

# Egg as Medium: Egg Tempera

Egg tempera was used in the ancient world, including in the famously life-like [Fayum mummy portraits](#), produced in Egypt from around the 1st century BC to the 3rd century AD. In the early Christian era it was used to paint icons, a tradition that has survived in the Eastern Orthodox Church until today.

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAWPK\\_EiNns](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAWPK_EiNns) (using egg tempera as an underpainting to oil)
- [Egg Tempera Demonstration – YouTube](#) (egg tempera alone)
- <https://www.incredibleart.com/egg-tempera/> (article)



# Fayum Mummy Portraits

**Mummy portraits** or **Fayum mummy portraits** are a type of naturalistic painted [portrait](#) on wooden boards attached to [upper class mummies](#) from [Roman Egypt](#). They belong to the tradition of [panel painting](#), one of the most highly regarded forms of art in the [Classical world](#). The Fayum portraits are the only large body of art from that tradition to have survived. They were formerly, and incorrectly, called Coptic portraits.

<https://smarthistory.org/egyptian-mummy-portraits-faiyum-portraits/>

First Century CE









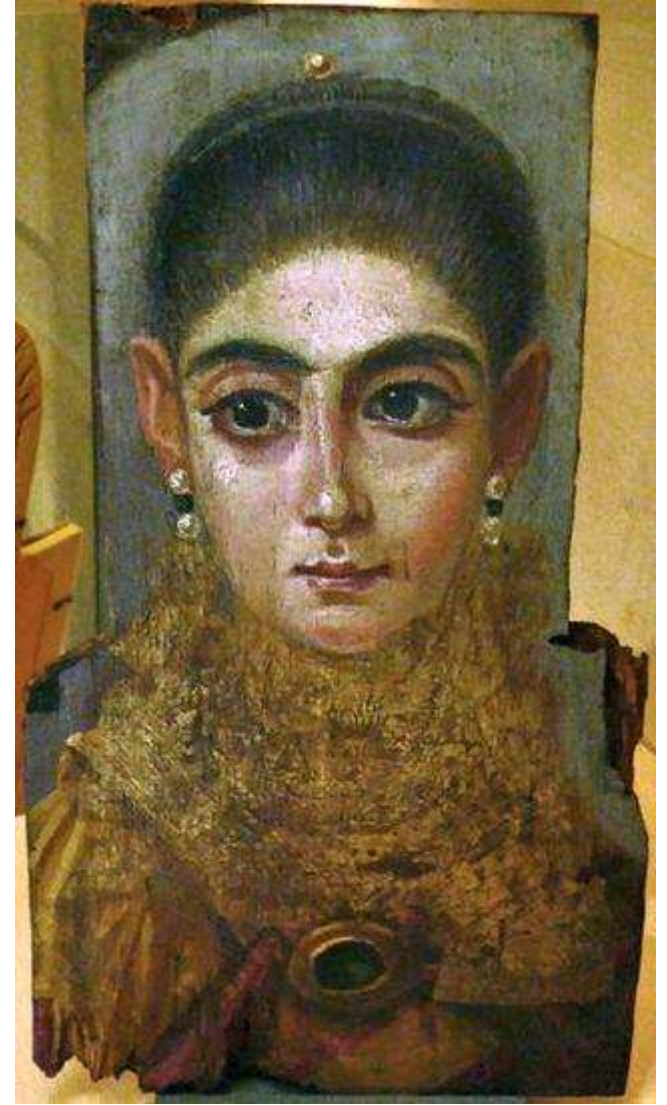




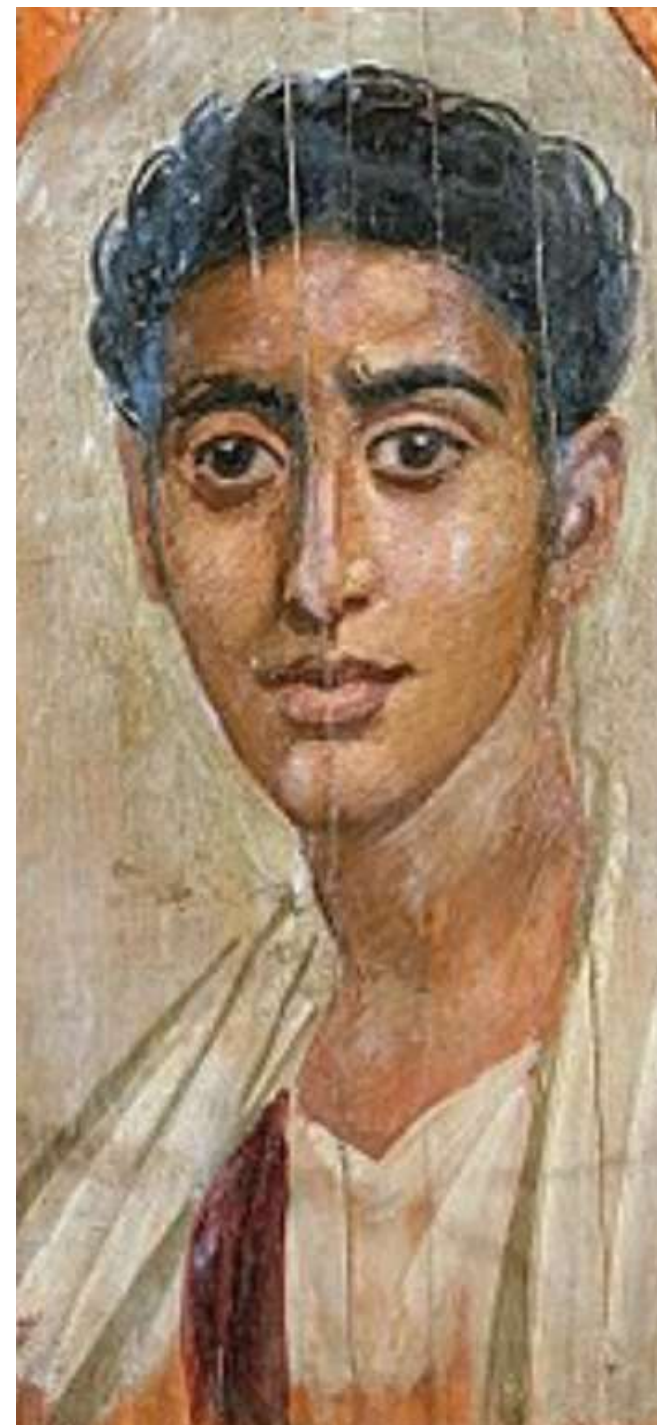












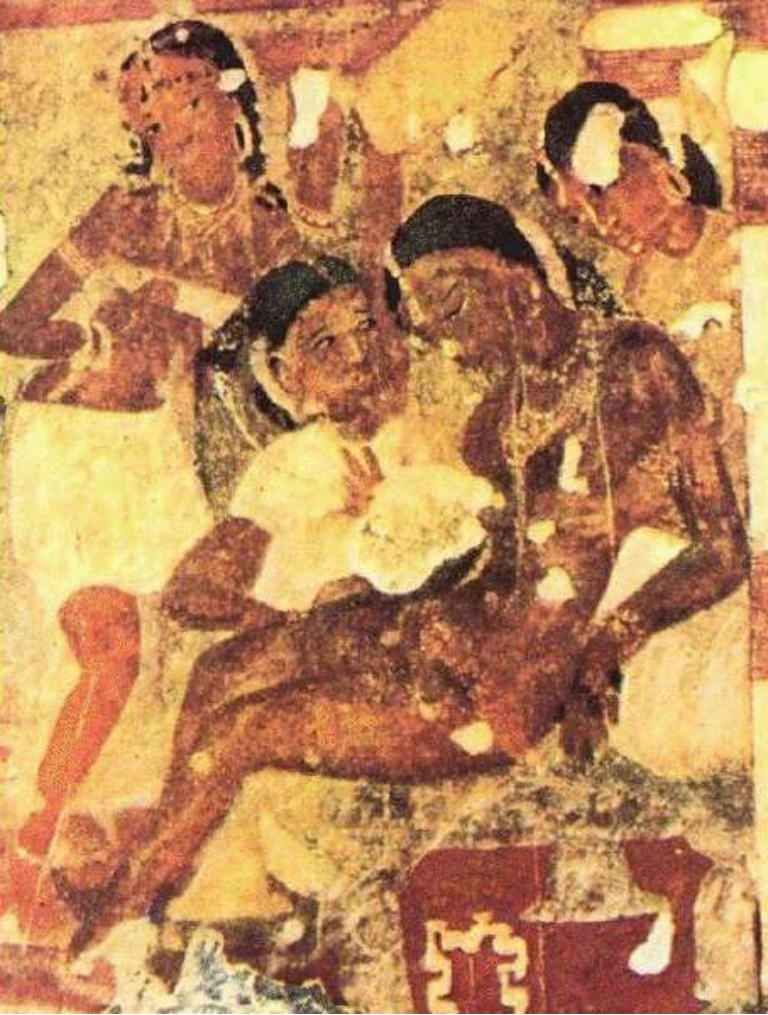


# Bagh Cave Paintings

The **Bagh Caves** are a group of nine rock-cut monuments, situated among the southern slopes of the Vindhya in **Bagh** town of Dhar district in Madhya Pradesh state in central India. These are renowned for mural **paintings** by master **painters** of ancient India. The Bagh Caves were quarried in the 5th -6th century AD, in the very late stages of Buddhism in India, and long after most of the [Indian Buddhist Caves](https://www.outlookindia.com/traveller/mp/videos/fascinating-bagh-caves/) had been built, many of them since the 2nd or 1st centuries BCE.

<https://www.outlookindia.com/traveller/mp/videos/fascinating-bagh-caves/>







# Medieval-Early Renaissance

While medieval artists decorated the interiors of churches and secular palaces in fresco, egg tempera was used in almost all small-scale panel paintings until the 15th century, when Flemish artists such as Jan van Eyck (1390–1441) increasingly favored the medium of oil painting.

Although the icon painters continued to work in egg tempera, the medium mostly lay dormant for the next three hundred years.

<https://blog.artweb.com/how-to/egg-tempera-medium/> (web page)

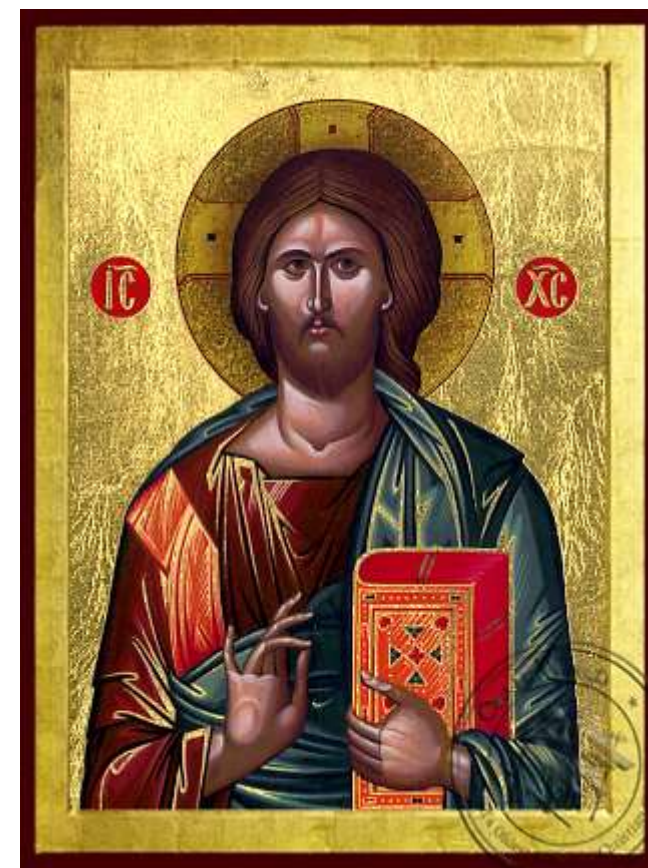
<https://youtu.be/IOzjUGuCib0> (icon painting process—holy family)

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YqTbqKCiYJw> (overview—Smart History)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8y1LoAgYMU> (How an icon is made)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owDaqkUj1cw> (icon painting at St. Elizabeth Convent in Belarus)































# Egg Tempera Revival

Then, in the 19th century, the English fell in love with Italy. Numerous Brits took up residence in Florence and began to explore the city's archives. In 1844 an Englishwoman, Mary Merrifield, rediscovered, translated, and published Cennini's 14th century manuscript, *Il Libro dell'Arte*. A second, more accurate translation appeared in 1899 by Christiana J. Herringham. At the same time, in response to the increasing mechanization of the Industrial Revolution, the Arts and Crafts movement in Europe and North America encouraged painters to experiment with handmade paints and traditional working methods. Inspired by these events, five British artists formed the "Society of Painters in Tempera" in 1901.

<http://vancouver-mastersgalleryltd.blogspot.com/2016/02/canadian-realism-and-egg-tempera-revival.html> (web page)





# Pre-Raphaelites

The Pre-Raphaelites toyed with egg tempera in their quest to recreate the traditions predating Raphael and his contemporaries.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=miDGBdoCBok>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11Jo-WILkhg>

In 20th century North America artists appreciated this age-old artistic tradition by honoring its use in their contemporary artwork.





# Simeon Solomon (1840-1905)

**Simeon Solomon** was a British painter associated with the [Pre-Raphaelites](#) who was noted for his depictions of Jewish life and same-sex desire. His career was cut short as a result of public scandal following his arrests and convictions for attempt [sodomy](#) in 1873 and 1874.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyuRlyB-H-8&t=7s>





# Marianne Stokes (1855-1927)

Marianne Stokes, born Marianne Preindlsberger, was an Austrian painter. She settled in England after her marriage to Adrian Scott Stokes, the landscape painter, whom she had met in Pont-Aven. Stokes was considered one of the leading women artists in Victorian England. *Candlemas Day* was made after working in Holland and recalls Johannes Vermeer as well as more modern impressionist images of Dutch country girls. The subject was also influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites and Stokes was part of the revival of medieval egg tempera paint, applied in tiny strokes, which created the pale, pure effect here.









# 20<sup>th</sup> Century Egg Tempera

In 1920 Daniel Thompson, a professor at Yale School of Fine Art, began teaching a course in tempera, creating a new generation of painters. A strong collection of early Italian art at the Yale Art Gallery augmented his teachings and further fueled interest. In 1936 Thompson published two books: his translation of Cennini's manuscript, and *The Practice of Tempera Painting*, a contemporary description of the Italian Renaissance working method. Thompson's books are still available and popular among tempera painters. Throughout the 1930s many notable American artists experimented with egg tempera or tempera grassa: Thomas Hart Benton, Isabel Bishop, Reginald Marsh, Ben Shahn, and John Sloan, to name a few. The leading 20th century practitioners of tempera include George Tooker, Paul Cadmus, Jared French, and Andrew Wyeth (who learned it from his brother-in-law, Peter Hurd). In 1973 a well-known egg tempera artist, Robert Vickrey, published a book on tempera painting entitled *New Techniques in Egg Tempera*. It discusses both traditional and nontraditional ways to work with egg tempera.



# Isabel Bishop (1902-1988)

Bishop studied under [Kenneth Hayes Miller](#) at the [Art Students League of New York](#), where she would later become an instructor. She was most notable for her scenes of everyday life in Manhattan, as a member of the loosely-defined 'Fourteenth Street School' of artists, grouped in that precinct. [Union Square](#) features prominently in her work, which mainly depicts female figures. Bishop's paintings won the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award, among other distinctions.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9HQ8LLeHTk>
- [https://www.westernmassnews.com/better/new-art-exhibit-featuring-isabel-bishop-opening-at-springfield-museums/video\\_50ca5fd3-c55f-51fe-9ba9-6be356cd68e7.html](https://www.westernmassnews.com/better/new-art-exhibit-featuring-isabel-bishop-opening-at-springfield-museums/video_50ca5fd3-c55f-51fe-9ba9-6be356cd68e7.html)





























# Frank Hinder (1906-1992)

Francis Henry Critchley Hinder was an Australian painter, sculptor and art teacher. A founding member of the Contemporary Art Society in Sydney, he had a strong interest in cubist and constructivist principles, theories of dynamic symmetry, and philosophies of theosophy and anthroposophy.

During the Second World War, he worked with the Australian Camouflage Unit, designing the 'Hinder Spider', a portable camouflage frame for soldiers. Hinder envisioned this project through an artistic lens, later explaining: 'My work... was connected with light, colour, tone, shadows, optical effects and illusions and so on – all for a very different purpose but nevertheless related to problems which concern the artist.' He was posted to New Guinea, where he was lucky to escape from a burning plane crash that became a powerful subject for his art. Hinder translated the trauma he experienced from this incident into a series of small watercolours, culminating in [\*Bomber crash\*](#) 1943, which evokes the glorification of speed and mechanical energy embraced by the futurists.

























# Andrew Wyeth (1917-2009)

"Mindful of the dangers inherent in practiced facility with his watercolor brushes he has put them away in moth balls for a season and, during the past year, has been devoting himself to tempera painting, employing a technic that imposes strict disciplines.

"In his temperas Wyeth's objective is to cover up his brush strokes and obtain a sense of freedom through pattern rather than technic. He paints these pictures with a single sable brush not over 3/4 of an inch long.

"These are done on Masonite upon which three coats of whiting mixed with casein glue are applied as a ground. The pulverized glue is heated, in water, in a double boiler. Wyeth sandpapers the final coat to a very smooth finish. The panel is made rigid by a framework attached to the back. He paints with dry colors mixed on his palette, as he works, with distilled water and egg yolk.

"His procedure is to make a monochrome underpainting in black ink. The colors, applied over this black and white, have a quality of weight and depth preferred to the result of direct painting in color. This is in accordance with the traditional method of old masters who used this medium.

"This turning from the freedom of watercolor to the exactions of tempera illustrates the intelligent purpose of a young artist in seeking strength and breadth as foundation for the work he hopes to do later on. Through his tempera paintings he is acquiring the habit of accuracy and is seeking an intimacy with nature which he feels he cannot attain with his watercolor brush alone. Thus fortified he believes his watercolors, though painted in a burst of enthusiasm, are more likely to be informed and interesting in every detail.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7oY5WNAgb90> (Christina's World)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0vz7Qb\\_UDI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0vz7Qb_UDI) (interview)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JbE99DVaudo> (bio)









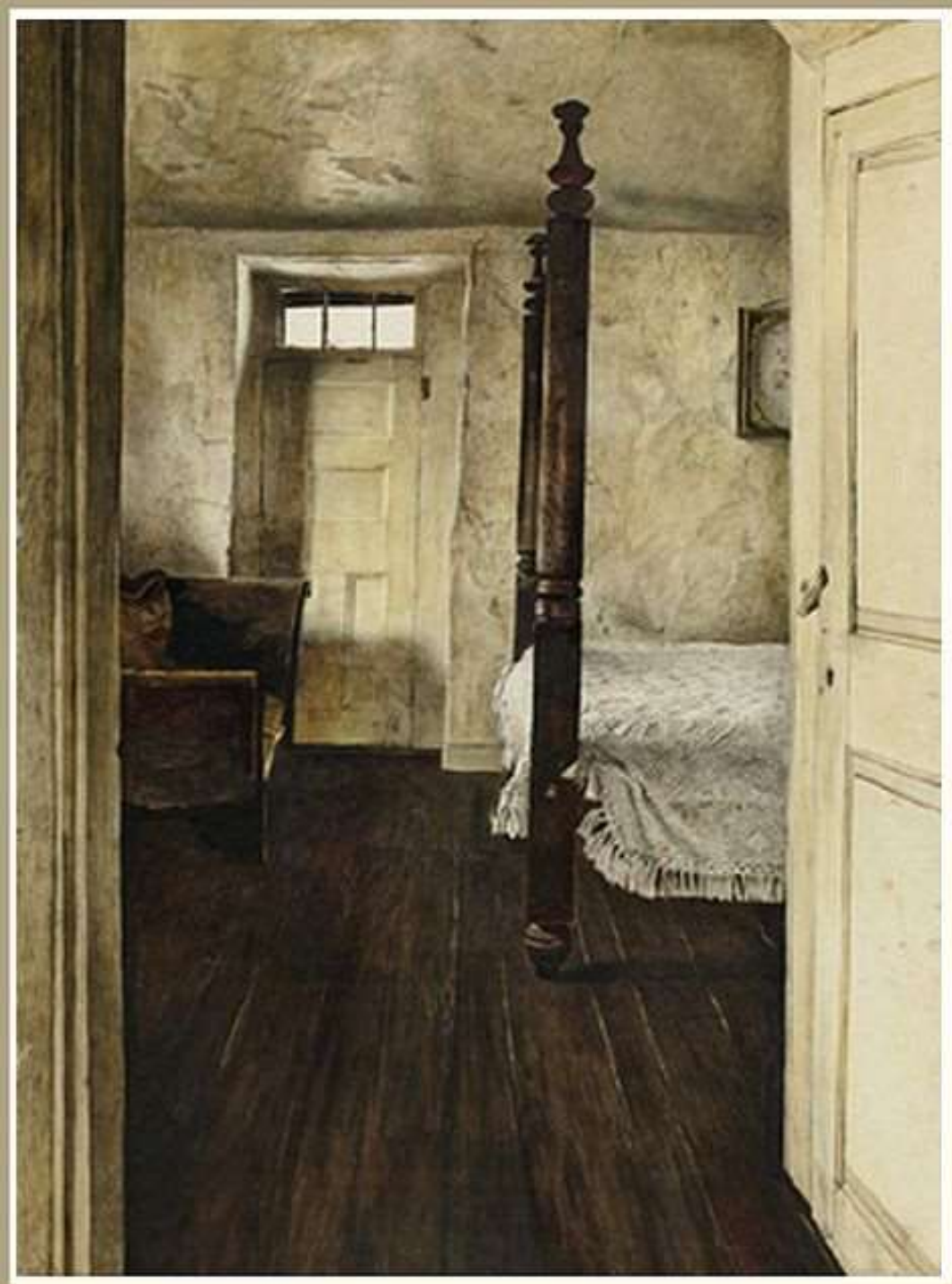




















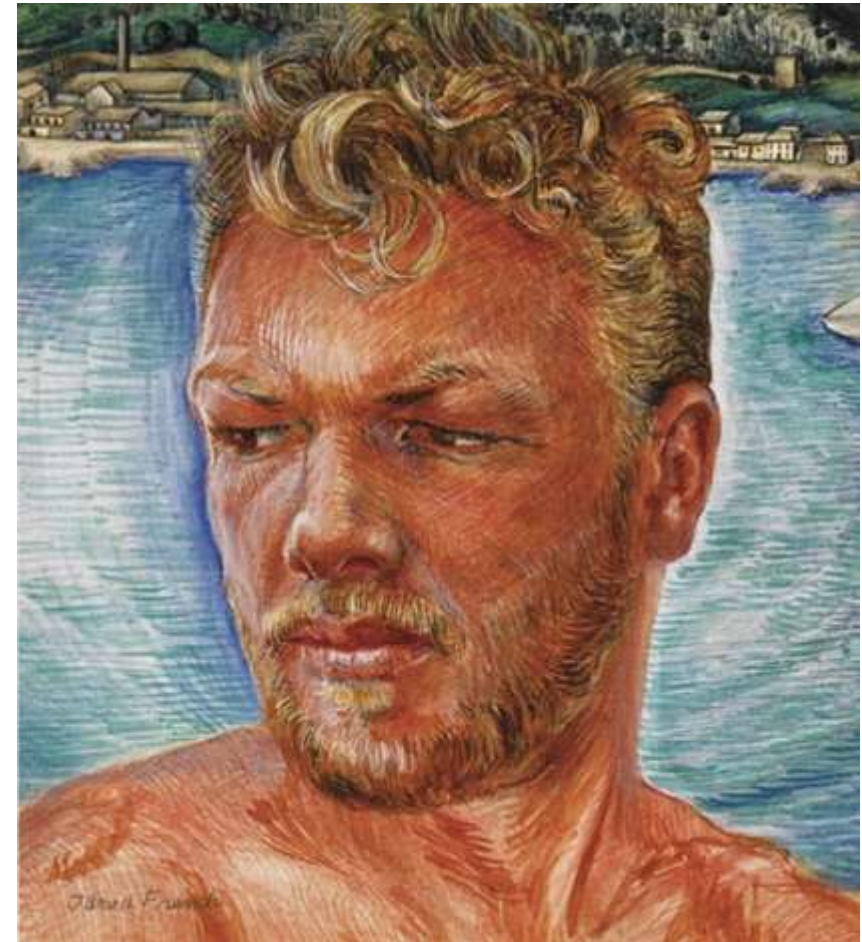






# Jared French (1905-1988)

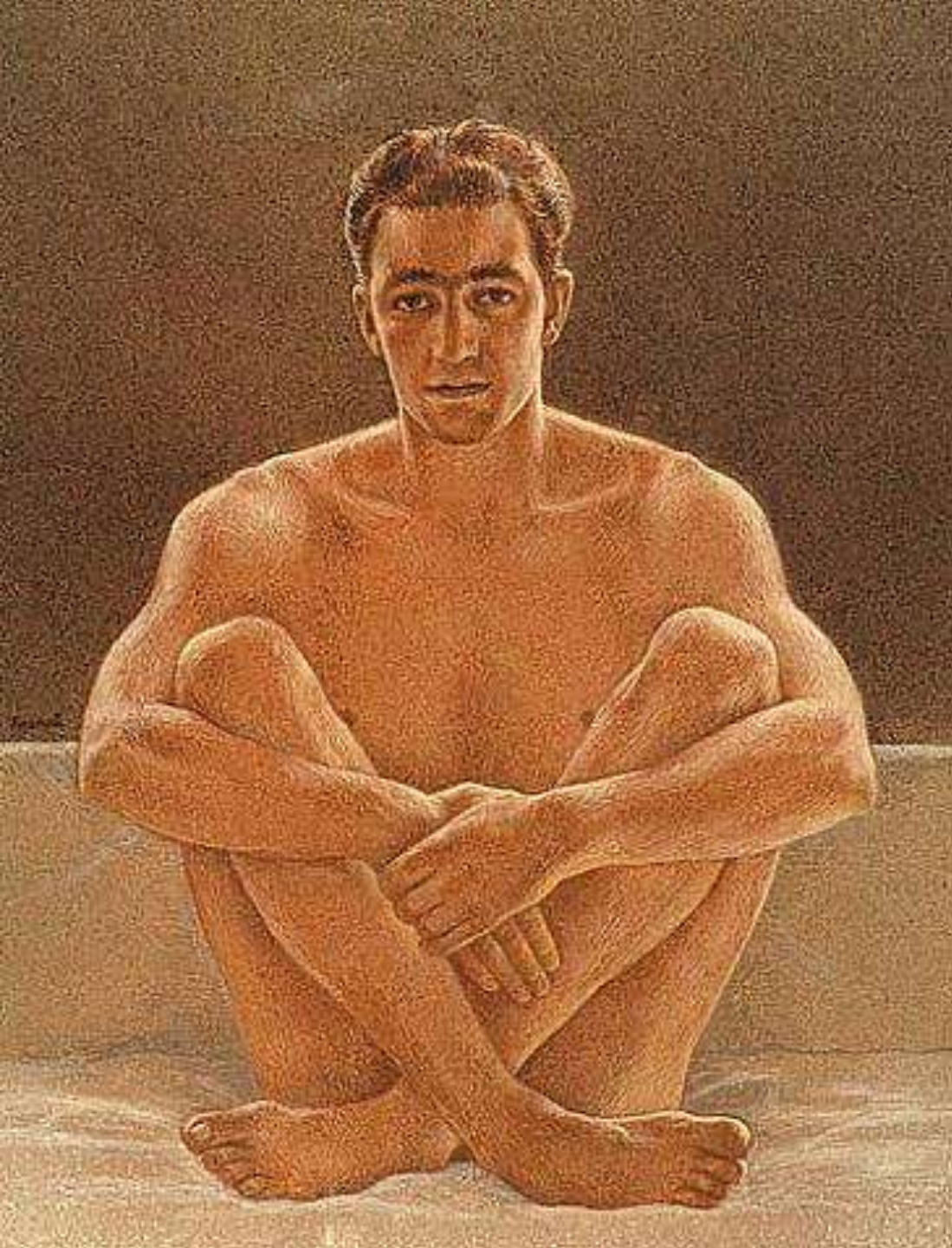
**Jared French** was an American [painter](#) who specialized in the medium of [egg tempera](#). He was one of the artists attributed to the style of art known as [magic realism](#) along with contemporaries [George Tooker](#) and [Paul Cadmus](#).

















# Paul Cadmus (1904-1999)

Paul Cadmus was an American artist widely known for his egg tempera paintings of gritty social interactions in urban settings. He also produced many highly finished drawings of single nude male figures. His paintings combine elements of eroticism and social critique in a style often called magic.

**Paul Cadmus** was one of those influential gay American artists of all time. His take on sexual identity dramatically shaped 20th century painting, along with **Thomas Eakins, Marsden Hartley, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Andy Warhol, Keith Haring** and **Robert Mapplethorpe**. Gay artists were frequently not fully a part of the society that they portrayed, taking on the role of outsider instead. From that point of view they found innovative, revolutionary ways of offering their art.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSfVjN\\_Z5SM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSfVjN_Z5SM)







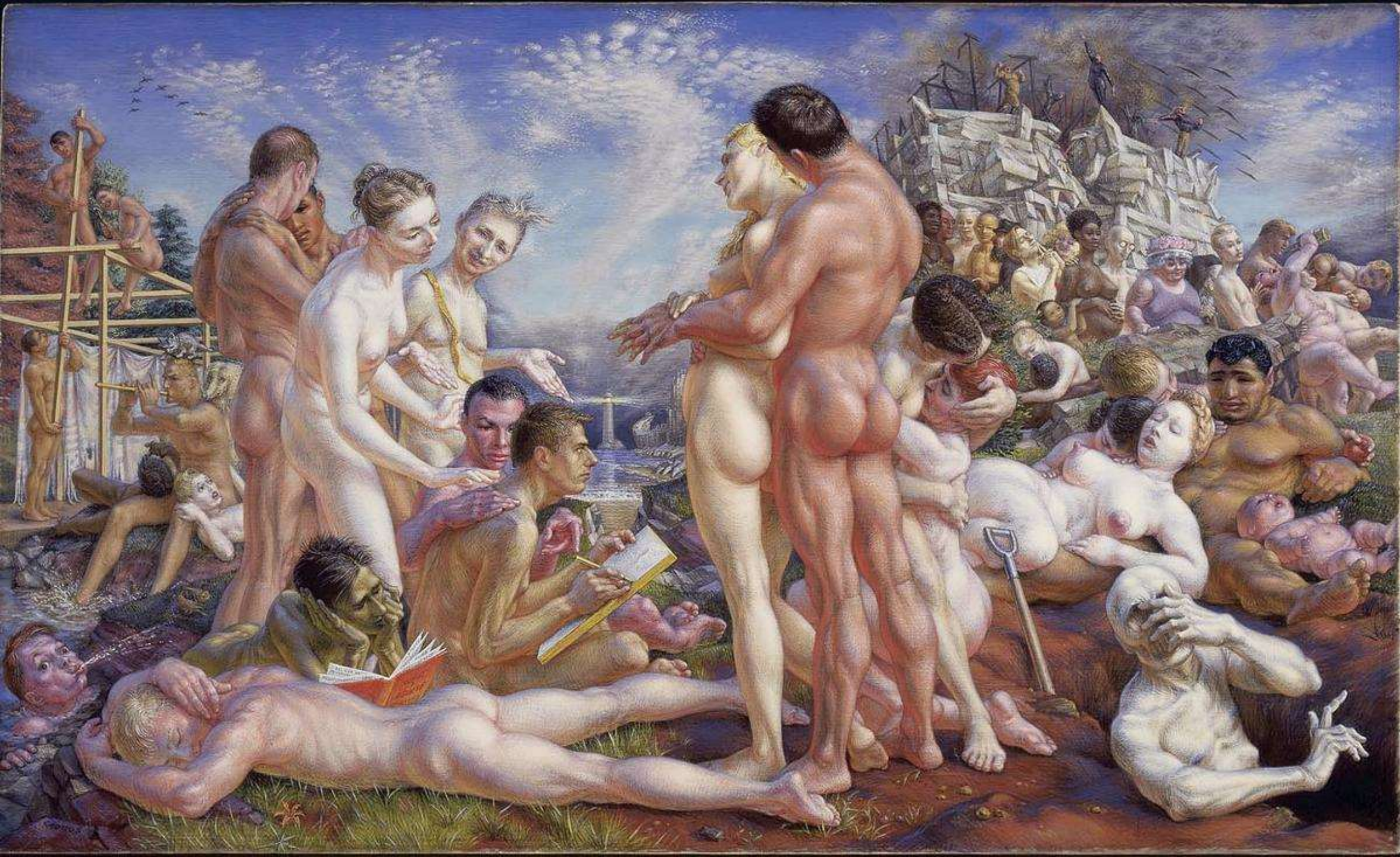
























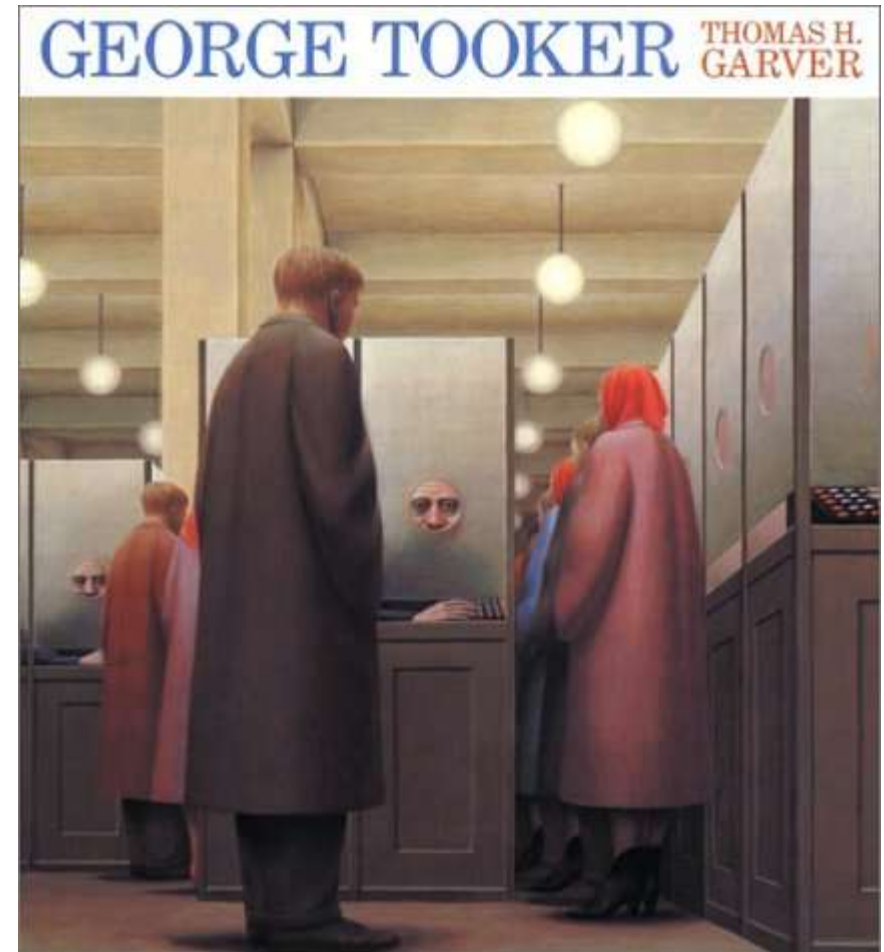


# George Tooker (1920-2011)

**George Clair Tooker, Jr.** (August 5, 1920 – March 27, 2011) was an American [figurative painter](#). His works are associated with [Magic realism](#), [Social realism](#), [Photorealism](#) and [Surrealism](#).<sup>[1][2]</sup> His subjects are depicted naturally as in a photograph, but the images use flat tones, an ambiguous perspective, and alarming juxtapositions to suggest an imagined or dreamed reality. He did not agree with the association of his work with Magic realism or Surrealism, as he said, "I am after painting reality impressed on the mind so hard that it returns as a dream, but I am not after painting dreams as such, or fantasy." In 1968, he was elected to the [National Academy of Design](#) and was a member of the [American Academy of Arts and Letters](#). Tooker was one of nine recipients of the [National Medal of Arts](#) in 2007.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5jX3-CFDUE>



































# Alex Coleville (1920-2013)

Canadian Egg Tempera Painter

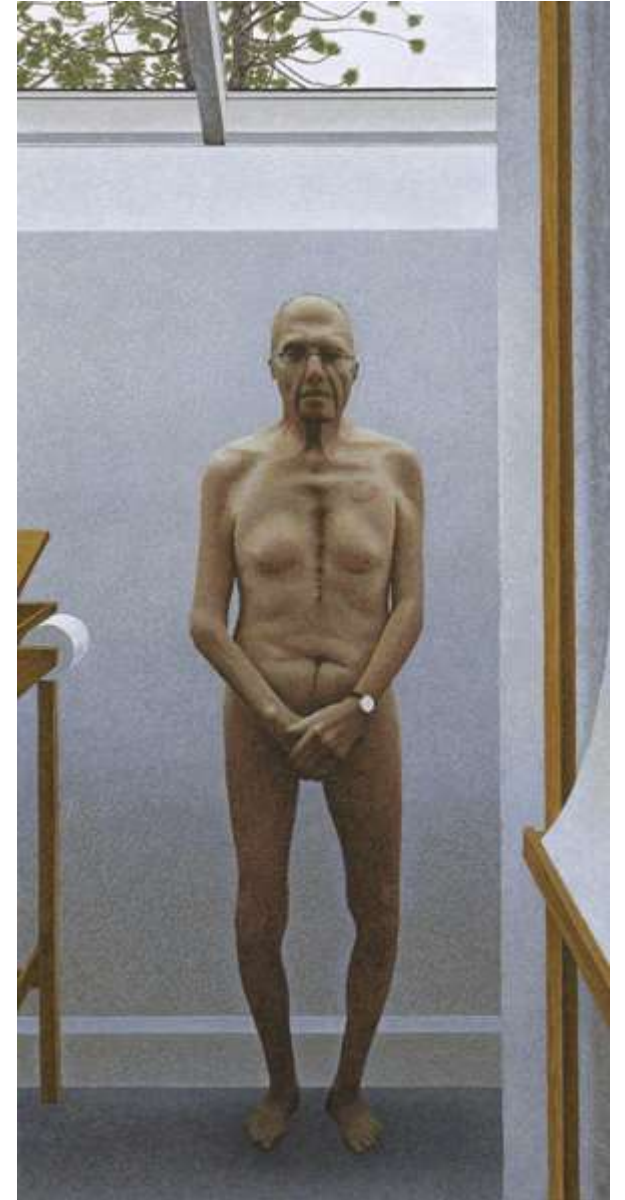
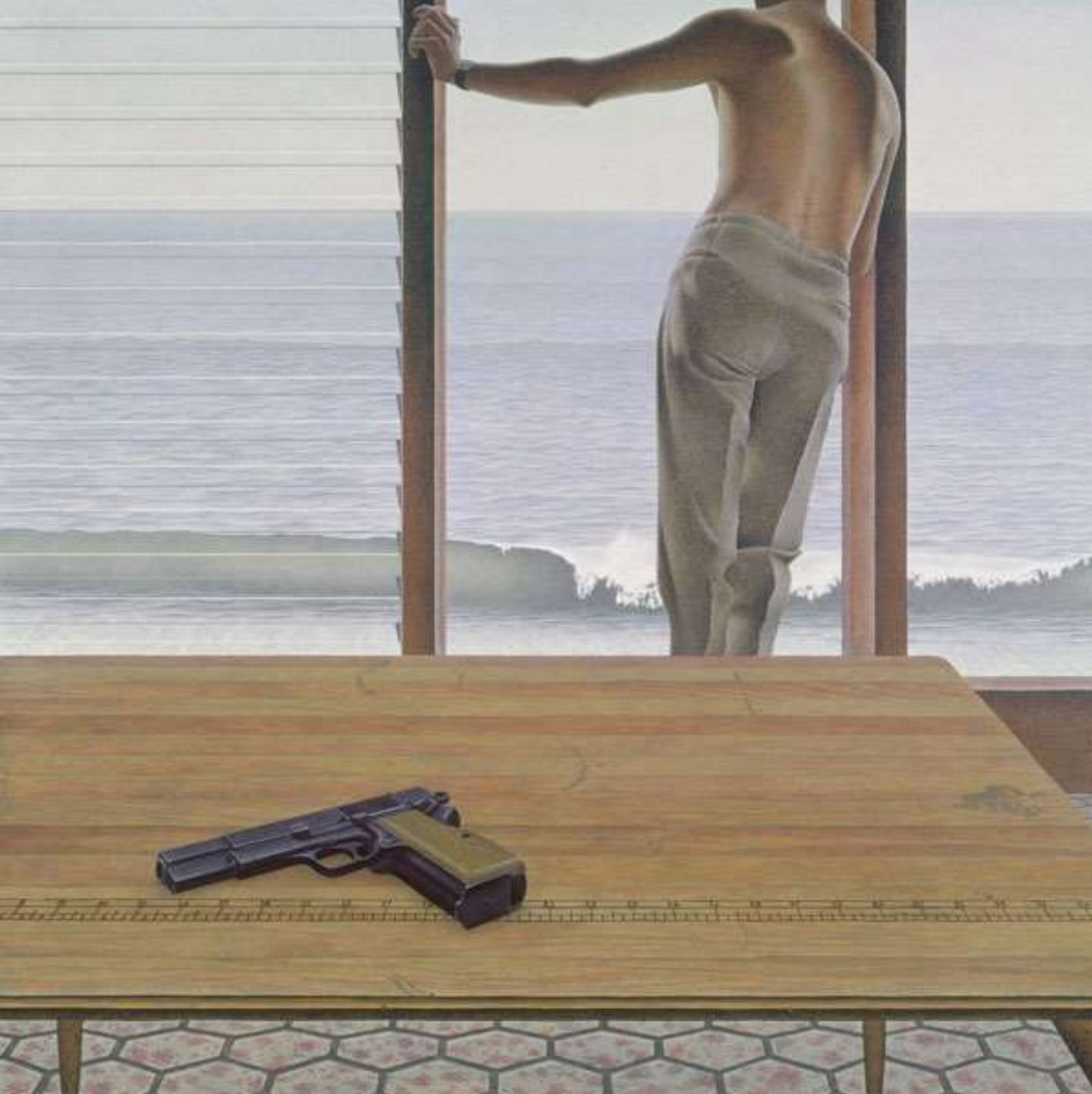
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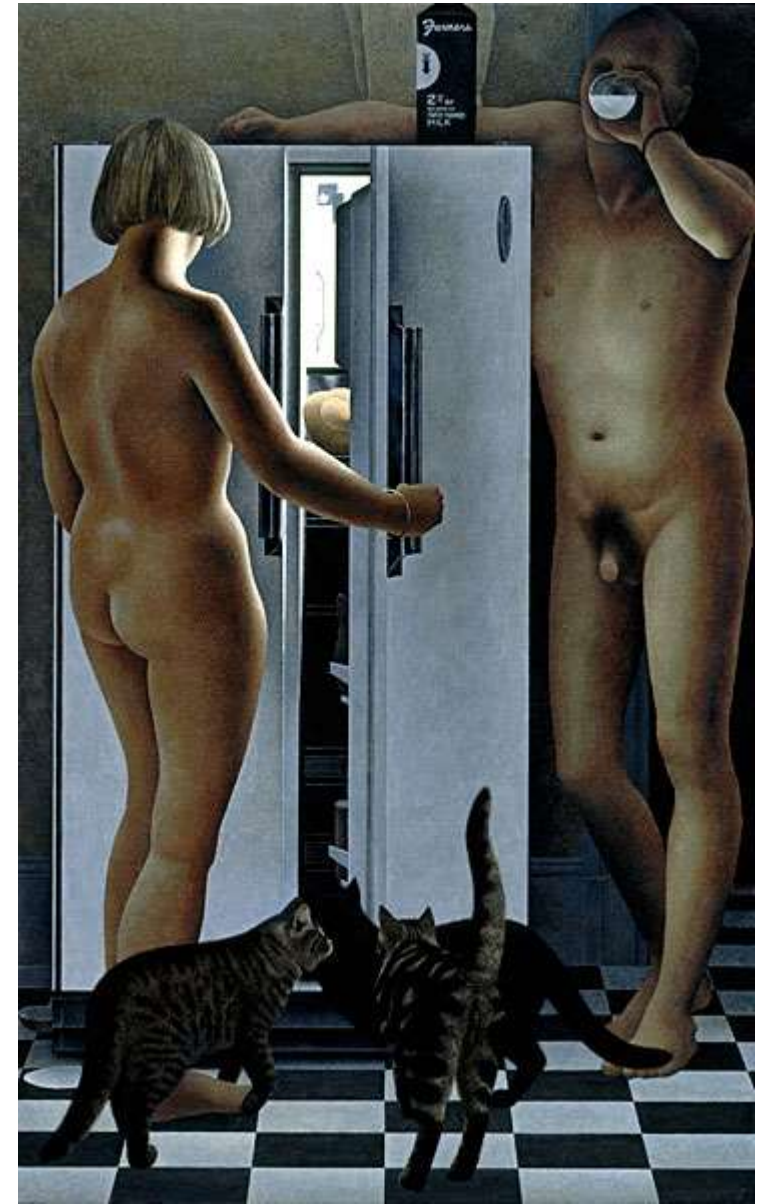














# Tom Forrestall

Forrestall's art has been classified as Magic Realism – an imprecise term often used to describe the work of a coterie of east-coast Canadian painters who emerged after the Second World War (Alex Colville, Christopher Pratt, Mary Pratt). Although their geographic roots, styles and vocabularies were similar, these artists applied themselves differently, each adapting naturalism in a personal way.

As an artist, Tom Forrestall is one of the leading figures associated with the visual arts of the Maritime region. His work has been exhibited and represented in every major public collection in the region and beyond, as well as in solo exhibitions in many prominent galleries worldwide.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wimele9i0WE>



















# Koo Shadler

Koo Schadler graduated from Tufts University in 1984 with a BA in Art History. After graduation she traveled throughout Europe and eventually settled in Florence, Italy, so she could look at Renaissance art daily. On returning to the states in 1986 she moved to California where she was introduced to egg tempera through artist Chester Arnold at the College of Marin. In the 90's Koo returned east and settled in a small town in Southern New Hampshire. For three years she studied classical oil painting with Numael and Shirley Pulido, while pursuing egg tempera studies on her own. Eventually she selected egg tempera and silverpoint as her primary mediums.

Koo is a Master painter of The Copley Society of Boston. She is a contributing editor at The Artist's Magazine and a board member of the Society of Tempera Painters. Koo teaches painting and design workshops around the US and abroad. Her work is represented by the Arden Gallery in Boston, MA. Her paintings and drawings are in more than 400 private and corporate collections, and many museums nationwide.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TcPOdQc-sSU>







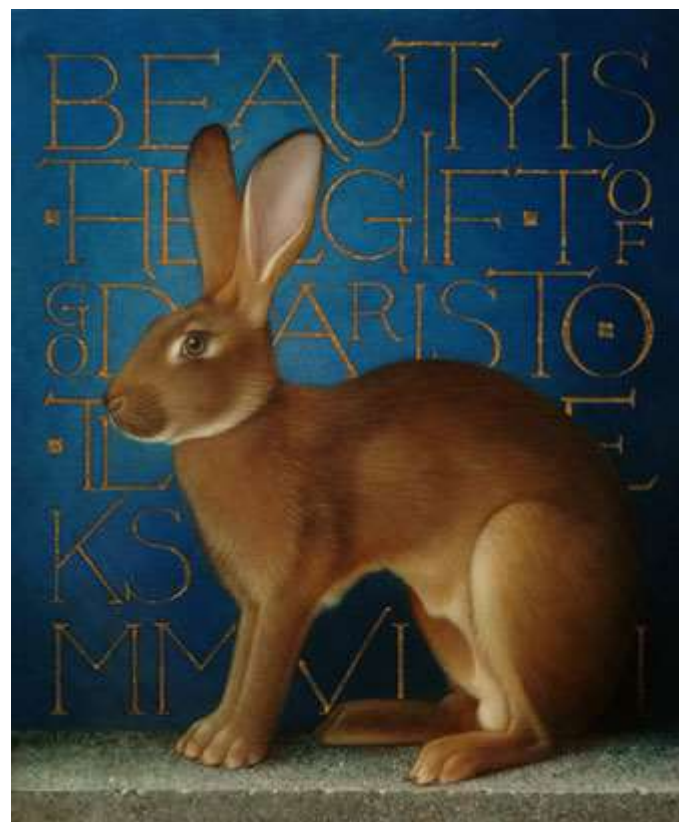






















# Colin Fraser

Colin Fraser is a contemporary Scottish painter, who is recognized for his intricate still lifes, interiors, and landscapes. He was born in Glasgow, Scotland in 1957 and received training to become a teacher at Brighton Polytechnic in England. Fraser taught courses in art for several years in the seaside town of Worthing, England. He moved to Sweden in 1981 to fulfill a teaching position, but left this role in 1983 to pursue painting and to exhibit his work full time. As an artist he has mastered watercolors, oils, and acrylics. However, he preferred a medium that was more convenient for traveling than oil and more durable than watercolor. Thus, he began reading books about the egg tempera painting technique and taught himself. This painting technique was the primary technique used during the Byzantine Period and the Italian Renaissance. The whites of egg yolks are mixed with pigment, it's a permanent, quick drying mixture, and creates stunning effects within works of art. Egg-tempera technique gives Fraser's work a translucent, bright quality, which makes his compositions feel extremely open and freeing. The artist says; "It's a medium fraught with technical difficulties, but therein lies its charm. Brushstrokes dry instantly and are never fully opaque, so just about every mark the painter makes shows." Colin Fraser and his wife currently live in Sweden with their two children.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TN\\_4kOkVU8Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TN_4kOkVU8Q)























# Altoon Sultan

Wanting to share her love of egg tempera paint, Altoon wrote an instructional book on the medium, *The Luminous Brush*, which was published in 1999 and is currently available at [Google Books](#). She now paints exclusively in that medium. More recent additions to her body of work are abstractly designed wall textiles using the traditional technique of rug hooking, prints using cardboard and potatoes, drawings based on Islamic design, small drawings, and small boxed paintings. She has also written a blog, [Studio and Garden](#), which attempted to integrate her daily life on a beautiful old former hill farm in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont, where she's lived since 1994, with her art work and her musings on the arts, on nature, and on some of life's questions.

All paintings are egg tempera, using "glair", which is the beaten white of the egg; they are painted on calfskin parchment stretched on a panel.

<https://www.altoonsultan.com/recent-paintings.html>



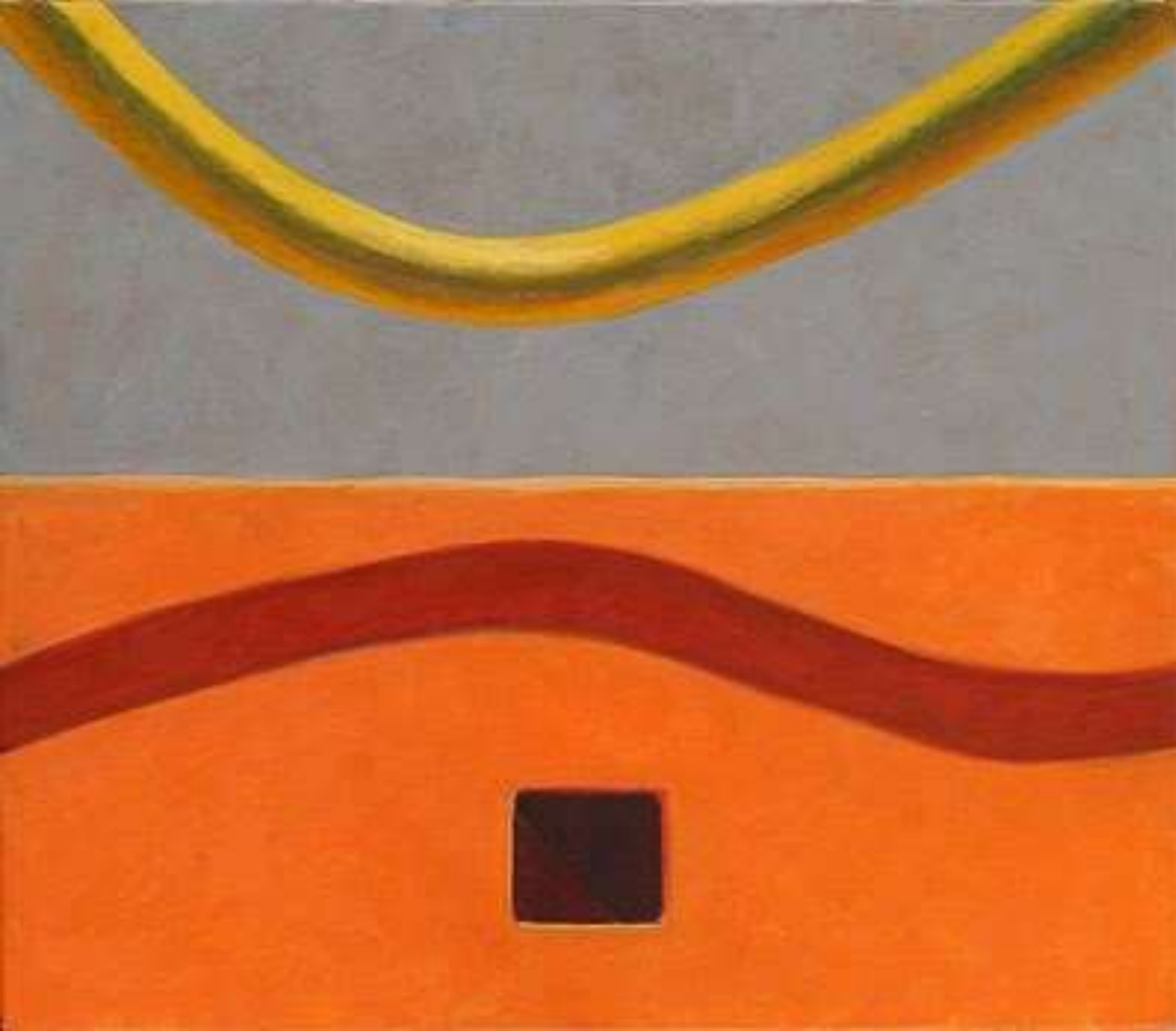


































# Arturo Rivera (1945-2020)

Arturo Rivera was born in Mexico City in 1945. He studied painting at Academia de San Carlos in Mexico City (1963-68); and silk-screen process and photo-silk screen process at The City Lit Art School of London (1973-74).

He lived eight years in New York City where he worked as a kitchen helper, construction worker and as a worker in a paint factory to support his painting. In 1979 artist Max Zimmerman saw Rivera's work at the Latin American Institute in Madison Street and invited him to Munich as an assistant professor at the Kunstakademie.









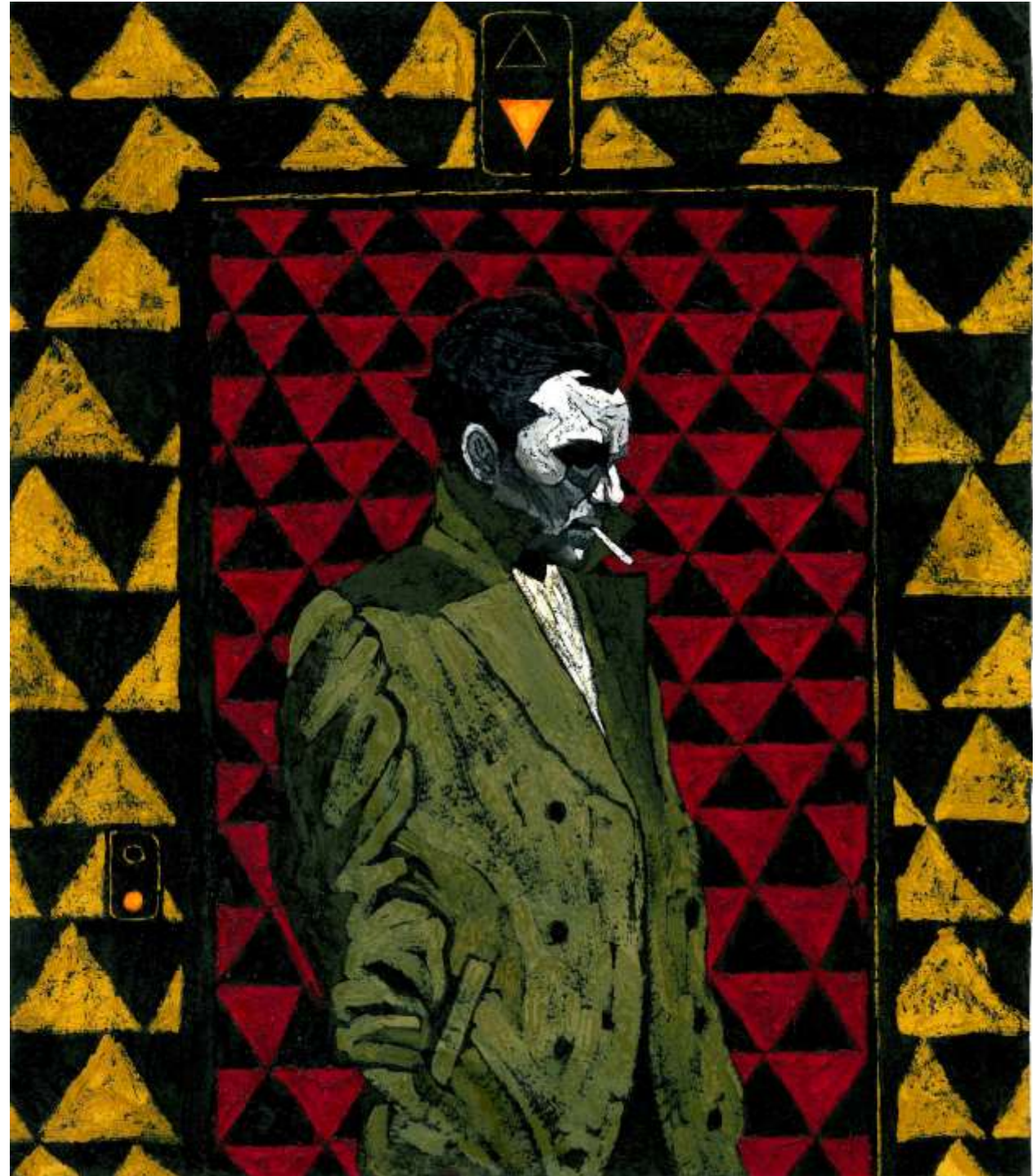
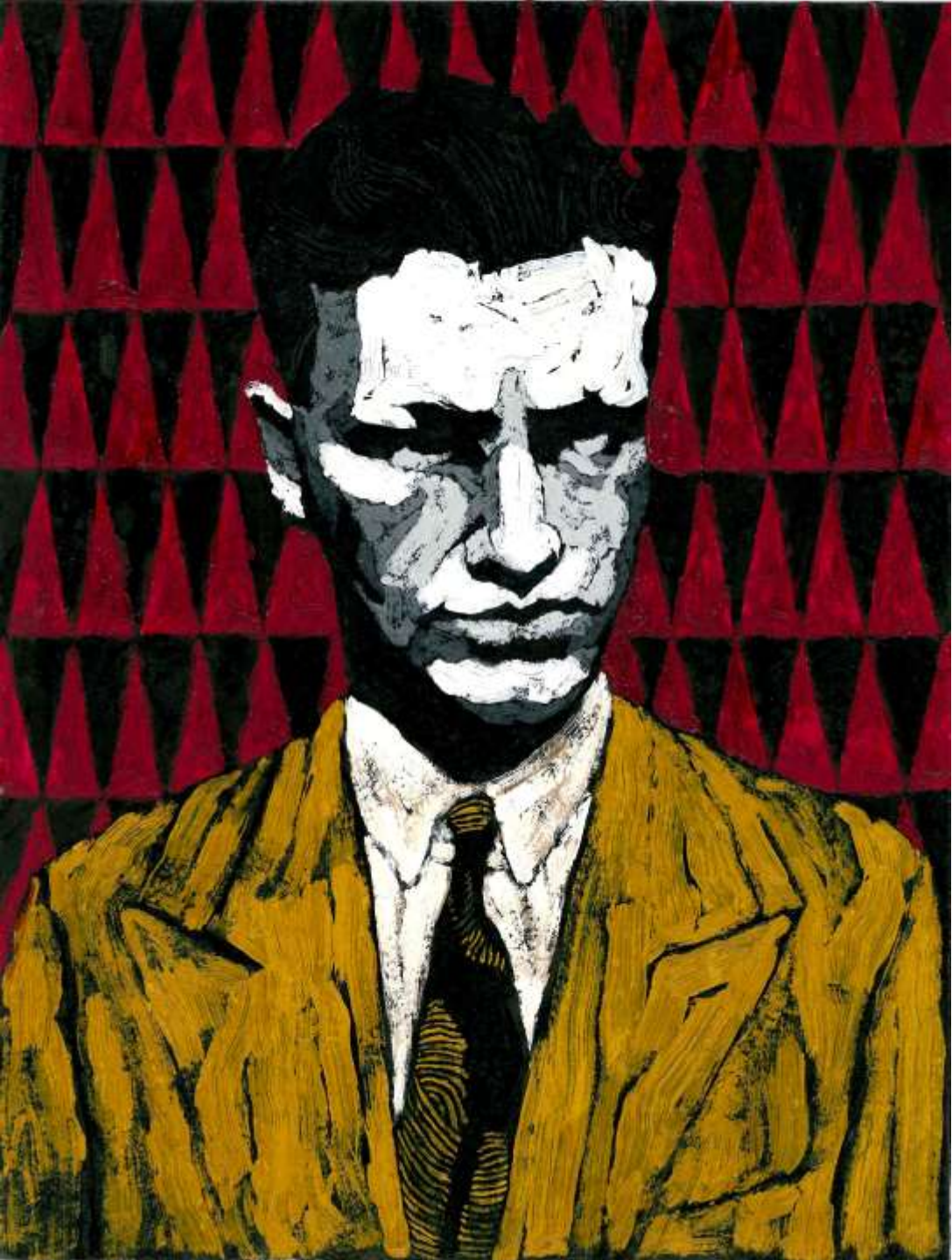
# Control Terminus

[https://www.behance.net/control\\_terminus](https://www.behance.net/control_terminus)

Egg Tempera in mixed media

















# Assignment Suggestions...

- Experiment with egg tempera (if you don't have powdered pigments, you can crush chalk or dry pastels)
- Experiment with crosshatching and layers
- Capture stillness in an artwork
- Use egg tempera in a mixed media format