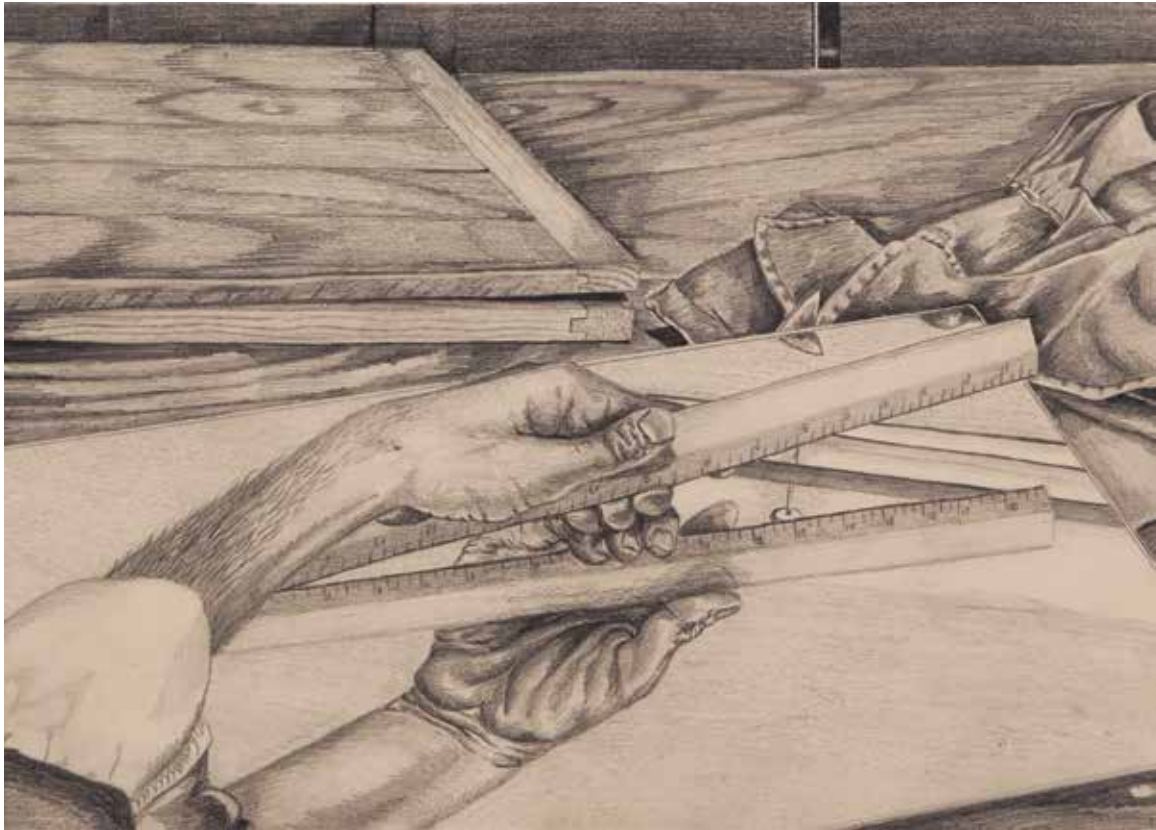
While Stitt is not a Boston School painter, and would never claim to be, significant Boston connections underscore his artistic development. Ingbreton was Ives Gammell's last student; Gammell, often erroneously labeled the 'last' American classical realist, trained a score of followers who promoted the highest technical standards in ateliers and organizations such as the American Society of Classical Realism (founded in 1989). William Paxton taught Gammell at Boston's Museum School; Paxton studied in Paris under the leading Academic painter of his day, Jean-León Gérôme, in league with other Americans there, like Edmund Tarbell and Frank Benson, who became The Boston School and painted at Fenway Studios. In essence, each generation owes a debt to a neoclassical lineage that includes Ingres, Gros, and David.

From Ingbreton, Stitt also adopted the classical "sight-size" technique, a method that virtually disappeared during the twilight of realism. This approach requires artists to position themselves so that their drawing corresponds as closely as possible to its three dimensional reality from a certain distance; it allows them to scan the canvas and subject simultaneously, and in so doing, to replicate accurate proportional relationships with a mahl stick or measuring guide. The process also relies heavily on the cultivation of accurate sight memory, which is as essential to Stitt's *plein air* practice as his easel. When Stitt revisits cityscapes or natural terrains, he tests himself against reality by reviewing his precise visual memorizations of shifting light, weather, or seasonal conditions. As he explains, "You never see shadows or light on the windows exactly as they are in my paintings, at the same time that the sky is *that* intense, or the pavement is *that* flattened by light. My paintings bring all those glorious moments together."

At No. 408 in the Fenway Studios, Stitt relentlessly pursues the challenge of "seeing" better and "painting for painting's sake," one of George Nick's mantras. The unpretentious vignettes Stitt compiled for this retrospective reveal his consistent drive simply to do the best work possible. As he describes it, his calling induces him "to take the mundane, catching it at that time of day when the light hits it in such a way that it creates, as Arthur Danto says, 'a transfiguration of the commonplace.' All of a sudden, what had been gray and boring is redeemed and transformed."

Stitt's straightforward, simple, sounding statements reveal the thoughts of a profoundly conscientious, meticulous, and informed artist, who continues to flex his skills in a synthesis of insight and stroke that can transform reality.

Art and Architectural Historian Karen L. Mulder, Ph.D., co-founded the Boston Artists' Fellowship, which met at Fenway Studios in 1981 and around the city until the early 1990s. She has lectured internationally on the arts, conducted research as Yale University's Menil Scholar of Visual Arts, and taught at William and Mary, the Corcoran College of Art and Design, and Vancouver's Regent College. She writes for "American Arts Quarterly", "Image, Material Religion", stained glass magazines, and visual culture journals.



Hand and Mirror 1974-75 graphite on paper 11x16"

Hand and Mirror

I was born in 1957, a true baby boomer. When I was about 9, my cousin Mark got rid of all his comic books by giving them to me. Why were they so fascinating to me? While most boys liked to just LOOK at the pictures, I liked COPYing and DRAWing superheroes and their MUSCLES. When most kids stopped drawing, I was still trying to perfect Daredevil. I subscribed to my favorite comics, mainly because of the artists who were drawing them (Gene Colan, Neal Adams, and Neal Steranko). Comic book art influenced my artwork and aesthetic for years; in fact, it probably still does.

Also, at Greenville High School in western Pennsylvania where I grew up, wrestling was held in high esteem. I chose to wrestle – probably because I was better at it than basketball, but also because of the glory and notoriety. Our uniforms, and the muscles we developed, were similar to those of the superheroes I liked to draw.

I eventually found other sources of artistic interest besides comic books. I developed an interest in fantastical work, like the work on Yes album covers and that of the Dutch printmaker M. C. Escher. After honing his printmaking skills to a very fine degree, Escher dedicated his life to making images using mathematics and geometry, making artwork out of repeating patterns, and using reflections to create and suggest other worlds. This is a high school attempt to do something similar... notice the numbers on the ruler(s).



"1st" Self-Portrait 1978 oil on canvas 30x24"

“1st” Self-Portrait

I knew I liked art and science and thought I might join the two by becoming a medical illustrator. But I was recruited, and given scholarship money, to wrestle at Kent State University, where there was no medical illustrating degree... I would have to take courses that I thought would help me develop the skills needed to succeed in that field. Unfortunately, most art classes were closed to incoming freshmen, so my first two quarters were spent fulfilling required credits such as freshman English. I didn't do very well my first year at Kent State.

Perhaps I should recount here that I had my “conversion experience” at Kent State, which influences much of this show. To be brief, in October of 1975 I asked God to come into my life and take over, since I'd been making such a mess of it. I had been drinking, drugging, and girling with no limits...a freshman wrestler cut loose from the restrictions of home...and found that this lifestyle, and these pursuits, left me unfulfilled. “Vanity, vanity, all is vanity,” Ecclesiastes says. After my first and then a second roommate left school, I was left alone in my dorm room. I heard my own echo as I moved about it and felt very lonely. I realized my dorm room was like my life... it looked OK from the outside, but inside, it was empty. I began to ponder what was really important in life. And I wondered about God.

I knew about God; I'd talked with Him regularly as I grew up, especially during wrestling season when I needed courage to go out on the mat by myself. He'd been a wonderful anchor and help when I needed Him. But I'd so often forgotten about God and turned to my own pleasures when I didn't feel the need for Him. Now, at this low, questioning point, I felt it was time to make a choice. Either follow God, who'd been good to me, or reject Him and continue on my own, making these same stupid choices. I felt that I would be a hypocrite and taking advantage of His good graces if I turned to Him only as a temporary fix and then fell back into the selfish lifestyle when I wasn't feeling so bad. I decided, rationally and on my own, that life without God was empty, so I got on my knees and asked Him to come in and take over... you know, “Jesus, take the wheel...”

It would have been nice to have heard an angelic chorus or have a heavenly light shine on me at that point, but as Jesus said, no miracle would be given this generation – other than Moses and the prophets. So I turned to a familiar passage in the Bible that said if God was for us, who could be against us? If He were willing to sacrifice His own son for us, would He not give us all things along with Him? That nothing could separate us from the love of God; neither height, nor depth, nor angels, nor demons, nor principalities, nor anything else in all creation. I decided to trust what this Bible said, what it said that God said, and moved on, with this new spirit in my heart. I was curiously uncomfortable engaging in my previous behaviors after that. Which I'll take as a miracle in itself.

My initial sophomore year attempts at painting were pathetic. My first painting class at college was taught by a graduate student who wasn't a painter, but who needed the job. He taught very little, so I bumbled along on my own. At one point he brought in a friend, Chuck Basham, who could paint figuratively very well. My teacher asked Chuck to take a look at my work to see if he could help me. He could.

Chuck did a demonstration on a painting of mine where my shadows on a yellow brick wall looked like mud. Chuck used crazy colors (alizarin crimson, ultramarine blue, and yellow ochre) to paint those same shadows and in a short time my “mud on the wall” looked like shadows on a brightly lit wall! I was stunned. I didn't learn to paint that day, but I knew that Chuck knew something I didn't, and I was very curious to learn what he knew.

One of Chuck Basham's teachers was Joseph B. (Joe) O'Sickey. Here you can see the many colors that Joe O'Sickey taught, the high contrasts and the use of different colors in the lights than in the darks. I call this “1st” *Self Portrait* not because it was my first, but rather because it's the first oil painting I was proud of, that I thought successful. I painted it over the summer of 1978 in a basement under an incandescent light in terrible painting conditions. Nevertheless, I emerged from that basement with a new enjoyment for this challenging medium.



Early Figure Painting 1979 oil on canvas 13x11"

Early Figure Painting

Joe O'Sickey may not have been the best at verbalizing how to paint better, but he could demonstrate it very well; he was an excellent painter. I recall his doing a demonstration once. He was angry that no one was approaching the painting correctly and indignantly said, "None of you has ever seen a painter paint before. Put a sign on me, 'Painter'"... and then he painted for about 20 minutes as we watched. He demonstrated how colors affected colors beside and around each other, and how a painter adjusts them as he proceeds, and how he could make a metallic object glow by manipulating the colors, values, and intensities of the juxtaposed color shapes around it. I began to try to adopt his methods and began to see success. I felt high praise when Joe walked around the room railing at all the terrible figure paintings, then came to THIS one, the one here in this show, and grunted, "Well, this isn't bad..."



Kent River Scene 1980 oil on canvas 30x48"

Kent River Scene

Joe, a student, and another teacher suggested I look at Claude Monet's work to see how he painted his shadows. So I traveled to the Cleveland Museum of Art on a school bus trip to see its lovely collection of Monet paintings in person. I noticed Monet didn't use black or brown to make his shadows as I was doing... rather, to my surprise, he used *entirely different* colors in the correct value to suggest light and shadow. This was a revelation... that shadows were full of as much color as light, and that the shadows should be painted with entirely different colors than the light. That shadows on a yellow brick wall weren't made up of yellow plus brown (which I can attest looks like mud) but was surprisingly purple and blue instead. This was what Chuck Basham was trying to show me my freshman year.

Before I left Kent for home and an uncertain future, my good friend and good artist David Bair and I trucked some large canvases to the park along the Cuyahoga River that ran through Kent.

Painting this took a number of afternoons, probably because it was so large. But here you'll see a fascination with the different colors used to describe the same path when illuminated by light as opposed to when strafed by shadows. There's a little Monet in that, isn't there?



East Side Dairy, Day 1980 oil on canvas 16x20" Collection of Jack Kalchthaler



East Side Dairy, Night 1980 oil on canvas 16x20" Collection of Jack Kalchthaler

East Side Dairy, Day / East Side Dairy, Night

After graduation, having worked drawing portraits at Geauga Lake amusement park for the summer season, I had to continue paying my bills as autumn approached. I had no art job or prospects. So I lowered my head and returned home, where my parents graciously took me in and allowed me to stay as I thought out my next step. There were no art jobs in Pittsburgh or Cleveland for a young student with a BFA who could paint well... the jobs were all advertising jobs for department stores, requiring skills I had not acquired as I chased Claude Monet's shadows. While in Greenville, I continued to do what I could do, which was paint and do occasional free lance work for people, and I applied my skills to painting the convenience store across the street from my house, which I remembered from as far back as I could. It is no longer a store, and my family no longer owns that lovely old house. But here again I was chasing Monet, painting the same haystack, er, storefront, at different times of day, er, night.



Roger 1981 oil on canvas 19x14"

Roger

While in Greenville, I began to work as a Sunday school teacher and youth worker in my family's church. Since art wasn't paying the bills, and I was oppressed by a guilt trip about having to serve God rather than make art, I decided to try to get into Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Hamilton, Massachusetts. Gordon-Conwell was where some of the clergy who'd been good influences in my life had trained, so I wanted to go to the same place. I figured God must want me to be a missionary, but when a friend asked if I'd ever worked with people unlike myself – white, suburban, middle class - I had to admit that I had not. Thus began my adventure into the big city of Boston to see what people unlike myself were like. January of 1981 was one of the coldest on record, and I had traded dorm rooms with some seminarians to live in the city of Boston and volunteer time at the Kingston House, which was a shelter/soup kitchen. Roger Dufresne was a regular there, and we became friends. He agreed to sit for me, and I became "Eddie, my artist friend" to him. This took about a month to paint in the dining hall where food was served daily to people that needed it. People would look over my shoulder and make comments, or tell me about their relatives who liked to paint. I became a subject of conversation among the many attendees there.



Boston Public Gardens 1981 oil on linen 24x30" Collection of Donald and Barbara Stitt

Boston Public Gardens

I painted the Public Garden because I wasn't used to seeing such beautiful, landscaped parks in urban settings.

Unlike that bitterly cold winter, the summer of 1981 was lovely. People in Boston love to complain about the weather, but I grew up east of Cleveland and Lake Erie. My hometown of Greenville got its name because it was always raining and overcast, and therefore the plants were always green... Greenville got three or four sunny days a month. Boston had three or four sunny days a week! Glorious sunshine on fascinating old architecture! I wasn't used to that. I celebrated the beauty of this new city. I chose to paint the Public Garden, a very popular, picturesque landscape. The logistics were a pain – parking and tickets cost me until it hurt. I was a country bumpkin... I had no idea what “No Standing” meant, so, since the spot was empty, I parked my car there. A fifty-dollar ticket rewarded my ignorance and was difficult on a poor seminarian who was doing a painting in a bustling city. But no one cares about the tickets it cost when they are looking at a painting... so I struggled through the issues and painted every beautiful afternoon that I could.



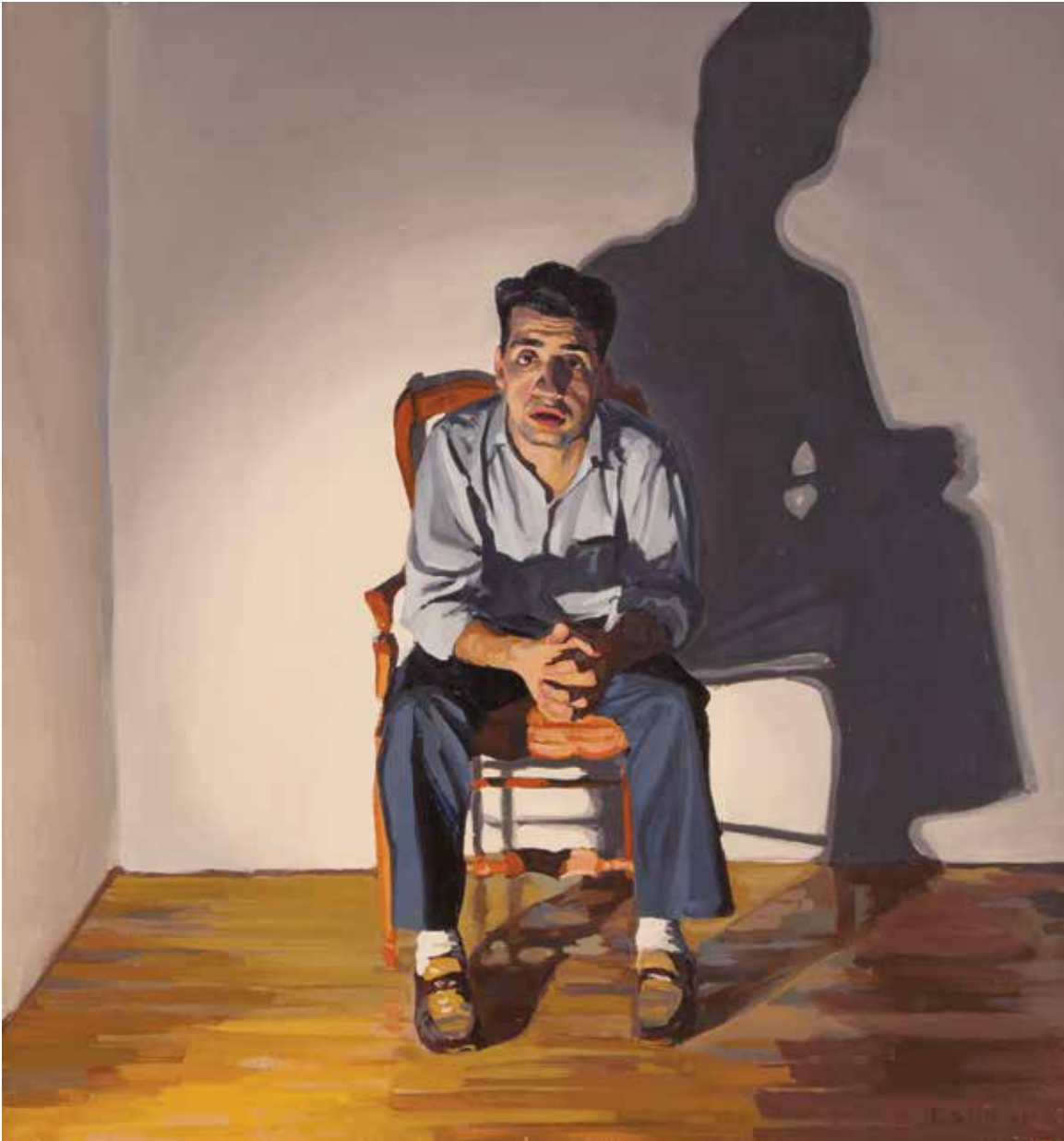
East Concord Living Room 1982 oil on canvas 14x18" Private Collection

East Concord Living Room

This is the interior of the two bedroom apartment I lived in with four other seminary students on East Concord Street in the South End of Boston.

We were taking an urban studies course that met every Monday night and other courses that traveling Gordon-Conwell professors taught at the Emmanuel Gospel Center throughout the week. Most of our time was spent reading and studying. I made an effort to paint once a week, for about three hours at a time if I could. My roommates put up with each other and me as best we could. Every Monday night we had a “Gripes and Complaints” session after dinner which, after many heated arguments over who was cooking and why people didn’t pick up after themselves, inevitably degenerated into comedic stories and howling sessions that our upstairs neighbors wondered about. We ended up becoming terrific friends, joining each other for weddings and important events over the years to come, and we still keep in touch.

This was the apartment I was living in when I decided to be a painter. A number of experiences were coming to a head which revealed that I needed to make a deliberate, conscious choice about what I wanted to do with my years to come. The seminary’s urban course, led by Doug and Judy Hall, forced me to look at my gifts and consider deeply where they would best be used. The Presbytery whose care I was under noticed that I seemed more excited about the paintings I was doing than the ministries I was involved in and asked me to examine my calling into the ministry. As I prayed, and thought, and considered these things, I eventually accepted the fact that what I loved to do was draw and paint, not work with people. I guess I realized that I was doing no one a favor, least of all God, by going into ministry if I didn’t enjoy working with people. And what would God want me to do with these artistic skills? Bury them? Or use them? So I made my decision in 1981-82 and summed it up with the statement I’ve been saying ever since, that I felt perhaps God could use a happy painter better than an unhappy minister or missionary.



Ed.N. 1983 oil on canvas 28x26" Private Collection

Ed N.

During winter months I couldn't paint outside so I decided to do portraits of friends who were willing to sit for me.

Fort Point Channel was an area full of old wool warehouses that the Boston Wharf Company owned and that artists were moving into because of the cheap rent. Artists were not allowed to live there, but were allowed to work there. Peter Barnes, an artist and organizer, interviewed and galvanized a group of artists, of whom I eventually became one, to sand the floors and paint the walls of the first floor of 63 Melcher Street, right across from the Hav-A-Bite Restaurant. This was my own little place to paint. This was where I could have my models and still lives sit to be painted.

A friend from church, Eddie, always had this unsure face – which reminded me of myself... how I often feel. I guess I wanted to paint him to say something about myself. I asked him to sit for me, and I would do a portrait of him, for him, in return for his time. He agreed, and we set to work. The lighting wasn't planned... I just tried various angles and this one, with the light on the floor in front of him, seemed to accentuate the feeling I was after for the portrait. We did this over the winter months; once a week I'd pick him up, we'd take the subway to my studio and spend the late afternoon together... sometimes having dinner over at the Golden Gate restaurant in Chinatown.

I showed this painting at Boston City Hall in a show this same year. It didn't sell, so it ended up at my studio for the next 31 years until someone bought it. But someone did see it there. That someone was Arthur Dion, who represented me at Gallery NAGA from 1984 to 2011, when Meg White, his cohort since 1999, took over the gallery's operations, including my work. Here's what he wrote when he saw an image of this painting recently;

I'm delighted to learn you're still in touch with Eddie.

Here's the way I remember our first meeting. You walked into the gallery and introduced yourself, planning to present images and to seek response to your work. I said, "You're Ed Stitt? Didn't you paint that picture of a guy sitting in a shadowy corner I saw at City Hall? It was the only interesting painting in the show."

You were floored. I recognized your name. I had already seen your work in person. I remembered it. I liked it. I was happy to meet you. Strategy was unnecessary. In a few seconds we had skipped way ahead to "Yes, let's see what we want to do together here."

For thirty-three years I've delighted in your ability to make alluring objects out of paint and I've connected with the tender and glorious values your work espouses. This painting leveraged all of that.



Pittsburgh Street 1983 oil on canvas 30x42" Collection of the Cabot Corporation

Pittsburgh Street

This was a great corridor to paint in the Fort Point area... the sun revealed drastic differences in color on the bricks.

I got cold standing on this street lined by warehouses, and the wind picked up fiercely throughout the fall. The Boston Wharf workers stopped by now and then to look over my shoulder. One said, (in a gruff, quick, hard-to-distinguish voice), "You ain't paintin' that red chitbox down there, are ya? Huh?" Eventually I figured out he was pointing to the red pickup truck at the end of the street, and was making fun of his coworker's truck at the same time. Slow on the uptake, I played it off as best I could. I've never been good at making quick, funny comebacks while half frozen and painting; left brain/right brain thing, I guess.



#8: *A Thinker* 1984 oil on canvas 36x46"

#8: A Thinker

In 1980, while I was deciding what to do with my life after college, I picked up the book *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, which was about choosing a career. One of the exercises it recommended was to answer the question, "Who am I?" ten times, to try to determine who you were and what you might be happiest doing with your most productive hours.

I've lost that list, but I did two paintings of my answers, both of which are in this show. I think I started at the bottom of the list because I didn't feel up to the challenge of doing the big important ones first. For *#8: A Thinker* I chose to wrap myself in a toga-like garment and ponder all the things in life around me. (I made a collage from magazines and newspapers of images prominent in the news at the time.) The figure/pattern interplay was inspired by Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele, two Austrian artists from the last century that I was very interested in at this point. If you look closely, you'll find Martin Luther King Jr. and Sylvester Stallone among the many other wobbly images, all of which make a pattern intermingling with my figure.



Bobby O's 1984 oil on canvas 30x50" Private Collection

Bobby O's

The architecture and the street of Bobby O's sandwich shop grabbed my attention during the summer mornings of 1984. Little did I know what I was painting.

This was a large canvas to walk down the street and to set up and paint. It took most of the summer to complete. I did it standing on the sidewalk, beside a laundromat, across from a Lebanese men's club, where I assumed the men gathered to play cards. Shawmut Avenue, where a number of Middle Eastern people lived years before, was now becoming gentrified, so there weren't as many around. Now and then one of the men from the club would come over to see what I was painting, talk, ask about me and what I was planning on doing with the painting... typical questions. Apparently I checked out fine because they would offer to buy me a coffee or tell me to bring it by when I was done. I noticed the large Cadillac was parked nearby most mornings, so I included it. A very large man, seated inside the door, seemed to be the owner of the Caddy. A couple months later I read that there had been a large drug bust right on that corner and that a few people had been arrested. I read that there were federal agents with binoculars and telescopes in the Greek church tower observing the men not a block away from where I was standing. So apparently some of the regulars from the area, perhaps whom I'd dealt with, were engaged in illegal activity and had been coming over to see if I might be a federal agent. Little did I know.



Dover Station 1984 oil on canvas 36x44" Collection of Ted Fallon

Dover Station

This beautiful old Orange Line station had won architectural prizes in its day.

An MBTA stop, it was the first station on the Orange Line that I walked out of in 1980 when I went to the Emmanuel Gospel Center to interview for an internship position. It was a magnificent structure that was in need of a bit of repair. Inside there were 2x4s holding up the ceiling in certain places. I noticed that some other prominent Boston artists (George Nick and David Moore) had done paintings of it, and I wanted to try my hand at it, too. This was a large canvas, and it took some physical effort to lug it down to Berkeley Street. When the wind picked up, it acted like a sail and pushed me back or forward with the wind... sometimes I had to redirect the edge of the canvas into the wind and just stand there and wait. Berkeley Street used to be Dover Street, but more than one person told me that its name changed because it had a bad reputation. This painting took an entire summer of sunny afternoons to paint.

Some interesting things happened while I worked on this painting. Once, a street person walked by with a plate of food he'd just gotten from Pine Street Inn, a homeless shelter. When he turned to look at this painting he stopped, stared, and dropped his plate of scalloped potatoes right there. I think that was a compliment. I also saw someone sprint out of the entrance near me and run past me, almost knocking my painting over. Soon I noticed screaming and a woman in high heels pointing after him, yelling, "Stop that thief!" This left me in an awkward position; if I pursued the thief, what would happen to my painting and all my art supplies? But a gas station attendant ran after the kid who eventually tossed the purse away and kept running. The woman got her purse back. All in all, I got quite an education about urban landscape painting that summer. Interestingly enough, this all happened in the now fashionable SoWa area of town.



My Garbage Can 1985 oil on canvas 18x14"

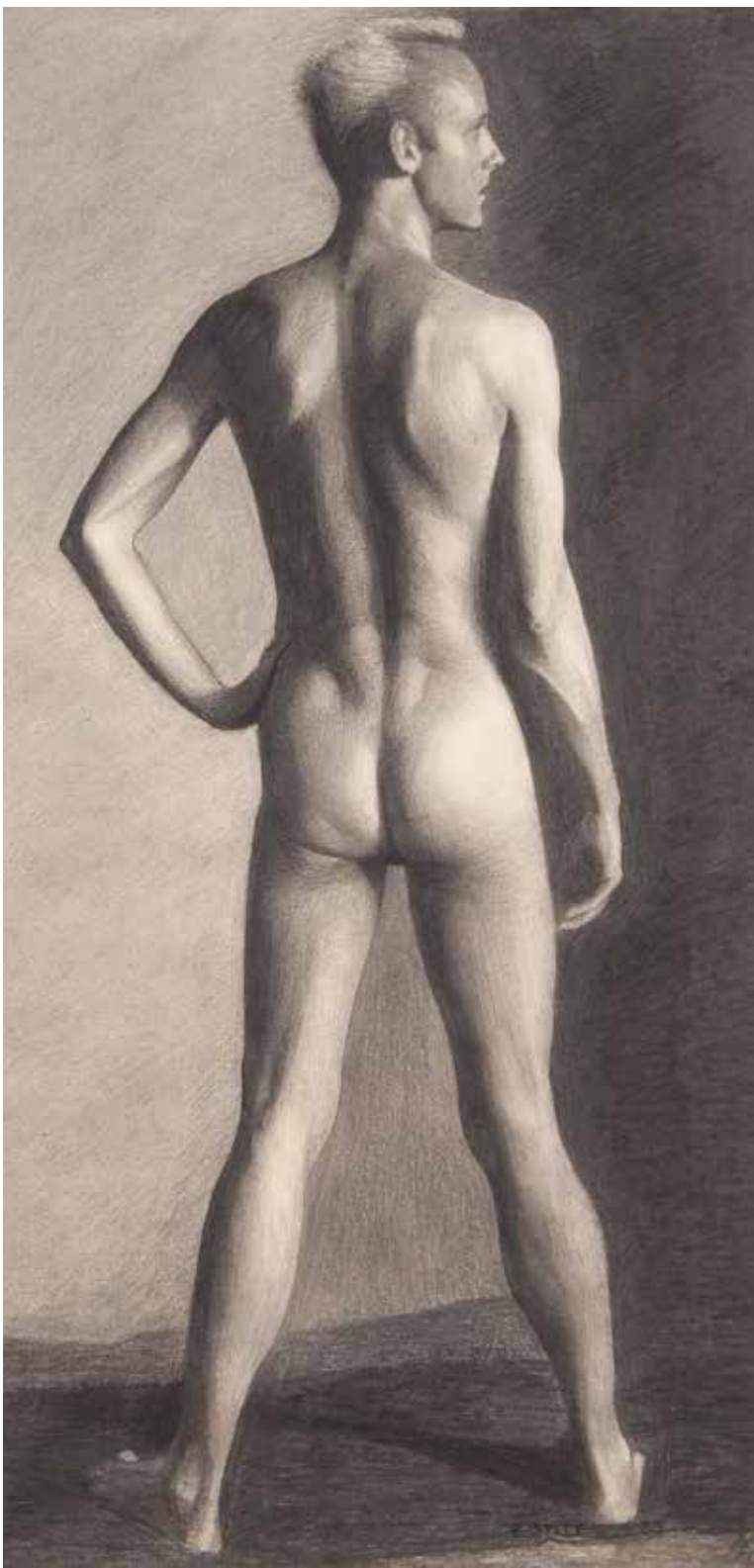
My Garbage Can

In graduate school, Paul Rahilly and George Nick recommended I do a few palette knife paintings (among other things) to improve my approach.

In the spring of 1985 I made a less than full-hearted attempt to get into the Massachusetts College of Art's master of fine arts program. After all, I was showing at a Newbury Street gallery, Gallery NAGA, and they should know about me and want me to enter, right? So I tucked a few small paintings under my arm and showed up at the interview where George Nick and Barbara Grad asked where the big, ambitious landscapes were? I (arrogantly, in hindsight) proposed that they were too much trouble to bring and that they could see my skill from the small paintings I brought in. For that, I was (appropriately) put on a waiting list. Moral of the story, always put your best foot forward. I've tried to do that with this show.

When good painter and friend Chawky Frenn, who had been accepted into Mass Art, opted to go to Temple's Tyler School of Art MFA program, I was offered the opportunity to get into Mass Art. I jumped at the chance. I chose Paul Rahilly as my mentor because of his beautiful figure paintings and his lovely way of handling paint. I'd seen his work first when his painting of a nude with a servant and a still life was the star of the show at a Boston Arts Festival where art had been put in tents along the Esplanade. (This was the show where a disgruntled city employee put one of my friend Barney Rubinstein's large paintings— poor Barney! — in the Charles River!) Paul and I became good friends during our time together, but I never quite got the knack of handling paint in his creative, painterly way. One of the first steps he suggested was to quit using so much medium and drawing with the brush so much... to PAINT with the paint instead of DRAW with the paint.

During one critique, George Nick argued with me that I didn't understand values at all... (I had maintained that I did...) so to punctuate the point he began to poke me in the stomach saying, "You're not mixing enough! You're afraid to put oranges in your blues and yellows in your purples, and you're not going toe to toe with what you're really seeing!" He had gone from poking to pushing with his fist to gently but forcibly punching as I tightened my stomach in response — not hard, but vigorously to get the point across. I realized he meant it. George maintains he can't remember ever doing that, but I can, and it made me try harder. After all, if George Nick cared enough to press home the point with me, I must have needed to hear it. So Paul and George (and Janet Monafo, Paul's wife) recommended I do palette knife paintings of simple objects. I did this garbage can in about 2 afternoons. To my surprise, one morning when I arrived at my studio, I noticed that the garbage can painting looked better against the wall than one of my more elaborate, more "sellable" cityscapes that I'd been showing... perhaps because it was more honest with what I saw. This observation was a step in the right direction toward improving my paintings.



Tom 1985 charcoal on paper 24x12"

Tom

This figure study was a high point of four years of private study with Paul Ingbretson.

Long before grad school, in 1981, I attended a conference on Christianity and the fine arts at Park Street Church. I noticed a lovely, old-looking, beautifully painted portrait of a person on the wall and wondered why no one could paint like that anymore. As I looked around the room, I discovered the person in the portrait sitting a couple rows behind me! I approached him, (It was Dr. Joe Viola, who ended up becoming my primary care physician for the next 20 years.), and he pointed out the person who had done the portrait. That was the painter Paul Ingbretson, and when I approached him and asked him if he could teach me to paint a portrait like that, he told me it would take some years to master the skills needed to do what he'd done there. I was interested. What he proposed was expensive, so I tried to paint a portrait (of myself) that accurately for a couple months. I failed.

After a year of trying, I made a deal with Paul to receive teaching at my studio and then go play basketball with him for a lower fee. He taught me how to do sight-size drawings (a classical training technique), keep a drawing fresh after countless hours of work, and ultimately how to draw really well.

1985-7 was a time of much learning from two very disparate sources of artistic knowledge - two Pauls: Paul Rahilly (and George Nick) at Mass Art and Paul Ingbretson at Fenway Studios, a glorious 1905 northern light studio building inhabited by many classically trained artists. Paul Ingbretson had me doing figure drawings like this one of Tom Chesley, and Paul Rahilly had me doing palette knife painting. People at Fenway Studios maintained that modern art was sloppy, foolish, and devoid of skill; and people from Mass Art maintained that the training I was taking was out of date, misguided, and devoid of creativity. Nevertheless, when I put this drawing up in my studio at Mass Art, I noticed students coming in to look at it. My prayer was that somehow I could make these two philosophically antagonistic approaches towards making art coalesce.



Rainy Day Studio 1986 oil on linen 20x28" Collection of Sharon Walkey

Rainy Day Studio

This is what my studio looked like at Mass Art. I shared it with Tom Dempsey, and Frances Hamilton was in the room next door.

Sunny days are always days I feel I need to work hard and diligently, because the sun races across the sky and shifts shadows, and I have a limited time to get my colors right. Cloudy and rainy days are more consistent with colors, and one can work on the same painting almost the whole day because the sky is like a large, white umbrella, lighting everything below it fairly evenly... the color one sees is all local color – that is, the color of the object itself, not so influenced by the color of the light hitting it. For some reason I feel I can relax and enjoy painting on rainy days... I don't feel as much pressure to perform and produce. This studio ensemble greeted me one morning upon entering my studio after a messy commute. It was so quiet and lovely, and I was the only one there... artists are notorious for sleeping in... but not me. So this became my cloudy day painting for a couple weeks, showing a still life I was working on at the side, a sunny day painting on the easel, and the garbage can I'd painted with a palette knife (page 22).



Faculty Men's Room Still Life 1987 oil on linen 22x26" Private Collection

Faculty Men's Room Still Life

I saw this ready-made still life whenever I used the faculty men's room.

I began using the faculty men's room after an awkward incident in the student bathroom on the second floor of my studio building. There were three stalls in the student bathroom. I would use the second one because the end one was for handicapped people. There was a hole, about an inch and a half in diameter, in the marble wall between my stall and the end one. Above that hole it said something to the effect of, "For a good time, meet me here Tuesdays after lunch." One day when I was using the middle stall, someone got in the end one, the one where the hole was. I noticed odd moving shadows on the floor and sounds next to me when I realized it was Tuesday after lunch! "Oh, Shit!" I exclaimed, and then noticed what looked like an EYE at the hole... I left as abruptly as I could, wanting no business with this, but noticed as I washed my hands at the basin that someone was peeking at me over the stall! I never used that bathroom again.

Mass Art was an old conglomeration of buildings, with many interesting rooms and architectural spaces. As a grad student, I was allowed to use the (cleaner) faculty men's rooms. In it I found this lovely tableaux of items above where we washed our hands. Could I make a painting shine as well as that Ajax can? It was so simple, so plebeian. Yet it shone so importantly above the sink. It was worth a try.



Boston Facade 1987 oil on linen 28x42" Collection of Jim Aloisi and Paul Rehme

Boston Facade

I noticed this contrast between magnificent architecture and human need in the Fenway.

I walked past the Tufts Dental School's Forsythe Center between grad school at Mass Art and the little apartment I shared with Zoe Dodds Stitt, who married me in 1986. Across the Fenway I'd noticed a little structure made out of sticks and blankets, probably built by a homeless person, where he/she could sleep at night. The contrast was dramatic. Boston is such a beautiful place to me because I grew up in a small town. Architecture there was functional and, for the most part, nondescript. Boston was and is full of architectural beauty and wealth, yet being here doesn't solve human problems, like poverty, mental illness, and homelessness. This was an attempt to say that. I posed for the photo on the Forsythe steps, and Zoe took the shot.



Honeymoon Portrait 1988 oil on linen 36x26" Collection of the Artist

Honeymoon Portrait

Although I painted this two years after we were married, it still felt like we were on our honeymoon.

Note the date on the calendar... we were married in 1986. The day we were married, Zoe and I moved into a little one bedroom apartment in the Fenway, where we lived for the next three years. That was a lovely, simple time... I got to enjoy the pleasure of being married to this beautiful woman and learn what it was like to coexist with a female I was intimately acquainted with, something I'd never done before. As I'd get out of the shower now and then I'd behold a lovely sight such as this; just Zoe, putting her contacts in, but looking absolutely gorgeous after her shower. When a painter, or artist, is confronted with something beautiful, he/she has no choice but to use their skills to try to communicate that beauty to the world. I've never shown this publicly until now.



Advance of the Condos 1988 oil on linen 34x42" Collection of Richard and Judith Wurtman

Advance of the Condos

Development began to appear overhead in the warehouses around our artist lofts.

Upon graduation from the Massachusetts College of Art in 1987 I returned to my studio at 63 Melcher Street in Fort Point Channel. The area had been changing when we began the studio there, and it continued to change as condominiums and businesses moved in. FPAC (Fort Point Artist's Community) artists had pointed out to me that often this happens; artists move into an area to create art because the rent in that area is cheap. As they work on making art, the area becomes known as an interesting, desirable place to be because of the art activity going on. Then, real estate developers begin to eye the buildings and develop them so they are more desirable for people who want to work or live in the artist area. After a while, the rent of the cheaper loft spaces start to go up and the artists who are barely making it have to move out to go to cheaper places. Our rent was slowly rising each year, too. But we could continue to make art as long as it was reasonable...



Studio Shelf 1988 oil on linen 18x34" Collection of Jack and Cindy Aber

Studio Shelf

This simple still life was surprisingly difficult to do, even though I could take as much time as I needed.

A studio is really a work place... it's not a living space. Around a painter's studio one will find the various mediums and items used to make paintings. I noticed how functional, yet calm this still life looked passing by it daily as I rushed outside on painting missions. I wondered, now that I could draw so well, and now that I understood values and color better, if I could actually paint this shelf accurately, and whether that would make it Art – something important and beautiful, revealing its inherent beauty, something MORE than what we ignore every day... or not.



Olmsted's Eye 1989 oil on linen 50x52" Collection of Devine, Millimet, & Branch

Olmsted's Eye

This is H. H. Richardson's bridge, leading to the Bowker Overpass, right down the street from my new studio in Fenway Studios.

I first entered Fenway Studios when I met Paul Ingbreton in his studio. I'd never seen a more beautiful artist's space in my life. He advised me to apply for a space at Fenway Studios as early as 1983. I told him I didn't know where I was going to be in a couple years, but he said, "Who knows? If you ARE in the area, you'd love to have a space in this building wouldn't you?" So I applied and fortunately was accepted, and put on the wait list. Thank you, Paul.

Paul was right... Fenway Studios is where an artist would want to end up if he/she had a choice. One can both live and work there, no fear of being caught squatting illegally as so many in Fort Point were risking. Each studio is almost two stories high with a bank of tall, eleven-foot high windows facing north for constant north light all day long; no shifting shadows from the sun occur in the prime space. There are southern facing windows in the back of the studio if one wants them, but they are in the living/storage/kitchen/bathroom area. When Zoe chose to go to medical school (very much because she knew her husband would never make much money from his chosen profession), I had been on the waiting list for close to six years. She was going to medical school at UMass Worcester, a 45-minute drive away, so we had to decide whether to stay in Boston and have her commute or move to Worcester. When I inquired about our status on Fenway Studio's waiting list, I found out we were next to get a studio, and one was going to be up for grabs in a year... which meant Zoe would have to commute... which meant she would have to learn how to drive. So I taught her how to drive, using the parking lot across from the Museum of Fine Arts. I wanted to share that story under the painting Red Light on the Turnpike, but I was unable to locate it. In that large painting I actually painted Zoe in our little Plymouth Colt driving on the turnpike out to UMass Medical School. But I digress...

Fenway Studios is near one of Frederick Law Olmsted's beautiful, landscaped parks in the Emerald Necklace, an area called the Fenway, where the Muddy River flows. This bridge was commissioned and created by his contemporary, H. H. Richardson, the same person who designed Trinity Church in Copley Square, one of the more beautiful structures in the area, if not the United States. I was struck by how its reflection looked so much like an eye.

As I painted it, it reminded me of a sundial... the shadows appeared daily at a certain time, but as the days grew into the fall and the sun shifted south, the shadows shifted and grazed the surface of the brownstone so the bridge wasn't lit so brightly. I had to capture the light where it looked best, and put the colors into those spots.

Years after doing this painting, a brick mason came to Fenway Studios to make a proposal for work needed to be done. He got there early and inspected the bridge because he had time on his hands. He told me that bridge is like a brick; it was built solid and would stand there for the next century or more. It continues to stand as solid as a rock as the light comes and goes, year in and year out.



Hemenway Street Scene 1990 oil on linen 24x46"

Hemenway Street Scene

This unusual painting was to show the plight of women who were caught in the drug and sex trade on my street.

There was a nearby street corner where we saw prostitutes talking with johns who would prowl by in their cars. I recall there would be three or four women hanging out near a pizza shop, chewing gum and just waiting there, with nowhere to go. Now and then a car would drive up and one of the women would walk up to it and talk with the driver. Sometimes they'd toss their gum onto the ground and get into the passenger side. There was gum all over the sidewalk. When the police would drive by the women would go into the pizza shop. One day Zoe came home from work and told me she had seen one of her former high school classmates on that corner. This classmate had trouble with drugs in high school, and here she was, seven or eight years later, on the street, paying for her habit. This was terribly sad for both of us. It was also gripping because recently the news had reported that a number of women, found dead on Route 24 outside of Fall River, had been connected to Fall River's red light district. So this life was no longer just about recreational drugs, it was now about sex traffic and possible death.

We suspected that some of the activity was going on in the building on the corner; the Hemenway Hotel. I chose to do a painting depicting the feeling of all this, with a nude figure made up of a composite of Zoe's body, my hands, and the head of a woman whose face I took out of a newspaper article about the Fall River red light area. I used the beautiful architecture of the hotel as a backdrop, with a dramatic October sky, and made the size of the canvas roughly the size of a driver side window, with the woman approaching. This was the scene on Hemenway Street.

A couple years later the pizza shop was burnt down. Apparently, the owner would kick the women out when they'd all come in because they weren't buying pizza, just escaping police. So the word was that the pizza place was burnt down in retaliation for not cooperating with the pimps' business.



#7: *A Painter* 1990 oil on linen 36x32" Private Collection

#7: A Painter

Remember the ten answers I'd given to the question "Who am I"? Number 7 was "I am a Painter."

It took so much courage to state this at the time. It felt, and still feels, presumptuous, because I'm saying I'm one of the group that contains titans like Rembrandt and Velázquez. Nevertheless, this is the gift that I was given, this is the talent that I chose to develop, and I needed to paint myself in this, my chosen profession. The harsh gaze is what most painters look like when concentrating, trying to be objective about what they are actually seeing. Now and then someone like Rembrandt will mug for the viewer, but most often there is that cold objectivity of Velázquez in *Las Meninas*, or the intent gaze of Raphael in *The School of Athens*, or again the cold objectivity of Sargent in his self-portraits. "One needs to be totally objective, harsh with one's self, to prevent affectation with color or drawing." (Sargent) This painting took a long time to make... I believe it took close to a year, and I believe I sanded off the face more than once to start over. Perhaps commissioned portraits or painting one's parents are harder, but self-portraits are quite demanding, too.



Zoe's Dresser 1990 oil on linen 48x48"

Zoe's Dresser

This was what I saw upon waking up in the morning in studio 205 at Fenway Studios, Zoe's dresser.

Zoe got this dresser when her family took it off the street (someone was throwing it away) when she was a girl growing up in the South End in the 1970s. The mirror was a great mirror (we still have it) with no distortion. While lying on our bed one day, I wondered what stories that dresser and mirror could tell. Then I realized, just like bumper stickers on cars, one could tell all kinds of things about the owner just from what was on it and around it. I decided to try to tell that story, about all that the dresser could tell about Zoe, and us, and our little studio in Fenway Studios.

Some people find things I didn't notice myself; in fact you may point something out we didn't notice. There are many things in this painting that suggest more than what is there. Like the fact that I have more shoes in the painting than Zoe. But as I tell people who notice this, that may be because she doesn't put her shoes away. In fact, her sister, Bindy, pointed out that a neat dresser wasn't what she remembered Zoe's dresser looking like. So everyone has their comments.



Down An Alley 1991 oil on linen 26x34" Collection of David Center and Patricia Rabbett

Down An Alley

I found this little nook behind my mother-in-law's building and was struck by the unique view it afforded.

I usually set up the easel so that I am facing my subject. But I couldn't here, because the canvas would be in the dark. I had to place the canvas behind me, so it would have light on it. I had to look at the alley, remember what it looked like, then turn around 180 degrees and render that on the canvas facing the other way. Also, there were people in apartments behind those windows beside me. I was afraid they would call the police about the person in their alley. But it was a public passage... I figured I had as much right as anyone to be there. Lastly, I remember some afternoons seeing people walk down the alley. It wasn't very populated, but I began to notice a woman and a young child walking down the alley at similar times in the afternoons. I believe the woman was looking for soda cans and bottles; this was part of her route, and the young child was along because there was no one else to watch her. She was collecting bottles for the nickels from the bottle return.



Back Bay Skyline 1991 oil on linen 22x52" Private Collection

Back Bay Skyline

Fortunately, the attendant let me climb the parking garage steps to do this painting for an entire summer. It was like I had my own studio looking across the Back Bay.

I had painted a number of sites around my studio... I began to wonder what things looked like from different perspectives. I liked the look of the old brick architecture of the Danker and Donohue Garage on Newbury Street seen from Boylston Street. But where to stand? As I scouted out the area from the bridge between Hynes Auditorium and Berklee School of Music, I looked behind me and up; there was a tall parking garage. I asked the attendant if I could do a painting from the fire escape, and to my surprise, after asking if I was going to avoid the roof and walking around the cars (which I had no intention of doing), he said yes! So my mornings for a summer were set. It's hard to describe the beauty of sunlit brick roofed buildings on an early June morning looking across the rooftops toward Cambridge. But here, I try.

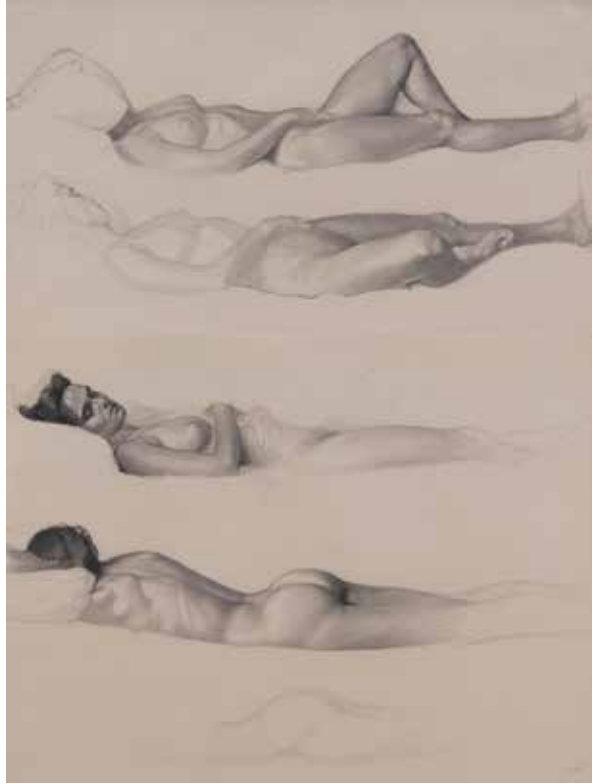


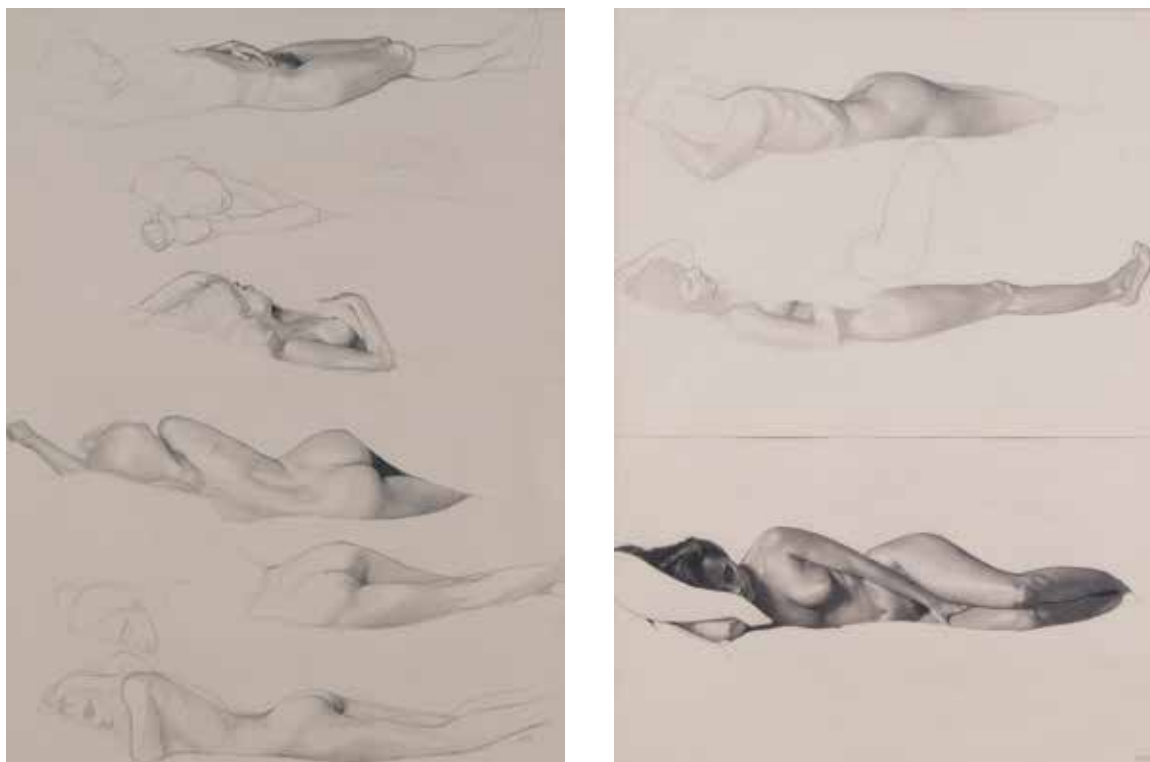
Notre Dame, Pittsfield 1992 oil on linen 20x24" Collection of Jennifer H. Miller and Lawrence K. Miller III

Notre Dame, Pittsfield

Zoe did a rotation in surgery at a hospital in Pittsfield, so I drove out every Friday and came home every Monday because I taught Tuesday and Thursday nights at Mass College of Art.

While she was doing her surgery I found interesting places to paint. Here I was struck by the two church towers in close proximity as seen beyond parking lots. Interestingly enough, both had originally been Catholic churches; one was Irish, and one Italian... apparently they didn't mingle much.





Drawings of Zoe Sleeping 1992 5 panels dimensions variable graphite on paper Collection of the Artist

Drawings of Zoe Sleeping

Zoe was exhausted her entire year of residency. While she was sleeping, she let me draw her.

After she finished medical school, Zoe had to go through an internship at Boston University's hospital. It was like a hazing done by the medical system; because the older doctors had gone through this, they were going to make the younger ones go through it as well... long hours, getting yelled at for getting insufficient histories from the patients, reams of paperwork, charts... Often Zoe was so tired she just wanted to come home and sleep. When they changed her shift, she was up all night, so she had to sleep during the day. I had the bright idea of drawing her as she slept during the day... a beautiful model staying still for hours, to look over, appreciate, and draw. Makes me smile to even think of it. Thank you, Zoe.



Gas Station, Rainy Night 1992 oil on canvas 16x18" Collection of Mark J. Macenka

Gas Station, Rainy Night

I taught beginning painting, a continuing education course, at Mass College of Art from 1987 to 1992.

On raw, windy, wet nights, attendance would be low. So, I would paint alongside my students instead of breathing down their necks as they struggled through the various painting exercises I had them do. They often claimed it helped them to watch me paint. This was the scene looking out the fifth floor painting studio, which was across the street from this gas station, on Huntington Avenue, that's no longer there. Because it is difficult to see values at night correctly while inside a brightly lit room, I had to stick my head out the window to see what the colors and values really looked like outside. I'd have to force myself to remember what it looked like when I brought my head back in the lit room. Often when I pulled my head back into the room I'd bang the back of it on the window sash. You'd think after one or two times you'd remember. But because I was concentrating so hard on remembering the various tones, I'd forget all about the sash and, BANG, did it again. This was a painful painting to finish.

The lighting of this was particularly challenging to work out. During the day there is a single source of light; the sun. At night there are many sources of light, and determining which one dominates, and how to make the values work together to make something glow, was fascinating and challenging. The flowing plastic banners brightly lit against the gas station (which was also lit, but dully) was difficult to do but fun to find. The red truck, painted so simply, says so much about the light and atmosphere with so little work – an economy of stroke.



Humble 1992 oil on linen 36x44" Private Collection

Humble

I originally misnamed this eatery (on the edge of South Boston and the South End) HoJo's, thinking it had been a former Howard Johnson.

But Stephen Paine, a wonderful collector, who saw the painting, pointed out that it had been an Esso, or Exxon station, and that this dome was their signature, much like the golden arches for McDonald's. Another name for Exxon in the 1960's was Humble, so I ate Humble pie and renamed it *Humble*. The building was a fried chicken place when I painted it; later I saw it had become a pizza place. It's still there and now green.

This was kind of a scary area to paint; it was isolated and a lot of homeless people were around, and maybe some addicts? I found a place to paint it across the street and under a tree. Nevertheless, I had no scary incidents throughout the summer of painting this large canvas on the corner of Melnea Cass Boulevard and Massachusetts Ave.



Roland von Metzsch 1993 oil on linen 38x34" Collection of Gail and Ernst von Metzsch

Roland von Metzsch

I had the pleasure of meeting and painting Roland von Metzsch, a former football player and recent graduate of Princeton, on commission for his father, Ernst, who has been a champion for the arts for years.

Roland was quite large at the time; he'd just graduated Princeton and had been a guard on the football team. He was big. He kept putting his large hands on his hips, arms akimbo, and I eventually asked him to stand that way. He did and I painted him that way, an imposing presence. He was very patient as I worked hard at painting him from life.

Years later, looking at this painting with the great Spanish painter Antonio Lopez Garcia, I mentioned that I wasn't very good at putting cool colors in the skin, like veins and all. I mentioned that I heard from a teacher that Titian said there needed to be viridian in the skin. (Viridian is an intense, cool blue green.) He was shocked to hear that and asked indignantly who had told me that, that Titian would never have said that. Of course I backed down, since it was secondhand information. But I'd still like to find out if it's true.



173 Marlborough Street 1993 oil on linen 32x40" Collection of Gail and Ernst von Metzsch

173 Marlborough Street

I actually discovered this painting on the way home from doing an alley painting in the Back Bay. I rarely do paintings in the middle of the day, when the sun is directly overhead, preferring the slanted angle of the sun in the morning or afternoon. But I was struck by the harsh shadows cast by noonday sun on the grill work and door of 173. The odd placement of the fire escape also afforded some interesting shadows. So I had no normal lunchtimes for a while.



Luis de Gongora (copy after Velázquez) 1993 oil on linen 20x18" Collection of Gail and Ernst von Metzsch

Luis de Gongora (copy after Velázquez)

We wanted to stay in Boston, but medical training doesn't always give you what you want. For her residency, Zoe matched with the University of Rochester's Strong Memorial Hospital and its excellent program headed by a genius in the field of dermatology, Dr. Lowell Goldsmith. Since we were sadly going to leave Boston, I wanted to bring my favorite painting from the Museum of Fine Arts with me.

Why this painting, you might ask. Paul Ingbretson laughed when I told him this one; he said there were so many better painted heads by Velázquez over there, this was so tight and austere. Maybe that's why I liked it. I learned that Velázquez had been a gifted student, and had gone to Madrid to try to get into the good graces of the young King Phillip, who was roughly the same age as Velázquez. Velázquez was a commoner, not of the noble class, so the best he could manage was to get the poet, Luis de Gongora, to sit for him. He did three portraits of him, probably in a short amount of time, some with laurel wreaths around the head (a symbol of intelligence and poetry). It just so happened that de Gongora was invited to a dinner with the king and was able to mention the fine portraits that Velázquez was doing. Phillip asked to see them. When de Gongora had them brought in, Phillip asked if Velázquez might be willing to do one of him. Of course, he was, and did, and they hit it off and became friends, and Velázquez had a job for the rest of his life. And thank God he did! If anyone should have been allowed to paint, and use paint to express his times, it was the Prince of painters, Diego Velázquez!

I had to ask permission from the Museum of Fine Arts to paint it. I had to have it a certain size different than the original. It had to be stamped on the back. I couldn't bring open solvents into the galleries, and had to cover the floor below me as I painted. But I did all that and painted it. Mine kept looking too wild, too colorful. George Nick told me I wasn't mixing enough. But it turns out I had too many colors on my palette. I eventually learned that Velázquez probably used a very "lean palette" as Antonio Lopez Garcia put it – the translator used the term "skinny", but spare, or lean is what a painter would say in the U.S. The idea is to use as few colors as possible to get the desired effect, thus creating a natural color harmony. Velázquez was probably trained using white, black, and probably something similar to our yellow ochre and Venetian red. When I switched to a limited palette I could spend less time mixing and more time drawing. It came out so well that I brought it down to Gallery NAGA to show it off. I didn't want to sell it. I wanted to keep it. But to my delight Ernst saw it and wanted it. I'm glad he did, because it was up when Antonio Lopez Garcia was invited to Boston and came to a reception. After the reception I saw him head over to my painting and put his glasses on to look at it. Here was a chance to talk with a great one, I thought. Through a translator, he said he knew it was a Velázquez copy right away and said he appreciated the unique shapes I used to model the form... He asked how long it took? 5 months. What colors did I use? Etc. After our translated conversation, he nodded and smiled and shook my hand.



Self-Portrait after Velázquez 1994 oil on linen 20x18" Collection of Peter Lee

Self-Portrait after Velázquez

I had the tones already mixed and on my palette when I got back to the studio from painting Luis de Gongora at the MFA. So I decided to use the same lights, middle values, and darks on a self-portrait.

After all, I had a bald head, too, and could put the same look on my face as de Gongora. If anything, I may have mixed the self-portrait colors too dark, but it was fascinating to apply the same palette to my own head, and perhaps go through similar steps as Velázquez went through. Interestingly enough, we don't have any early self-portraits or portraits of his young wife by Velázquez, only the later, highly skilled self-portrait in the mirror of *Las Meninas* in the Prado.



Self-Portrait Sagittal Slice 1994 oil on linen 20x18" Collection of Peter Lee

Self-Portrait Sagittal Slice

Midway through my self-portrait, I was making a Japanese meal with yakisoba, which called for chopped red cabbage. Slicing through it revealed an intricate web of color and pattern which reminded me of a brain. I did a painting of it.

I thought of my head as a head of cabbage. What would it look like if one were to slice through the middle of my head? More interestingly, what if I didn't slice it right down the middle, but rather through my front eye? So I used a beautiful anatomy book Zoe had of photos of cadavers and estimated what it would look like at that point and made the cut. Of course I looked at many photos and MRIs and images, but after all is said and done, I was making my best guess, as with so many of my pieces.



Self-Portrait and Death 1994-95 oil on linen 20x18" Collection of Peter Lee

Self-Portrait and Death

Such a macabre portrait as the one previous reminded me of my art history lessons at Kent State from the Gothic era; memento mori. One such image was of a skeleton at the bottom of a 12th century triptych that had the words, "As you are, so I once was. As I am, so you will be."

As I painted *Self-Portrait Sagittal Slice* I pondered what my skull looked like and found myself interested in painting a 3D skull emerging from the shadow side of a portrait instead of the actual head I saw. It should be easy to figure out the skull from a bald head like mine, right? And I already had a variety of tones mixed from the de Gongora painting, right?

One of the tricks of the trade that I learned from Paul Ingbreton was the idea of simplifying values in the shadows... to emphasize the form created by the light and reduce the form created by reflected light in the shadow.



Zoe 1994 oil on linen 50x40" Collection of the Artist

Zoe

I had done a number of paintings of Zoe in the nude and looking like “a Playboy bunny,” in her terms. (See *Honeymoon Portrait*, page 29 and *Drawings of Zoe Sleeping*, page 41. There were others, too.) Once she said, “Can’t you just make a portrait of me looking beautiful?”

One of my favorite paintings of a beautiful woman is John Singer Sargent’s portrait of Lady Agnew of Lochnaw. So I posed Zoe in the most beautiful gown we owned (her wedding dress) in a position similar to the Lady’s. My studio in Rochester, one of the bedrooms in a two-bedroom apartment, didn’t have very good lighting, so I had to use outside light on her right and a spot light on her left. The light made her eyes water, and as annoying as it must have been, she gave me almost six months of Saturday morning sittings to do this portrait. I accidentally splattered blue paint on her wedding dress.



Barn Over Beanfield 1994 oil on canvas 16x18" Collection of Gail and Ernst von Metzsch

Barn Over Beanfield

Not far outside Rochester were the lovely farms and country of upstate New York. Short drives found me many rural country sites I never would have seen in Boston.

This painting was featured in a photography magazine for up-and-coming photographers because a young photographer from Rochester Institute of Technology saw me out painting and lined up the horizon in the painting with the actual horizon - it all looked like the same horizon. The photo looked like a Rene Magritte painting.



Lower Falls 1995 oil on polyester 30x34" Collection of Donald and Barbara Stitt

Lower Falls

I did a number of paintings of the upper falls of the Genesee River which flows through Rochester, a very scenic and interesting urban area where pulleys and belts drove industry in the mid-1800s.

But the lower falls were inaccessible, shielded by cyclone fences. At least I thought so until George Nick told me he'd done paintings down there and I needed to jump the fence to do it. So I went to the parking lot nearest the falls and, sure enough, found the fence pulled back and a path down the steep hill toward the lower Genesee below.

I found a nice place to paint viewing the falls with the bridge just out of the painting from above and worked there in the afternoons. It was lovely, but I noticed there would be surges of water like I'd never seen before! It turns out that the Genesee was being controlled by locks and dams upriver and now and then they'd release more water than usual.

Also, I recall hearing large splashes behind me and wondering why the water was so active. It turns out there were HUGE Atlantic salmon in this river. I found this out when I noticed someone walking toward me with a 2x4 lined with hanging... what? Suits on coat hangers? No, he got closer... to my astonishment, they were fish! Each fish was about five feet long and large, probably weighing 30 pounds! The salmon would breed behind me in the water, then try to climb the tall waterfall (impossible), die trying, and fishermen would easily collect them to bring home to dinner.



Aisha 1996 graphite on paper 14x10"

Aisha

While in Rochester, I began advertising for students and apprentices. One night a week we'd have figure drawing sessions, and when we had fewer than five students, I'd do a drawing alongside them, both to demonstrate and for the sheer fun of drawing the human figure.

I ended up with some very good beginnings, but was frustrated that I couldn't finish them because I had to spend lots of time teaching the students who were paying good money for instruction. I decided to try to finish them in the studio the next day... could I do it? To my surprise I could remember a LOT from the previous night... it was still fresh in my memory. I did about 20 or 30 drawings like this, never from photos since models don't like photos taken of them in the nude. (I can't blame them.)



Kate Groenevelt 1996 oil on linen 30x36" Collection of Claudia Groenevelt

Kate Groenevelt

I never liked working from photographs (color from life always looks better), but occasionally people wanted a family member memorialized, and I would agree. A month before we left for Zoe's fellowship in Philadelphia, I got a commission to do this lovely, impetuous youngster, Kate (who is now a 25-year-old grad student!). Fortunately, her mother Claudia also hired a very good local photographer, Gary Geer, to do photographs. Working from these photographs, I did the portrait in Philadelphia and drove it back to Rochester.

It's always a fearful thing, revealing a portrait to someone who hasn't seen what you've done but who has put up some good money to have you do it. I think Claudia and I were both anxious going into our meeting.. I was worrying, "What if she doesn't like it?" I'd worked so hard on it... and she's a beautiful girl, and I did a beautiful portrait of her... She was no doubt wondering "What's it look like? What if I don't like it?" But when we met and I showed it to her, her smile and misty eyes helped me realize that she liked it, and it was good, and things were going to be all right.

When I picked up Kate's portrait last December, Claudia mentioned to me how the idea of having me do a portrait came about. She said she went to dinner at the High Street Grille where a number of my paintings were on display. There she saw my portrait of Zoe (which is in this show, page 51) right before her as she entered, and it stopped her in her tracks. She said it was all she could think about during dinner and soon after made a call to me to discuss how this could be accomplished as a gift to Kate's father for Father's Day. She was concerned that Kate would give away the secret. She didn't.

She also told me how cherished the portrait had become to her when in 2006 she and Kate had a fire in their home. She said that Kate got the dogs out of the house, and Claudia followed right behind her with the portrait - her most precious belongings were safe!



Doodle of Audrey Sleeping 1997 colored pencil and glitter on paper 10x10" Collection of the Artist

Doodle of Audrey Sleeping

Our daughter Audrey was born Christmas Day, in the evening, of 1996. Audrey would become my model for the next couple years as I took care of and watched her while Zoe went on to finish her medical training. Here, I began to wonder at the amazing fact of life in the middle of a cold, empty, dark universe.

Zoe wanted to do a dermatopathology rotation after residency, so she got a fellowship at Hahnemann Hospital in Philadelphia. We moved there in June of 1996, with Zoe already a couple months pregnant. She would have to put on special breathing devices as she did pathology rotations to protect the baby. As she got more and more pregnant, I began to worry more about another mouth to feed. I can't imagine how difficult that time must have been for Zoe. We hung in there, and as Christmas closed in we got ready for childbirth, taking classes and practicing. The morning of the 23rd Zoe started having contractions. She would continue to have them for 36 hours, but never dilate enough for a baby's head to make it through. As Zoe continued to struggle and tire, and the baby's signs began to show difficulty, the doctor decided to do an emergency C-section around 5:45 Christmas night. At 6:03 Audrey was born, but was terribly quiet. I was praying in fear and trembling, and the Russian anesthetist standing on my side of the curtain shouted that all the pediatric fellow needed to do was intubate the baby. The pediatric fellow freaked and went to call the ER, so the anesthetist left his post and intubated Audrey. After an eternity of silent seconds, with me begging God to PLEASE let everything be all right, we heard some tiny coughing and crying, and then wailing. Her air tubes had been full of meconium and she'd been unable to inhale, but the anesthetist had been able to get a tube through it all so she could breathe! She coughed and spluttered, then cried out at this cruel world that had interrupted her peaceful surroundings. She was tiny (5 lbs. 12 oz.) and long, like a spider monkey, I thought, as the nurses washed and wrapped her. After she was swaddled, on Christmas Day, I held her for the first time, and wondered to myself, "Now, why was I so worried? No matter what happens, I'm gonna be here for this little girl."



ABC Building 1997 oil on linen 22x36" Collection of Michael Pomerance

ABC Building

This was a treatment center in downtown Rochester for alcoholics and people coming off of drugs.

This painting was finished in Philadelphia using photos and a small oil sketch I did on the streets of Rochester days before we left. It features that look that I've found myself favoring, of a valley created by buildings on either side of a painting, with a foreground shadow and a colorful, industrial building at the end of the road, what I'll call a "worthwhile destination" or "distant destination" painting.



Rock, Paper, Scissors 1998 graphite on paper 17x22.5"

Rock, Paper, Scissors

Painting takes forever to set up for and clean up after. Now that I had a little girl to take care of, I needed another medium, that I could pick up and put down quickly, to work in while she napped in her portable crib in the corner of my studio. Sharpened pencils fit the bill, and the chance and happenstance of life was my subject. Escher would have made a beautiful lithograph out of this. The best I can do is a pencil drawing.



Self-Portrait with Glasses 1999 oil on linen 20x16" Collection of the family of Ed and Hilda Fleisher

Self-Portrait with Glasses

I enjoyed excellent eyesight up until 1999. But then, for the first time, I needed help seeing small print. My arms weren't long enough... I had to hold things way out to see the letters clearly... I, too, needed glasses like everyone else in my family.

I had been special in my family. Everyone else had glasses but me. That had been true for 42 years! But here was yet another sign that I, too, was getting old. I, too, am mortal. I, too, am aging, and changing; youth was and is now behind me.



Marian's Italianate Garden 1999 oil on linen 14x16" Collection of David Center and Patricia Rabbett

Marian's Italianate Garden

The wooden fence beyond this lovely Italianate garden was the brightest thing in view, but the surrounding garden was a fresh breath of air and an escape from the city.

A group of adult painters whom I'd met in various classes asked if I would teach them privately, using the basement of one of their homes as a place for class to meet during the winter and/or bad weather. This was the beautiful garden behind that same house. When winter classes in the basement were done, we'd venture upstairs and out of doors to paint the grounds. We had just started this group when I joined in and painted the garden. That group lasted ten years, and a number of those students are still painting professionally today.



3 *Bobby Heads* 1999 oil on linen 10x8" Collection of the Artist

3 Bobby Heads

I was the last boy of my father's family that could have a male child – my cousins did not have children so there were no more boys whose last name was Stitt.

Because girls are ubiquitous and boys so rare on the Stitt side of our family, I thought I wouldn't be able to have a boy, but I could live with that... my daughter was wonderful. But when Zoe told me we were going to have Bobby, I got misty-eyed. I felt so lucky that I, too, would get to have a little boy. Someone else would carry on the family name in my patriarchal mind.

There was now another, my son, Bobby. Zoe came down to the studio while Audrey was at day care and nursed him while I painted him looking over her shoulder. He'd go back and forth between wakefulness and sleep, and I caught his head in these positions.

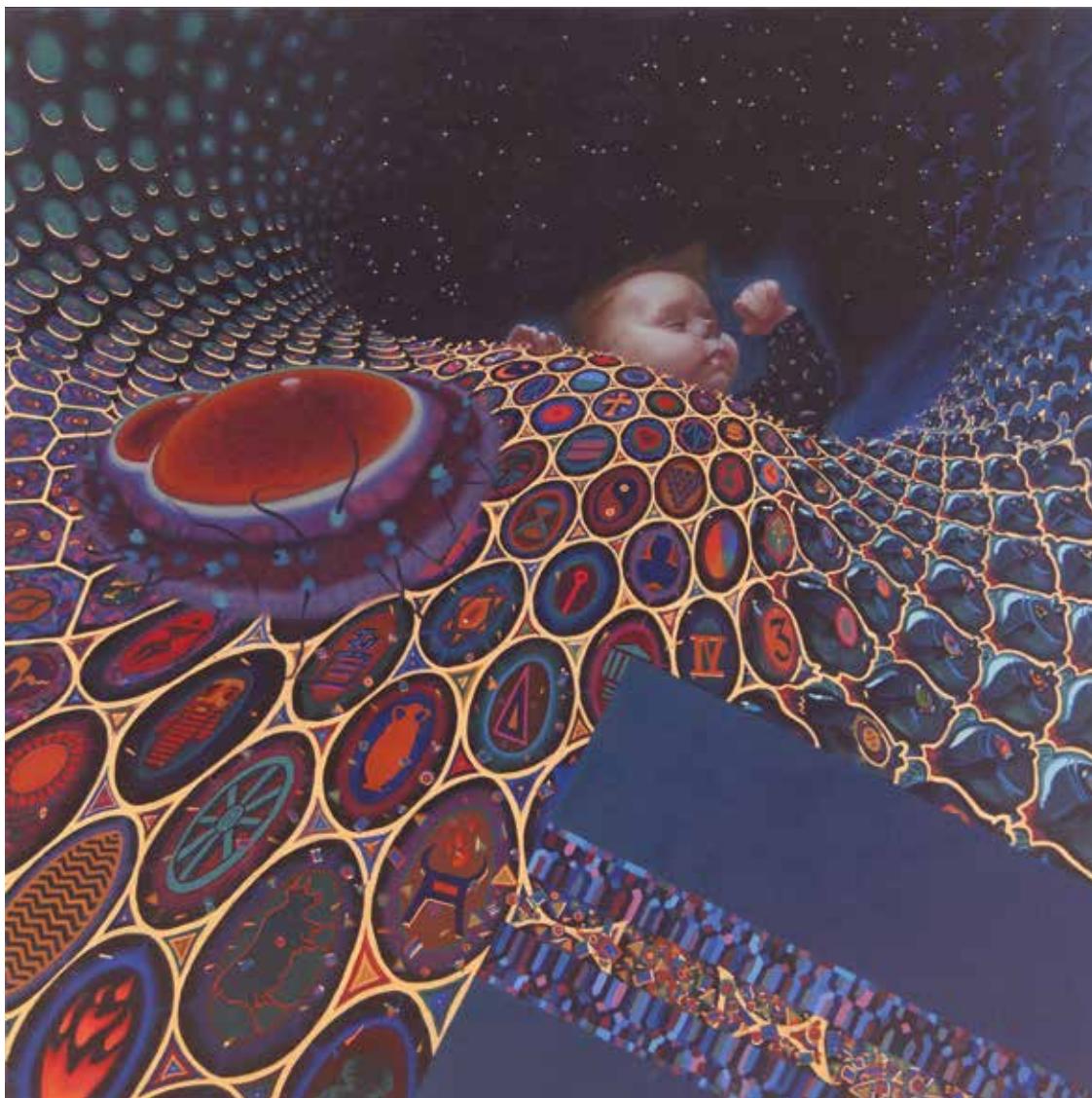


Essex Porch 2000 oil on linen 30x50" Private Collection

Essex Porch

I took my class of painters up to this well-known marshy area in Essex and braved the rickety porch and the trespassing risks to accomplish this unique look at an inside/outside landscape.

This was one of our furthest jaunts, up to a large tidal area near a public park. The house was abandoned, but still owned by a family that came by now and then. The porch was risky to walk on at best, but the contrast of the bright landscape against the dark, shadow side of the porch was both exciting and restful to the eye. All the colors under the roof were influenced by the yellows of the bright field and those on the floor by the blue sky above, as if the opening were an aperture for all the light bouncing into the shadows.



Audrey: *Life in the Universe* 2000 48x48" oil and cubic zirconia on panel Collection of the Artist

Audrey: Life in the Universe

In 1997, while watching my baby daughter sleep in my makeshift studio in Philadelphia, I was struck by the wonder of how this tiny human being could be alive in this huge city and world, and I allowed my perspective to grow out, from my little studio on 22nd street, to above Philadelphia, to over the East Coast, to the western hemisphere, to the earth... out into the universe. As I daydreamed and drew, I imagined her, actually all of us humans, floating alive through space, with a quilt of history and humanity surrounding us and keeping us warm. I was reminded of Escher and the bending of boundaries and rules... I began to doodle in the edges and think about all I could put into this painting. Now I had a very special model, a perfect little life, to put in my painting. It took three years to accomplish what I'd sketched while she slept in the studio that day. (See *Doodle of Audrey Sleeping*, page 56.)



Bobby, Observation 2001 oil and cubic zirconia on panel 12x12" Collection of the Artist

Bobby, Observation

Since Audrey was now older (about four) I needed real baby cheeks to paint for the big cheek on *Audrey: Life in the Universe*. NO one had chubbier cheeks than my son Bobby, so I used Bobby's.

But I also began to think of him and his life in the universe, and his unique quality of observing small things carefully. Each child has his or her own personality which one notices along the way. Audrey was immediately interested in everything going on in the room... eyes wide open. Bobby was cuddly and sensitive, laying his head on our shoulders when we held him. He also would observe little objects very closely. We'd watch him to make sure he wouldn't put things in his mouth. After my student Jan Mahony held him for a photo session, I chose the photos that fit these ideas best and used them.



Bobby, Horizons 2001 oil, broken mirror and cubic zirconia on panel 12x12" Collection of the Artist

Bobby, Horizons

At night I would carry our tired Bobby up the steps to his crib at bedtime. I would often look over his profile at the steps as I carried him, careful not to trip, and thought of what might be on the horizon for him. The background is a *2001: A Space Odyssey* idea.



Willow on Jamaica Pond 2001 oil on linen 16x20" Collection of the Family of Ed and Hilda Fleisher

Willow on Jamaica Pond

I noticed this island in the middle of Jamaica Pond, like an oasis of peace, while waiting for the light at the intersection of Perkins and Chestnut Street as I brought my young children home from day care one afternoon. I began to look forward to seeing it at that intersection as a restful moment among the hectic duties and work of caring for our growing family. Peace, respite. There it was. I just needed to paint it.



Life in a Fish Tank 2002 oil on panel 24x12"

Life in a Fish Tank

This was an attempt to describe what life felt like when I felt overwhelmed by anxious and depressing feelings. I guess I was trying to say that it was like being alive, but planted in a claustrophobic tank, unable to climb out, as the waters rose and swirled over me.



Red Sok Laundry 2003 oil on linen 30x36" Collection of Alexander and Livia Aber

Red Sok Laundry

I found this curious little building/laundromat in the middle of a very livable neighborhood in the Fenway. It made for a lovely summer of painting. The thin, strange little building is still there, but no longer a neighborhood laundromat.

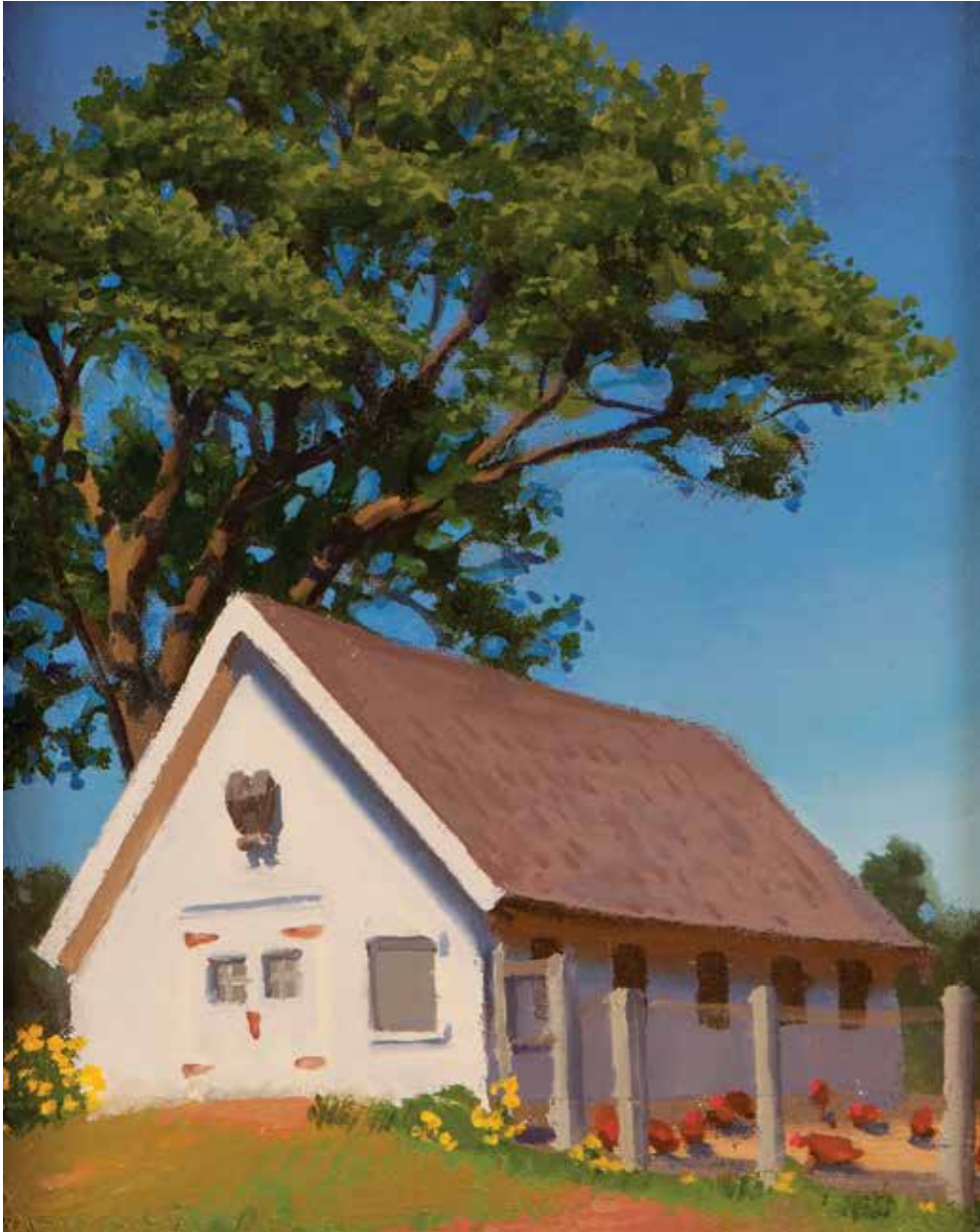


Urban Garden Tree 2003 oil on linen 20x14"

Urban Garden Tree

This painting shows an odd, tall tree at the end of a local public garden plot. It is another “distant destination” painting.

When one sees such an odd example of plant life in the middle of a city, one wonders about the history that made it. I'm guessing there had been a building just beyond that tree, and that this tree had been allowed to grow in between it and the buildings that had been where the gardens now are. It had an odd outer “shell”, or canopy... Usually these trees grow fuller, wider. This one was unusually tall and narrow. So once again, for this tree to get light, it would have had to grow tall and straight, with little light other than what was above it for sunlight. When the buildings came down around it, it had already grown quite tall, with short outward branches below. Those will begin filling out now that the buildings are gone.



Chicken Coop 2004 oil on canvas 10x8" Collection of Gail and Ernst von Metzsch

Chicken Coop

I painted this to stay out of my students' hair at Drumlin Farm.

Edward Hopper once said that everyone called him the quintessential American painter, yet all he was trying to do was paint sunlight on a wall. Here's another of my attempts to do that... by making the sky a little darker the lit white wall looks brighter.



Djana Daydreaming 2006 charcoal on paper 24x18"

Djana Daydreaming

This began as a demonstration during a figure drawing class that I was teaching at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts. I like the idea of finishing some parts and leaving others unfinished.



Wottaquottack Horse Farm 2006 oil on canvas on panel 8x13"

Wottaquottack Horse Farm

This scenic farm was yet another lovely place that my student and friend Will Kirkpatrick suggested we visit and paint as a class. Will may have given me this horizontal panel to paint on so I would stay out of his hair.



Large Alley Mirror 2007 oil on linen 36x36"

Large Alley Mirror

I really enjoyed how the convex mirror in Fenway Studio's driveway alley could suggest entirely different worlds, the actual mirror on the wall, and also an entire world in front of it (and behind the viewer) that it is reflecting.

Here I've only painted about a foot of actual space total - a mirror on a brick wall - yet the illusion is there of a large landscape behind me reflected in the mirror. And it's not even a mirror; really, it's a bunch of paint on a flat canvas that's creating this perception of different levels of reality.



Buried Treasures 2007 oil on canvas 30x30" Private Collection

Buried Treasures

This is a little head shop on Haviland Street between Berklee College of Music and the Boston Conservatory. It was usually closed when I walked past it, but I liked the alley and the golden building beyond. I eventually met and befriended the man who works behind the counter, and did a number of paintings of the place, eventually placing him in one of the paintings. (See *Behind Buried Treasures*, page 84.)



Audrey 2007 oil on linen 16x12" Collection of the Artist

Audrey

I decided to do portraits of my children before they got older and had too many commitments to come and sit for me. Audrey has been the most interested in art of my three children, and she sat like a dream for me. Audrey has the lightest blue eyes of anyone in the family, except perhaps Zoe.



Bobby 2007 oil on linen 16x12" Collection of the Artist

Bobby

Bobby is a fun kid, with a great sense of humor. He gave me this look as I was photographing him for a guideline to work from. Interestingly, I painted his eyes blue... they are actually greenish.



Suzie 2007 oil on linen 16x12" Collection of the Artist

Suzie

Suzie was born in 2002. No dreamy paintings of her floating in the universe or looking out over horizons – we were too busy changing diapers and dealing with two older toddlers! So here was my chance to finally paint her.

Suz was born with congenital cataracts, and had her lenses removed (from behind her pupils, inside her eyes!) at one month old. Over the years she had five eye surgeries, contact lenses, and many types of glasses, some of which made her eyes look huge. She now has man-made lenses behind her pupils, and therefore no longer needs the large lenses out in front of her eyes. Suzie is a very fun, witty, and unique personality, and the glasses only added to her strong character and charm. Our photos of her growing up with those precious glasses are priceless. Once another child asked her why her eyes were so big (she was about three years old) and after looking at him, rather, fixing her large gaze upon him, she said, “I’m not gonna tell you. You figure it out.” And went on playing. Currently she is quite the dancer.



Self-Portrait of Broken Nose 2008 colored pencil on paper 18x12"

Self-Portrait of Broken Nose

Coaching my son wrestling, I encouraged another boy to try to pin me, and his knee met my nose and broke it, bloodying it and deviating the septum even more than it was before.

It had been broken and my eye had been blackened numerous times during wrestling in high school and college. But here I was, 50 years old! So, just as Lucian Freud stopped his routine to paint his black eye, I drew my broken nose... but just my nose is delineated... the rest is suggestion. Oddly, the image is better with less information, not more.



George von Metzsch 2008 oil on linen 38x34" Collection of Gail and Ernst von Metzsch

George von Metzsch

As you can see, George, is a big, fun, good looking rugby player, even bigger than his brother, Roland (page 44). It was fun painting him. I cannot imagine trying to tackle someone that big on an open field. At one point he had a black eye that prevented me from working on this.



Beal's Farm, Cloudy 2008 oil on canvas 18x24" Collection of Nick Cramb and Kate Cimini

Beal's Farm, Cloudy

This beautiful public land is available for the townspeople of Sudbury to walk through, so one of my painting students suggested we paint out there. As always, I painted alongside them so I wouldn't bug them too much. This little island of trees in the middle of the field lent itself to four paintings over the next two months.



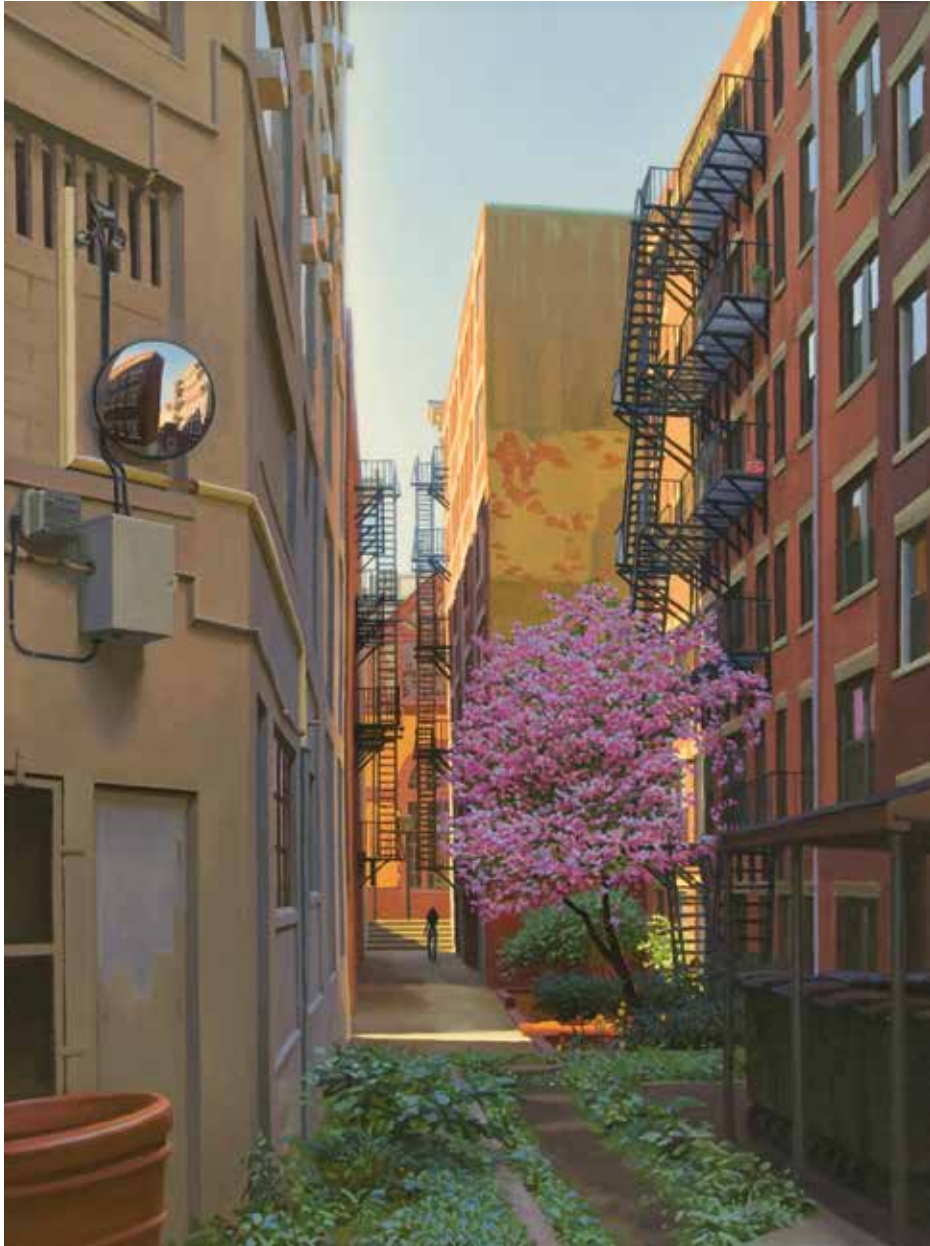
Boston from Larz, Rainy 2009 oil on panel 8x8" Collection of Meg and Jonathan White

Boston from Larz, Rainy

My painting class eventually began to dwindle as people got better at painting and didn't need my input as much. As we traveled to various places to paint, fewer people showed up, especially on rainy days.

One grey morning, at Larz Anderson Park in Brookline, hardly anyone showed up. I pulled out a panel and painted in the rain. The rain went from drizzle to mist to nothing to drizzle, all morning long. It was a cool, dark, green landscape, and the light changed little, just a little darker or lighter, all morning long. The water beaded up on the oil surface, but I still had to wipe it off as I proceeded. The entire city of Boston appeared as a dull haze off in the distance behind the rich summer green of the park.

Eventually this and *Larz Oak* (page 86) inspired a larger painting, *Larz in the City* (page 95).



Jamaal's Grandmother's Alley 2009 oil on linen 40x30" Collection of Brookline Bancorp

Jamaal's Grandmother's Alley

I continued to explore the alley behind *Buried Treasures*.

Sometimes you enter an area and there's a painting everywhere you turn. So it was in this alley. This tree was in my *Buried Treasures* painting (page 75) as a leafy tree. But it flowers beautifully in the spring. It's an amazing sight in this brick and concrete alley, and definitely worth a closer look.



Behind Buried Treasures 2009 oil on linen 30x24" Collection of Jack and Cindy Aber

Behind Buried Treasures

After entering the alley, I turned around to see this sight. That's Slim, the guy who worked behind the counter at Buried Treasures, feeding the pigeons, which he did every day. I actually did about five paintings in this alley.



Self-Portrait, Tired 2010 oil on canvas 16x12"

Self-Portrait, Tired

This was the sight I saw one night after a particularly exhausting day taking care of family needs.

Anyone with children knows this feeling. I just happened to catch myself looking this way in the mirror as I was brushing my teeth and getting ready for bed. I decided to try to paint only that which was essential; nothing else.



Larz Oak 2010 oil on canvas 12x16" Collection of Jon Allen and Melanie Quigley

Larz Oak

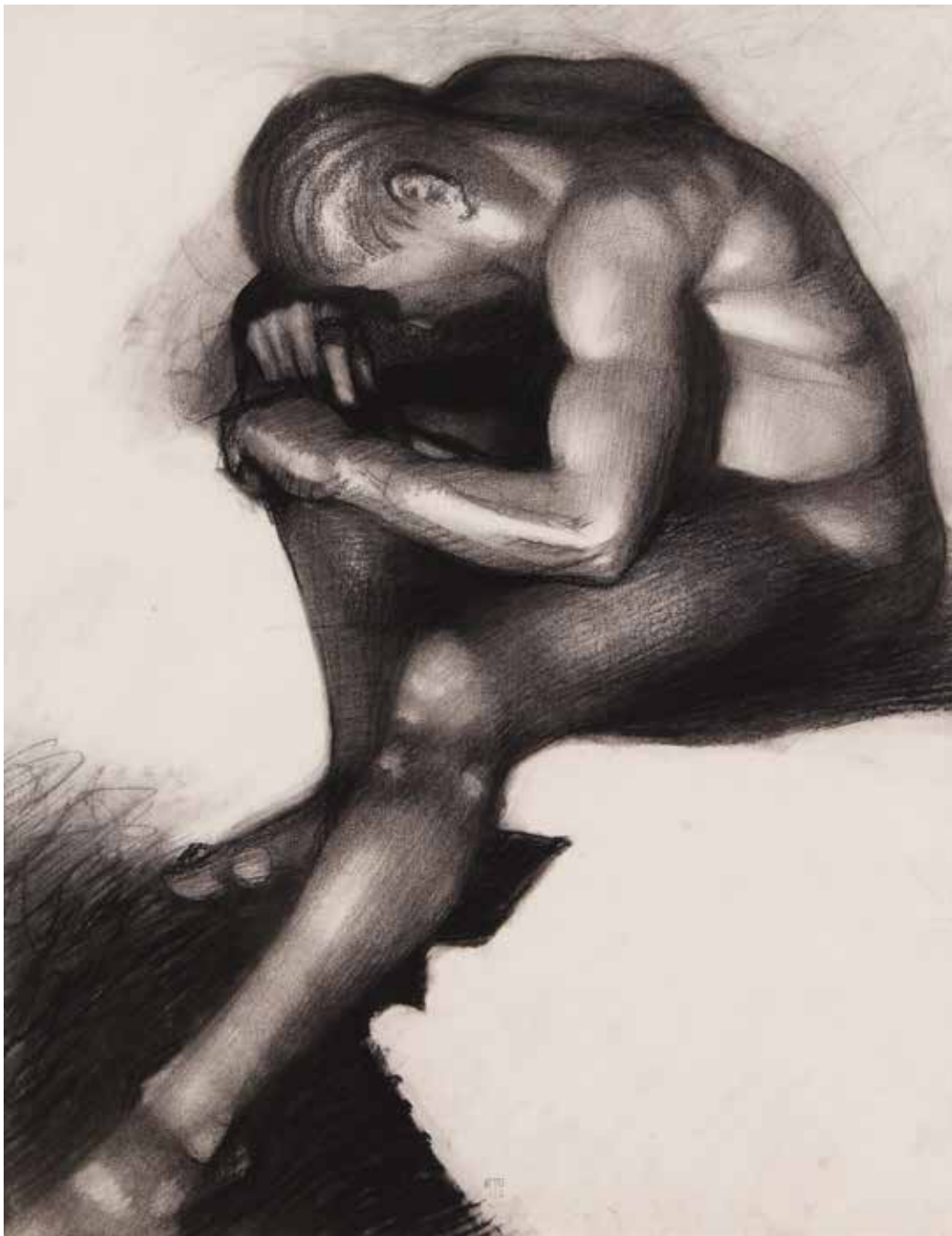
This was the beginning of a number of paintings of trees in Boston and Brookline parks. It was seeing this painting and the one entitled *Boston from Larz, Rainy* (page 82) from Larz together in my studio that engendered the large painting *Larz and the City* (page 95). Ironically, I discovered as I painted *Larz and the City* three years later that this is not an oak tree... it is an American chestnut. There were squirrels everywhere searching for chestnuts. Hawks, too, hunting squirrels.



Boylston Greeting 2010 oil on canvas 30x34"

Boylston Greeting

This large building on the corner of Hemenway and Boylston greets me every morning as I get off the Hynes Convention Center stop of the Green Line and walk to my studio.



Exhausted Athlete 2010 charcoal on paper 22x17"

Exhausted Athlete

I actually began this drawing at the Museum of Fine Arts during one of Bill Flynn's all-night drawing marathons at the Museum School. I finished it five years later in the studio.



Shahin 2011 oil on canvas 20x16"

Shahin

I did two portraits with Gary Hoffman, a gifted portrait painter at Fenway Studios. He did the first one, with my adding touches now and then, and I did this one, with his supervising and critiquing, but not touching. I'm proud to say that with only a half hour left in the modeling session, I changed the eyes from looking away to looking toward the viewer, some of the most decisive painting I've done in years.



Muddy River Placid 2011 oil on linen 12x24" Private Collection

Muddy River Placid

I noticed this lovely horizontal scene as I backed away from one of my paintings of flowering spring trees in the Fenway. It was so peaceful in the morning light that I worked on this after all the blossoms fell off the tree painting.



Oasis Afternoon 2012 oil on canvas 30x70"

Oasis Afternoon

The yellow brick buildings on Edgerly Road showcases some lovely architecture. The Oasis Bed and Breakfast takes particularly good care of their flower boxes and adds beauty to this tiny city street where people walk past to get to the local markets. I had to do this one in 3 pieces because the sidewalk was too narrow to accommodate a large canvas.



Sigma Nu Bay Window 2012 oil on linen 26x34" Collection of Alexander and Livia Aber

Sigma Nu Bay Window

This beautiful bay window is in the back of an MIT fraternity house, hidden away from the world because it looks into a narrow alley behind the Boston Conservatory.

At one point the president of the fraternity called the police to come arrest me, because a worker told him there was a guy painting the back of their building. The president thought it must be the person who had been defacing their back door with graffiti (someone painting on the building, not doing a painting of the building) and after he made the call, he rushed out to see who was the culprit. When he saw me, and checked out what I was doing, he quickly called the police and canceled the call.



Toby's Still Life 2013 oil on canvas 24x30"

Toby's Still Life

I chose to do an accurate still life of the most colorful objects I could find in my studio.

A number of these were hand-me-downs from my former student and now colleague, Marian Dioguardi. The red Solo cup was the brightest red I had in my studio. While I was working on this, Toby Keith's hit, "Red Solo Cup" hit the charts, and my country music fan wife pointed that out to me. Thus the title.



Fenway Spring Diptych, P.M. 2012-14 oil on canvas 26x52"

Fenway Spring Diptych, P.M.

This was originally going to just be a painting of the right panel only... but when I saw the tree in the lower left corner blooming the following year, I expanded the painting to include it and the daffodils on the left.

This diptych took three years to paint. The second spring I went out to paint at the correct time and noticed there was no color(!)... no blossoms like the previous year. I waited a week but still no blossoms. I asked the Jamaican gardener who tended the rose garden why there were no blossoms that year, and he replied that the trees were under stress. He explained that there needs to be a snow pack of about one to two feet to melt and draw the nutrients down to the roots, but because there was no snow pack that winter, there were no blossoms that spring. So I had to wait another year to complete it.

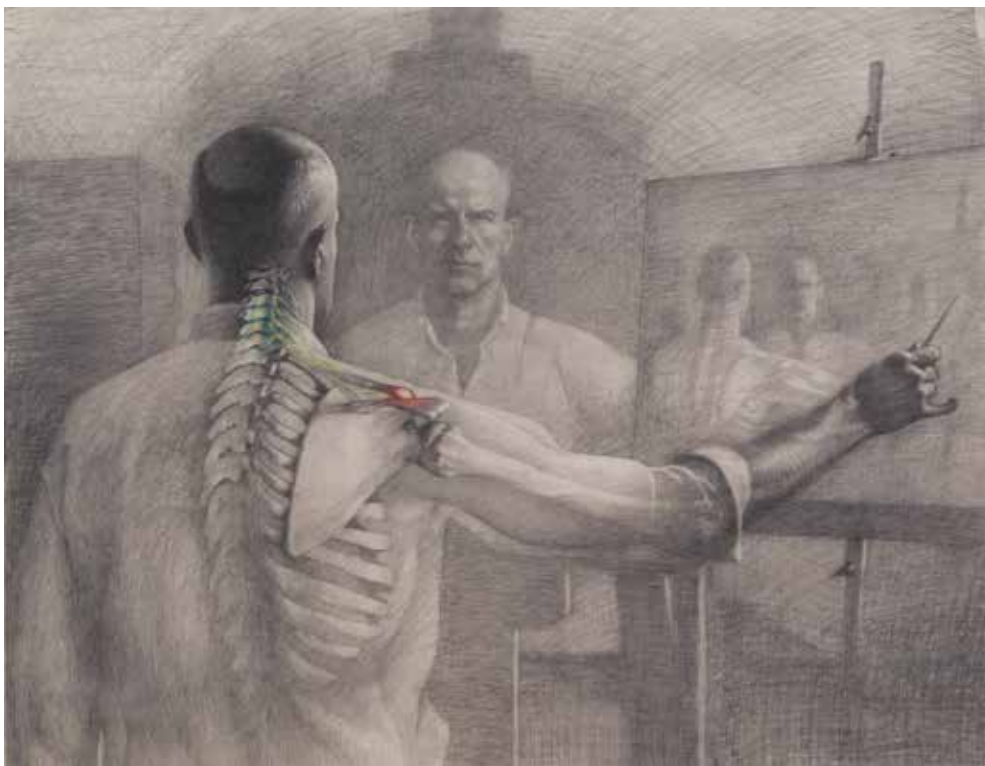


Larz and the City 2014 oil on linen 36x60" Collection of Heather and Jeremy Pozen

Larz and the City

I'd recently seen a painting by J.J. Enneking, who painted the recession of autumn colors shifting towards blue in the New Hampshire mountains almost a century ago, and wanted to try it myself.

But where around Boston could you see that? I couldn't afford to spend the time driving up to and camping out in New Hampshire's White Mountains to do the beautiful quilts that God and Nature provided annually there, so the best I could come up with was the view from Larz Anderson Park in Brookline. This was really inspired by two smaller, earlier paintings (pages 82 and 86) I had done that I'd juxtaposed beside each other along my studio wall.



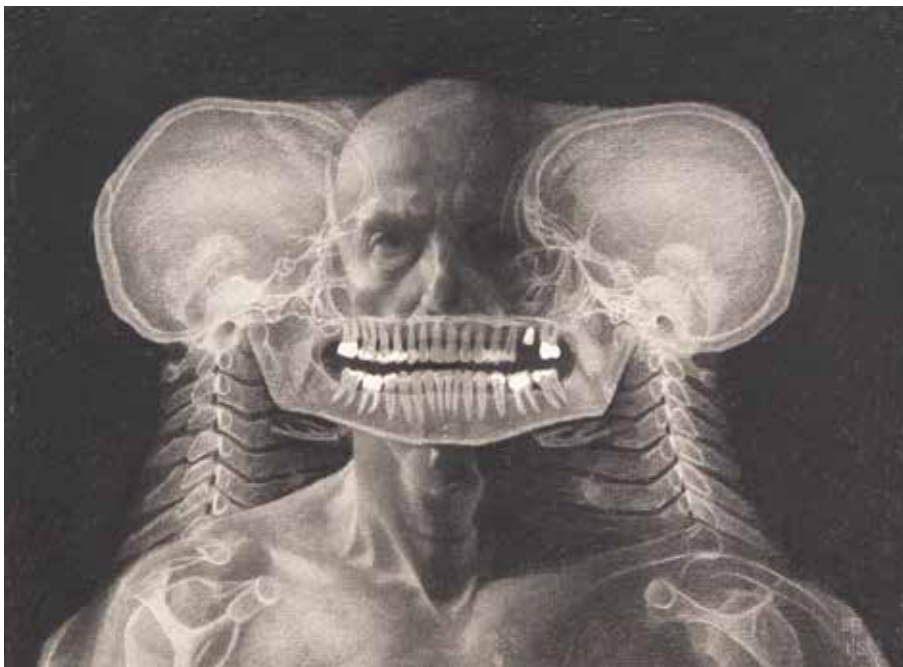
Pain in my Neck and Shoulder 2014 graphite on paper 17.5x22.5"

Pain in my Neck and Shoulder

During our study of the skeleton, I gave an assignment to my B.U. artistic anatomy students to draw the bones of a part of the anatomy that they were particularly concerned about.

I admit this creative idea wasn't totally mine; it was conceived during a discussion with a fellow adjunct faculty teacher at a gathering. The more I thought about it, the more I wondered why I was exempt, particularly because I was interested in this same subject. As you've witnessed, I've been mindful about my continuing aging process, decay, and loss of function. My neck and shoulder were particularly painful at this point, perhaps because I was doing a lot of detail work or trying to finish a portrait, which I often obsess about and sweat blood over. Either way, I was wondering how long I was going to be able to keep painting if this pain continued. Even drawing on and beside my student's work, which I feel is crucial to their learning process, was so painful I dreaded noticing areas where I could be helpful; it meant I had to lift my damned right arm again. Often as I drew, I'd forget about the pain, only to notice it midway through my demo, or later after class was over.

X-rays revealed a slight calcification of my fifth cervical, which was pinching the nerve that ran out over my shoulder and into my arm. This, plus my familial osteopenia, was heavy on my mind. This project began as a drawing of the bones of the shoulder girdle, but then it began to morph into a drawing about the radiating pain from my neck into my shoulder. Curiously enough, after a couple months away from portraits, and doing a variety of other things, the pain slowly dissipated.



Take Better Care of Your Teeth 2015 charcoal on paper 19x25"

Take Better Care of Your Teeth

As I observe my body age and deteriorate, my teeth have continued to cause me problems, and I continue to rue my lack of care of them when I was in my 20's.

After I graduated college, left seminary, and was on my own, I was determined to pay my own way, even as a poor artist. Part of my plan was to floss and brush more so I didn't have to go to the dentist as often. I forgot. Seven years (!) later, after Zoe and I got married and she began working for B.U., we got dental benefits and I went to B.U.'s dental school to have my teeth checked. During the routine cleaning, the dentist pointed out that I had gingivitis, and that my gums were receding and eventually this was going to compromise my teeth. I redoubled my efforts to take better care of my teeth. Nevertheless, my gums continued to recede and I brushed and flossed so hard that I wore away the dentin exposed below where the enamel stops, where gums were supposed to be, so I was actually carving into the base of my teeth with the toothbrush. I somehow got away with this until the last five years, when I've had two root canals, large fillings turned into expensive crowns, implants to prevent the wearing away of my roots, deep cleanings to clean out bacteria that have been eating my bones underneath my gums, even having a post drilled into my maxilla because the tooth had to be extracted. (See it?) All because I didn't get regular cleanings every 6 months in my 20's.

Then my daughter Audrey began to have trouble with her wisdom teeth. She had one of these scans done of her jaw, and I saw her wisdom teeth coming in crazy, as mine had 40 years earlier. And I wondered, how bad would a scan of my teeth look? I wondered what it would look like with my missing tooth, and the root canals, etc. So I guesstimated it, and wondered out loud about it to my dentist, Dr. Amirali Fatahi. He kindly ordered a scan of my teeth, which I got a copy of and worked into the drawing I'd already started. Moral of the story? *Take Better Care of Your Teeth!*



Jillian's from Ipswich Street 2015 oil on canvas 24x36"

Jillian's from Ipswich Street

I knew I only had a few months to paint this summer so I chose nearby areas I'd thought of painting before.

The Bowker Overpass is a large, functional bridge that funnels traffic from the Fenway to Commonwealth Avenue or onto Storrow Drive. It is a large, solid structure that casts a dark shadow on Ipswich Street. The brightly lit structure at the end of the street currently houses a billiard and bowling establishment and is the beginning of the night clubs that line Lansdowne Street, which borders center and left field of Fenway Park. Colorful tour buses routinely drove down Ipswich to show tourists Fenway Park, some blinding me with their shiny mirrors as I worked. Here, I liked the contrast between the dark urban shadows under the bridge and the revamped, regenerated businesses at the end of the street.



Fenway Fire Dispatch 2015 oil on canvas 30x24"

Fenway Fire Dispatch

There is a radio tower above this structure in the Fenway that directly signals Boston fire stations regarding the dispatching of fire trucks to local fires.

One would never know; it is a lovely old building, and its function is unknown to most people that walk by. Its reflection in the Muddy River is often disturbed by Canadian geese or mallard ducks or the occasional heron or fish jumping. The phragmite reeds that line the river grew dramatically during the months I painted here, going from about 15 feet to 40 feet tall. It was difficult to know when to put them in; windy days made them act like fields of wheat, and people made trails in amongst them, hidden from the rest of the Fenway public. I'd hear sounds below me but not see who was making them. Then I'd notice someone staring up at me. One wonders what kind of activity is going on in there.



Clouds Over Building 2015 oil on canvas 20x20"

Clouds Over Building

There were windy days that made it difficult to work on the previous two paintings.

Afternoon clouds got kicked along by wind from above so their tops flew ahead of their slower moving, heavier bottoms, creating leaning pillars and wisps that signaled the wind direction. Rather than fight the wind outside, I opted to look out my huge northern-facing windows and paint the clouds. I've done similar paintings with this building in it... It's very helpful for getting a sense of scale. This is the most recently finished painting I've made; I put a scumble of yellowish atmosphere at the horizon line a week before the show went up.

Hopefully, I'll have 40 more years of paintings to show in 2056. I hope to still be around... I'll be 98. I hope you'll be around, too. See you then.

Just as it takes a village to raise a child, so also it takes a community to make an artist. I've been supported by a terrific community, and all these paintings - ALL this work couldn't have happened without it. I'd like to thank Gordon College, and specifically Bruce Herman and Peter Morse, for their excellent, tireless work in hanging and presenting this gorgeous show. The idea for the show originated with Bruce. I'd like to thank all the patrons who graciously allowed me to borrow their paintings back, and who shared their stories and homes with me during the process. They enriched me enormously. I'd like to thank Gallery NAGA, specifically Director Meg White and Associate Director Andrea Dabrila, who contributed countless hours to this effort, and former director Arthur Dion for his help editing this catalogue. Thanks to Karen Mulder for writing a terrific introduction, and Dana Salvo for taking excellent images of the entire show. I'd like to thank my friends, and South End Neighborhood Church, and colleagues at Boston University, Boston Trinity Academy, and Fenway Studios for your support. But most of all I thank my family; my Mom, Dad, and sisters, my wife Zoe — none of this happens without her — and my kids, Audrey, Bobby, and Suzie. Thank you ALL for making this possible. "To God be the glory, great things He hath done..."

Ed Stitt

Born 1957 Franklin Township PA

One Person Exhibitions

The Gallery at Barrington Center for the Arts, Gordon College Wenham "Ed Stitt My First Forty Years: Paintings and Drawings"	2016
Gallery NAGA Boston MA "Fenway and Beyond"	2015
Park Street Church Boston MA "Paintings and Prints"	2014
Gallery NAGA Boston MA "Everyday Glories"	2011
Gallery Grille Greenville PA "Ed Stitt"	2009-10
Gallery NAGA Boston MA "Radiant"	2009
Gallery NAGA Boston MA "Horizons"	2004
Gallery NAGA Boston MA "Daily Views"	2001
Fidelity Investments Boston MA "Paintings"	1999
Gallery NAGA Boston MA "New Paintings"	1999
Gallery NAGA Boston MA "Rochester Paintings"	1995
Gallery NAGA Boston MA "New Paintings of Boston"	1993
Gallery NAGA Boston MA "Produce Paintings and Portrait of Roland von Metzsch"	1993
Gallery NAGA Boston MA "New Paintings"	1992
Tibor de Nagy Gallery New York NY "Recent Paintings"	1992
Gallery NAGA Boston MA	1990
Gallery NAGA Boston MA	1988
Gallery NAGA Boston MA	1987
Audrey A. Ockenga Gallery Gordon-Conwell Seminary Hamilton MA	1983
Sampson Gallery, Theil College Greenville PA	1980

Selected Group Exhibitions

Gallery NAGA Boston MA "Dysfunctional Family: Portraits by Gallery NAGA Artists"	2016
Boston University Boston MA "Faculty Show"	2015
Borderland State Park North Easton MA "The 12th Annual Blanche Ames National Art Exhibition"	2014
Astrazeneca Hope Lodge Gallery Boston MA	2014
Stone Gallery, Boston University Art Gallery Boston MA	2013
"Artistic Anatomy in the American Academy, from Copley, Rimmer, and Eakins to Contemporary Artists"	
Brookline Town Hall Brookline MA "Town Hall Walls"	2013
Audio Concepts Boston MA "Fenway Studios Artists"	2013
Art Complex Museum Duxbury MA "Galvanized Truth – A Tribute to George Nick"	2012
William Scott Gallery Provincetown MA "National Figures"	2011
Vose Galleries Boston MA "Artists of the Fenway Studios"	2009
Logan Airport Boston MA "Painting fom Fenway Studios"	2007
Gallery NAGA Boston MA "Saturated Color, More or Less"	2006
Francesca Anderson Fine Art Lexington MA "Cities of the World"	2005
Boston City Hall Boston MA "375 Views of Boston"	2005
Shreve, Crump & Low Boston MA "Art of the Emerald Necklace"	2005
Cushing-Martin Gallery at Stonehill College Easton MA "You Are Here: Rediscovering Landscape"	2004
Newton Free Library Newton MA "Paintings from Observation in the Garden City"	2003
Gallery NAGA Boston MA "Max. 24" Wide"	2002

DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum Lincoln MA "Landscapes Seen and Imagined: Sense of Place"	2001	Helen Schlien Gallery Boston MA "Urban Images"	1984
Chapel Art Center Saint Anselm College Manchester NH "Landscape at the Millennium"	2000	People's Exhibition Hall Guangzhou China "China Interface '84" (Traveling exhibition of 15 American painters)	1984
DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum Lincoln MA "Get Real: Representational Paintings from the Permanent Collection"	1999	Federal Reserve Bank Boston MA "Fort Point Artists"	1983
Gallery NAGA Boston MA "Exterior View"	1999	Boston City Hall Boston MA "60 Boston Artists"	1983
St. Botolph Club Boston MA	1999	Boston Visual Artists Union Boston MA "Open Show"	1983
Gallery NAGA Boston MA "Work From the Fenway Studios"	1998	Audrey A. Ockenga Gallery, Gordon Conwell Seminary Hamilton MA	1982
Gallery NAGA Boston MA "Autobiographics"	1997	Public and Corporate Collections	
Davison Gallery, Roberts Wesleyan College Rochester NY	1996	Bain and Company Boston MA Bank of Boston Boston MA	
Gallery Henoch New York NY "The Realist Figure: Contemporary Perspectives"	1996	Cabot Corporation Boston MA Danforth Museum of Art Framingham MA	
Boston Athenaeum Boston MA "The Future of the Past: Fifteen Contemporary Realists Paint Boston"	1996	DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum Lincoln MA Devine, Millimet & Branch Manchester NH	
Sherry French Gallery New York NY "Mass Appeal: Art from Beantown and Beyond"	1995	Eastern Tool and Stamping Company Saugus MA Fidelity Investments Boston MA	
Gallery NAGA Boston MA "Paul Rahilly, Ed Stitt, Stuart Ober: Paintings"	1992	The Frost Company Andover MA Gilbert Realty Trust Boston MA	
Francesca Anderson Fine Art Lexington MA "Fenway Studios: A Group Show"	1992	Joy Realty Associates Inc. Boston MA Kaplan Corporation Brookline MA	
Tibor de Nagy Gallery New York NY "Group Show"	1991	Lannon Communications Rochester NY Smilow Cancer Hospital New Haven CT	
Boston Center for the Arts Boston MA "Above, Beyond, and Within the South End"	1989	Tetlow Realty Associates Inc. Boston MA Wellington Management Company Boston MA	
Fitchburg Art Museum Fitchburg MA "Monocular Vision"	1989	Bibliography	
Gallery NAGA Boston MA "Four Walls"	1985	"100 Boston Painters", Chawky Frenn, Schiffer Publishing, Ltd., 2012	
Newport Art Museum Newport RI "New England Landscape"	1984	"Galvanized Truth – A Tribute to George Nick" (Show Catalogue), Kimberly Alemian, 2012	
Gallery NAGA Boston MA "Gallery NAGA Artists"	1984	<i>The Boston Globe</i> , Cate McQuaid "Mathematical Precision," March 11, 2009	
		<i>New American Paintings</i> , Vol. 45, 2004	
		<i>American Arts Quarterly</i> , Karen Mulder, "Redeeming Boston, the Urban Landscapes of Ed Stitt," Summer 2003	

The Boston Globe, Cate McQuaid, "Solondz Enters the Space Where Life and Death Coexist," March 16, 2001

Bay Windows, Shawn Hill, "Speaking for Myself," December 11, 1997

The Improper Bostonian, Charles Guiliano, "Exhibitionism," June 21, 1995

The Fenway News, Lisa Fay, "Stitt Paints Fruits of Labor at Gallery NAGA," April, 1993

ARTnews, Garrit Henry, "Ed Stitt: Tibor de Nagy," September 1992

In, Larey Allen, "In the Arts," March 24, 1992

The Tab, March 17, 1992

The Heights, Aimee Walsh, "Boston at Peace," September 19, 1990

Art New England, Miles Unger, "Gallery NAGA Ed Stitt: New Paintings," July/August 1990

The Fenway News, Lisa Fay, "Painter Ed Stitt: A Fenway Rising Star," June, 1990

The Boston Globe, "Names and Faces," May 11, 1990

Bay Windows, Tom Grabosky, "People, Places & Things," May 3, 1990

Art New England, Paul Parcellin, October, 1988

Fenway News, Lisa Fay, "Finding the Fenway on Canvas," September 24, 1988

The Boston Globe, Robert Taylor, "Exhibits: Fresh Urban Eye," September 8, 1988

WCVB TV (Boston) 11pm News Entertainment, Dixie Whatley, September 8, 1988

South End News, Daniel Scott, "With a Stroke of the Brush," June 11, 1987

Boston Globe, Robert Taylor, "Exhibits: Urban Light," May 28, 1987

Boston Globe, Christine Temin, "A Pair of Strong Shows at NAGA, Chapel Galleries," December 5, 1985

Art New England, Eugene Narrett, April, 1983

WNEV-TV (Boston) program Something More: interviewed for segment "Boston Bohemians: The Fort Point Artists' Community," Broadcast 1983

Education

Massachusetts College of Art Boston MA 1987
MFA, Painting (study with Paul Rahilly and George Nick)

Private Drawing Lessons with Paul Rahilly and George Nick 1984-1987

Gordon-Cornwell Theological Seminary Hamilton MA 1981-1982

Kent State University Kent OH 1979
BFA, Painting

Blossom Art Program Kent State University 1978
Studied with Jack Beal

Teaching and Related Employment

Boston Trinity Academy Boston MA 2014 - present

Boston University College of Fine Arts Boston MA 2009 - present

School of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston MA 2003 - 07

School of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston MA 1998 - 99

Roberts Wesleyan College Rochester NY 1995

Rochester Institute of Technology Rochester NY 1994 - 96
College of Continuing Education

University of Rochester Memorial Art Gallery Rochester NY 1993 - 95

Massachusetts College of Art Continuing Education Program Boston MA 1987 - 03
Instructor, Life Drawing and Painting

Brookline Center for Adult Education Brookline MA 1987 - 91
Instructor, Drawing and Painting

Massachusetts College of Art Boston MA 1986
Figure Paintings Assistant

Emmanuel Gospel Center Boston MA 1981 - 82
Instructor, Drawing

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