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Young Riders, Oil on Canvas, 36"x 48," Available at Reflections Gallery, San Juan Capistrano, CA

Horses and Riders from *The Oaks*

It was on the day of the Olympic trials at the riding grounds called *The Oaks* in San Juan Capistrano that I spent a number of hours wandering around with my camera. I got some photos of the world class jumpers in the act of their art, but nothing interested me more than the young riders, outside the main arena, during warm-up events. My inspiration was Edgar Degas, one of the great artists of all time who, among many other things, drew and painted riders at the horse track, making use of early photography to get it right how horses place their feet on the run. (It's not something you can tell by just watching.)



Ballerinas in Lavender, Oil on canvas, 36x48, on display at Diedrich's in San Juan

Child Ballerinas in Kirkland

Another subject that fascinated Degas was ballerinas. He did a number of fine studies (he rarely "finished" anything) of children during recitals. Earlier this summer we were in Seattle/Kirkland at the recital of daughter Acacia's gym, where she teaches gymnastics and dance. Taking advantage of our front row seats, I recorded flashless digital shots for possible paintings. And here they are, one large, two small, with colors that were never really there...but that's part of the beauty of what can be done with a brush.



Ballerinas, Number 2, Oil on canvas, 14x18



Ballerinas, Number 3, Oil on canvas, 14x18



Chief Black Bear, Oil on canvas, 24x18,
Courtesy of Rebecca Wilson

Portraits of the Arapaho

Seeing a number of my paintings on public display, Rebecca Wilson sent me an e-mail. She introduced herself as the great, great, great, great granddaughter of Chief Black Bear, a signer of the Laramie Peace Treaty. Rebecca wanted a portrait of the chief to present to her mother at Christmas. The big challenge was, no photograph was ever taken. In fact, he'd died in the prime of life, shot miners who didn't know or care about the peace treaty. His two children escaped; the son was raised by whites and later returned to his people as an Episcopalian missionary. Wilson did have a photo of him, dressed in his eastern seaboard clothes. With that and a number of other vintage photos of Arapaho people, I was able to come up with a reasonable rendition—at least in clothing and demeanor. Some of the photos I had to work with showed faces more severe, some a bit dull. But from the look of peace on the picture of his son, and the intelligence a leader would have, perhaps the result captured at least the spirit of the chief. In any case Rebecca Wilson is happy, ordering prints for family members, and predicting her mother's joy.



Arapaho Wife, Oil over acrylic, 60x 27

An Arapaho Wife

Taking advantage of the research for Chief Black Bear, I couldn't resist an attempt at the stately Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt. That was the name handwritten in white ink on the photo, taken in 1900 in Cheyenne, Wyoming (right near the homestead where my own father grew up). The painting hangs in our house...until someone worthy claims her.



Tree of Life, 4/10, Reduction Linocut, 11 1/4 x 11 1/4

Tree of Life (hand-made print)

Art-wise Anne's been more involved in drawing of late, and is now taking a class in two-dimensional design, all to sharpen her already strong intuitive approaches. In it all she keeps producing new pieces, or pulling new prints from earlier plates when there's a request. This one is in two colors on green Thai banana paper. In the edition of 10, this one is the fourth. The colors may well be different for each—both in inks as well as substrate (paper)—making each print very much an original.

A Couple of Recent Portraits (following page)

The commissions below are distinct by size and subject matter. Little Leah is a soon-to-be adopted child from China by a family which already has a number of such children. They took her picture while in China, as well as the little girl in pig tails, which we added in just for interest. The second portrait, of the Stedman family, is nearly 5 and a half feet wide, providing a striking focus for a large living room.



Pig Tails and Little Leah, Oil on canvas, 24x36, Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs Jim Crenshaw, Jackson, TN



The Stedman Family, Oil, 40x65, Courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Lee Stedman, Dana Point, CA (after a photo by Cheryl Mazzochio)