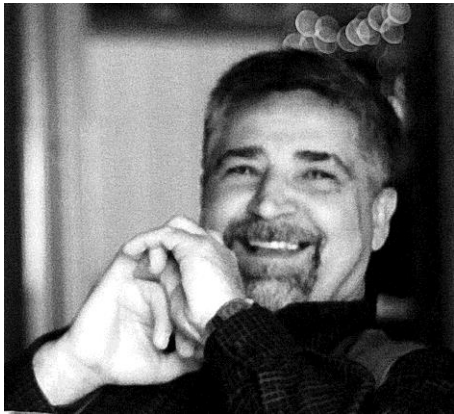
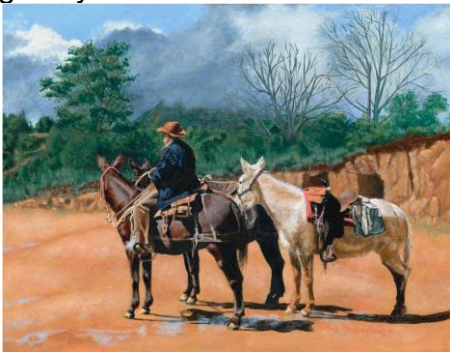


## Fabio Deponte



Will Fabio DePonte be at the opening reception for the coming exhibit of East Meets West by Southwest at the Shelburne Arts Coop on Sunday August 2? The show combines Sara and Fabio DePonte's paintings — watercolors, acrylics and oils— covering three years of work on a variety of subjects, from the natural world encountered in their travels throughout the Southwestern states to their continuing explorations of the world of horses and the people who love them. Fabio compares the experience of being in a crowd of people who are looking at his work, to “being naked in a roomful of strangers,” but the artist is hardly a recluse. It's just that he prefers a more one on one sharing of his work, like what he experiences at the equine expositions he and Sara routinely exhibit at, or in welcoming visitors to the small gallery attached to their house in Petersham where they settled in



1989.

The Petersham homestead hosts several horses, dogs, and a variety of wild birds on acreage that has been cultivated with perennial gardens and horse pasture. Dotting the garden are metal sculptures welded together by Fabio during a workshop at Snow Farm. Fabio finds himself drawn to welding lately and is looking forward to doing more found objects sculpture if he can wangle access to the welding equipment somehow. Welding represents a shaking off of the past for him: “My father was a machinist from Italy, and his best man was a welder there. He died at 45 or 50. He was welding 8 hours a day without too much protection, and the gases are very dangerous, because of that my father wouldn't teach me how to weld . So I needed to learn how to do it, just to get him out of my mind!”

Fabio was born in Italy and his family emigrated to Boston in 1956 when he was 8 years old. He was fortunate to attend a parochial school where he fell under the tutelage of a

nun who was a multi-talented artist. In high school he worked with silk screen, batik printing, painting, sculpture and just about every other discipline you can think of. All of his free periods were spent in the art club, and he painted through his summers as well, becoming an award winning student of the arts.



Later, he applied his talents to the graphic design field, working for agencies and studios and then he and Sara opened their own agency which they operated for 30 years. He has served in every capacity in the world of graphic design, doing illustration, copy writing, supervising photography, and serving as art director, creative director, designer, etc. etc.

But when computers began taking over some of these tasks, he and Sara weren't inspired to adapt to the changes. Around this time, they added horses to their lives. They had both always loved the animals, and when Fabio treated himself to a 1962 Corvette Sara saw an opportunity to purchase a horse. Since horses "become a little neurotic" if they are an only horse, soon there were two of them.

Boarding arrangements for the horses fell through where they were living in Holliston and that's when they found the property in Petersham. "I don't know whether it is the water, the attitude of the people, or that there are a lot of artists in town—I think maybe its just the physical moving out here— but it changed our attitude about a lot of things, and we got more and more into the fine arts. Though we always kept one thing going while trying something else, so it wasn't like an overnight change, we slowly slid into it." Their love of horses provided subject matter. "I am much happier now that I do fine art, because its easier to do what you want than to do what other people want." The couple also knows the market for this type of work and have many fans who collect prints and paintings from them at the yearly equine expo's. "There hasn't been an artist in history who didn't have a patron that he had to satisfy," explains Fabio, "and we have a bit of both, we are doing what we love and we have a market for it."

They do commission work, but are not interested in the type of portrait that positions the subject against a dull background. There is an illustrative quality to the work of both because they are most intent upon capturing the special relationship between horse and human. "It is very challenging to depict the teamwork between the rider and the horse. They are wonderful animals and they give you back as much as you give them— that's

what I try to bring out when I do the painting, there is always interaction,” says



Fabio.

It is also very challenging to paint a horse. “To make the horse stand, to have the weight on the ground...that’s hard! and to get the people to be with the horse, to sit, to depict the balance in an action scene, the muscles,—the musculature is very challenging, to put the human and horse together.”

When Fabio works in oils, he usually employs under-painting and glaze techniques in the manner of Vasari and other Renaissance era painters. But he no longer devotes a full week to preliminary sketching as when he was a young man. Taking photographs and working from those is now what he prefers. Sometimes he creates a composite of various scenes to get what he wants.

“I think it’s the nicest way to end a career,” he laughs, “to make a transition. To keep changing. I would rather produce forever. The style of the paintings may get a little rougher, but that may even be a blessing— to change the style, so that rather than showing everything, you give people an opportunity to build their own picture. Money is not my primary goal.”

Paintings: "Passing Showers", "True Blue Express", "Feathers and Thorns"  
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