

The Other Watercolor: the Case for Casein

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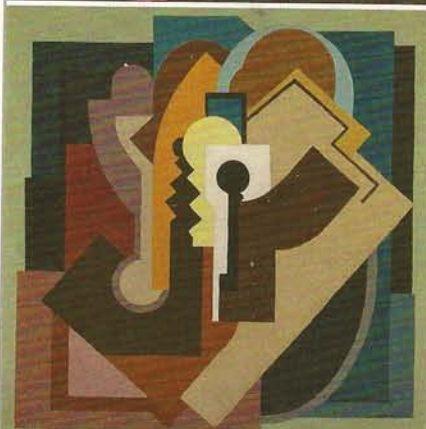
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Broad Landscape With a River (detail; oil, 80x116) by David Ligare

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FROM THE EDITOR, OUR CONTRIBUTORS AND READERS

Lessons & Lore Galore



WHEN I FIRST SAW David Ligare's serene landscapes (that's a detail of his *Broad Landscape With a River* on the cover), I was brought back to an exhibition of the work of Nicolas Poussin at the Metropolitan Museum of Art a few years ago. Looking at Ligare's work, I felt a solace that was accompanied by déjà vu, a sense of return. Ligare's vistas are informed by Poussin, by Homeric stories and ancient motifs, but he has taken these influences and distilled them, as in an alchemist's alembic, into a pure vision. We're thrilled we could pair Ligare with the poet (and classics major) Richard Stull ("**Literate Landscapes,**" page 32).

As always, we intend to show you the work of the best artists and provide, at the same time, the best instruction. In addition to Ligare's classical landscapes, you'll find Stephen Quiller's rhapsodic ones. Adept in all watermedia, Quiller explains the origins and uses of an ancient medium, casein, which has a "flat, velourlike surface" that imparts a lovely effect on its own or in concert with watercolor and acrylic ("**A Case for Casein,**" page 42)." Searching, too, for a range of effects, Charles Gibbons adds holographic additives and dried metallic pigments to acrylic with the result that his abstract compositions convey a shifting, shimmering veneer ("**Painting as Portal,**" page 58). Finally, four innovative artists—Joseph Crone, John P. Smolko, Arlene Steinberg and Shawn Falchetti—disclose the importance of the surfaces they work on as they achieve an enthralling range of effects ("**Colored Pencil Comes of Age,**" page 48).

And Mark Mehaffey takes HK Holbein's new line of acrylics for a spin (**Road Test**, page 72); Juliette Aristides analyzes master drawings to reinforce her lesson on diagonals (**Drawing Board**, page 26), and Daniel K. Tennant describes the parts of an airbrush and tells you how to use one (**Brushing Up**, page 66).

Mawee Bloomfield

Lifelong Learning

After months of being absolutely fascinated with the back and forth regarding Lucian Freud, I wanted to jump in with my two cents. I was fortunate as a child to live in an area where I had the opportunity to be tutored by people like Valentine

Aborgaste, Willem de Kooning, Larry Rivers and Andy Warhol, and in fact, as coincidence might have it, an art critic in Florida recently compared my latest work to that of Lucian Freud's. While I could never hope to even approach the kind of talent Freud had, I feel he's

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an absolute master, and if one takes time to study his paintings, he'll find that Freud's ability to create pathos with just one stroke of the brush is amazing.

I also wanted to say how much I enjoy *The Artist's Magazine*. I've been painting for more than 50 years; my most recent painting of Abraham Lincoln is now owned by Daniel Day-Lewis. I actually felt I wasn't likely to pick up anything useful from a periodical. I was very wrong in that regard, and I can't wait, each month, to receive the newest edition.

Ken Vrana, Cary, NC

After looking at some of my landscapes, I realized they were "fixed in time" and I became bored with them. Nature is ever-changing, never static.

While mowing the backyard, I glanced into the branches of a

70-year-old basswood tree. All the leaves looked alike to me; yet each one was desperately fighting to capture its share of sunlight. It struck me that each must "see" itself as a unique individual, different from its neighbor yet united in importance to the survival of the tree. I wondered if we humans don't all "look" alike to the leaves! So I painted a canvas with the top half full of dancing leaves, each one a bit different, over a group of marching individuals who all looked alike. I love this painting as it speaks my feelings.

I've also done a series on how our mothers' and others' voices follow us throughout our lifetimes by painting dual- and triple-faced portraits. These, also, speak loudly to me. I do not tire of them.

C.R. Lange (age 80) Ore City, TX

Judging Abstract Art?

I ask this question with all due respect. As a realist artist, I'd like to know how abstract art is judged. What makes one painting better than another? I can understand decorative qualities that arise from the colors used, but many artists have said they have nothing in mind when they start a painting. Dribbles, scribbles, smears and dabs that make no sense—put on a title that seems to have a deep meaning and add an artist's statement that appeals to the elite art community, and you have it made.

I guess beauty *is* in the eye of the beholder. Art museums display canvases that are nothing but one solid color. It seems as if the larger the work is, the more important it is. I guess I'll never understand. ■

Wynne Bittlinger, Ft. Wright, KY

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Artist: JD Hillberry



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