



CANADIAN ARTIST PAUL VAN GINKEL has been a Fine Art painter since 1990, primarily basing himself in beautiful Calgary. His work depicts many different subjects, however he specialises in equine themes, which he is drawn to the beauty, passion and power of. Durrah speaks with Paul to hear about his journey as an artist, what inspires him, and his current projects.

Equestrian Excellence

Born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada in 1960, Paul Van Ginkel moved with his family to Calgary, Alberta in 1973. In search of change and new stimulation he then moved to Vancouver, B.C. in 1996, however, returned to Calgary in 2001. Prior to earning a Master of Fine Arts degree from Syracuse University in New York, Paul was educated at the Alberta College of Art in Calgary. After working for the Calgary Herald newspaper as an editorial illustrator and as a freelance commercial illustrator for 6 years, he's been a Fine Art painter since 1990. Part of Paul's growth as an artist has come from extended painting and research trips to major art centres including New York, Italy, Santa Fe, Mexico and Australia. He also continues to travel the globe in search of new artistic stimulation while expanding his vast archive of photographic reference material. Numerous prestigious commissions including being the first "fine artist" selected to paint the annual Calgary Stampede poster in 2006, considered the pinnacle of Western art. Paul embraces the challenge of painting many different scenes, which inevitably inspires new techniques and styles; however, his speciality is depicting equine subjects. Paul feels he can execute a diverse variety of moods and compositions of the horse – from a small painting of a single quiet foal, to a large canvas of a 161 stampeding horses, to an abstract and impressionistic piece.

Currently Paul is represented in the US by the gallery McLarry Fine Art in Santa Fe. He also represents himself in a gallery within his Calgary home, which was designed and built by his wife Kristin (a retired architect) and himself. For 7 years Paul hosted private art events in the wonderful space, and now looks forward to the challenge of operating the Van Ginkel Art Gallery and studio in Inglewood, Calgary.

Articles on Paul's art have been published in numerous major magazines and newspapers, and he's been honoured with many distinctions and awards including being selected by Fresco Fine Art Publishers as one of the top Western artists working today. Paul has also received

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paulvanginkel.com

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Interview with Paul Van Ginkel

What was it like making the transition from commercial illustrator to a Fine Art painter?

When I attended Art College (in Calgary and New York) I chose the Visual Communications major, primarily so I would have disciplined and thorough training in design and all mediums, however my ultimate goal was to be a Fine Art painter. When I left Art College in 1983 I chose to utilise my schooling in the commercial art field, so I worked in that capacity for six years. The transition from illustrator to painter was easy because I first satisfied my desire to be a commercial artist and then fulfilled my dream to be a painter.

You have said that you gain a lot of inspiration from your travels do different countries inspire you in different ways, and if so how?

Being an artist is an all-encompassing lifestyle where every experience influences the work in some way (either consciously or subconsciously). So I deliberately pursue interesting travel for education, stimulation, and to inspire new work. I believe an artist simply records their life experiences through the medium they choose (visual art, music, dance, etc.). The more interesting their life is, the more compelling the art will be.

While your art depicts a variety of different subjects, your equine paintings are particularly captivating. What about horses do you find visually appealing?

Despite choosing to paint a variety of subjects, equine paintings are by far my favourite. In addition to the breath-taking beauty of this magnificent animal (with its extraordinary muscle groups, dramatic mane and tail, and a variety of breeds), the horse has had a profound impact on the history of civilisation (and continues to play a significant role in the lives of countless people from all parts of the world). Further, I feel I can paint the horse in so many different ways – from a single foal to a massive herd to an abstracted stallion.

For seven years you hosted private art events in a home you and your wife designed and built. Did having a space you created yourself add to the theatre of your work?

Being a professional artist for over 30 years, my primarily objective is to improve as a painter; however I also focus on the business side of art so I can sustain my career for my entire life. Over the years I've had gallery representation in the USA and Canada, however I've chosen to primarily represent

01 King's Cathedral, 50X50, oil painting

02 The Cowboy Rhythm, 40X50, oil painting

03 Equine Tsunami, 60X80, oil painting

04 Portrait of the artist

myself (currently I have my own gallery in Calgary and a gallery representing me in the USA). I feel art exhibitions need to be unique and interesting in order to attract the desired attention (and business). So the model that I implemented in the home that my wife designed (and we built) was to create a unique and welcoming space that showcased my paintings. For seven years we had private art events with live music, exquisite catering, an eclectic list of guests (usually around 125) and a house full of my art. This model had proven to be very successful both personally and professionally.

You are also an entrepreneur, as you represent yourself as an artist. How much do you consider the business side of things when you work?

First and foremost I'm an artist, however I also consider myself a small businessman and conduct myself accordingly. I feel there is certainly an art to business so I spend about half my time on it. There is no greater thrill than creating an exceptional painting, however I also feel a great deal of satisfaction when my business acumen serves me well. To me, success in the arts is doing it for a lifetime and this could not be achieved without the product being sold.



- 05 Bright Light, 30X30, oil painting
- 06 Morning of the Journey, 40X60, oil painting
- 07 Stagecoach, 40X60, oil painting



Do you prefer the planning, the process or the finished product most when creating an artwork?

Well, all three certainly apply to every painting, however it's the process I enjoy the most. To literally "see" a work appear from a blank canvas is a rush like no other. I begin each painting with a preconceived idea of what I want to achieve, however to create is to allow things to happen. So each painting it has a life of its own.

Have you had any interest from art lovers in the Middle East?

I have one painting (that I know of) in Dubai, however naturally I would love to have more exposure (and paintings sold) to patrons in the Middle East. I've always been particularly mindful of the significance of the horse in this part of the world.

What are you currently working on?

I'm working on my next Calgary gallery exhibition opening on June 11th. Once again, it will be focused on equine images, my favourite (and most marketable) subject.



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