

An Artist Inspired

Curtis Golomb

On a glorious sunny day in August, artist Curtis Golomb met with publisher Dwayne Zaba in the beautiful Beaver Flats area of K-Country to paint the idyllic landscape and discuss his evolution as an artist, how nature has inspired his passion and what the Kananaskis region has meant to him as an inspiration for his work.

with really thick and pastelly paints, and it blew me away how you got that sense of the feel, touch, taste, and smell of what you were looking at. I identified with that because I knew a lot of the places that he painted. I also became interested in A. J. Casson, a watercolour painter. He painted a lot in the La Cloche area of Manitoulin Island. I used to go to those areas quite often. What intrigued me was not only his style, but that he'd paint something and I'd really get it. Sometimes it would be the gesture of a pine – back there you get Georgian pine trees that almost look like giant Bonsai trees. They're absolutely stunning. From an early age, for whatever reason, painting was just in me.



When did you start painting?

I started painting when I was about 15, when I was living in Sudbury. As a kid, I could always draw. I was sitting at home one day, watching one of those painting shows on TV and I thought, "I can do that." But I discovered quickly that I couldn't do that. There was a little bit more to it than met the eye, but I had the drive and passion to stick with it and kept painting and painting. I started painting in oil, and then I got into watercolours. I still work with watercolours, but I also got into acrylics. With acrylics, I can go very large-scale, and do a little more with colour.

You grew up in Northern Ontario and, like Tom Thompson and the rest of the Group of Seven, you were inspired by the natural beauty of Northern Ontario. Describe your inspiration.

I was five years old and I went to the library and grabbed a book on Tom Thompson – a big thick coffee-table book – and I brought it home. There was something about it. I was just enamoured with the colour and how he could create the illusion of something. He painted his sketches

Describe your journey from Northern Ontario to your present life in Southern Alberta.

After I graduated from university, my options were to move to Southern Ontario or out west. I was always intrigued with the lifestyle out west. After working for a company in communications for a while, I decided at 26 that it was time to live where I really wanted to live and enjoy the things I liked to do: skiing, fly-fishing, hiking.



The completed work

Describe how Kananaskis and the Bragg Creek area inspire you.

I absolutely love it! The Bragg Creek area feeds my desire and passion to express myself through my art. K-Country is known for its rugged terrain and ever-changing weather conditions, which can make for some very interesting and dramatic lighting conditions. In one day, you can be enjoying a warm sunny day and stunning mountain vistas, and then just a little further down the road you could see high alpine larches turning bright-yellow as they get ready for winter. Kananaskis provides a high degree of entertainment and drama, as well as offering

up some surprises along the way – suddenly you’re painting a newly-discovered waterfall, or a group of ponds with a beaver dam.

Some of the original members of the Group of Seven found that on their first trip out west to paint the Rockies, they were overwhelmed by what they saw and found it difficult to paint. They had to simplify and focus on first impressions. First impressions are everything in life. I still remember my first impressions on a day trip out to the Bragg Creek area. It was a week after I had moved here, and I couldn’t believe that I was so fortunate to be in such beautiful surroundings. I distinctly recall the “big sky” feeling, how close the



mountains looked as we drove. I was with a young family that had also recently moved here. I saw the positive impact that living here had on them and their children – lots to explore and experience in a wilderness just minutes from their home. It’s rare to have such a large cosmopolitan city so close to an easily accessible outdoor experience. I think that’s why so many people identify with my work, as my paintings quite often depict the places they’ve been to. I frequently get calls from clients asking exactly where I was when I painted a particular piece. When clients interact with me in a personal way through stories of their own experiences in areas I’ve painted, I feel that I’ve reminded them of times that are special to them, when they too have been out enjoying K-Country and the Bragg Creek area. ■

Watch the video interview with Curtis as he talks about his art and techniques:

www.braggcreek.tv 

Curtis Golomb’s art is sold at the Alicat Gallery in Bragg Creek: www.alicatgallery.com
Photography by Peter Gold, www.goldphotography.com

