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## **Zokosky's work brimming with honesty and skill**

One of my favorite art museums is the National Portrait Gallery in London. People are endlessly fascinating and everyone has a story. Even though the artists featured in the London National Portrait Gallery deal primarily with the human head, and despite differences in human features, the diversity in styles and manner of depicting humanity is striking.

There is, of course, the formal, official portrait, and similarly, there is the society portrait. These, basically, are fashioned on a formula that makes them seem artificial. These kinds of portraits are often the least interesting, because, in these, we find difficulty in ascertaining the real individual behind the image. Basically, we desire a greater pictorial honesty.

Peter Zokosky's exhibition at the Masterworks Museum is also primarily about portraiture, although he is also exhibiting four landscapes. Most of the individuals pictured are unknown to me, although I did recognize Manuel Palacio and Tom Butterfield. Nevertheless, I know that every one of these individuals has a story, but because I do not know their stories, they remain a mystery. That is also a part of what makes this exhibition attractive. We are drawn to mystery. Most of the portraits are of a similar size, many being 16" x 12". His style is reminiscent of the early Renaissance. Of his portraits, 14 are in oil paint and 20 are meticulously drawn on toned papers in graphite.



A portrait of artist Manuel Palacio painted by Masterworks Artist-in-Residence Peter Zokosky.

His style is straightforward, without any of the flashy brushwork of such painters as John Singer Sargent or Anders Zorn. In other words, there is a basic honesty to his art, that is devoid of any pretentiousness. Because I like people, I am drawn to portraiture. For this reason, I find Mr. Zokosky's work additionally appealing. It is more to it than that, however. Peter Zokosky is a thorough going craftsman.

By that, I mean, he carefully renders his subjects with conscientious respect. Additionally, there is also an obvious high regard for his tools and materials. Underlying his paintings, there is also his considerable skill in drawing and we are naturally attracted to skillfulness.

For artists, the ability to draw is an essential skill. I know that in many art colleges today, for varying reasons, drawing is being reconsidered and often eliminated from the curriculum. One reason for this trend, is the insistence that large classes are more economical and for that reason, conceptual art is being emphasized.

It is, however, difficult to impossible to teach drawing to very large groups of people, for in teaching drawing, it requires a one-on-one situation. I find this trend, a sad development, for drawing is not only a most useful skill for an artist, I consider it essential in learning to see. We usually take seeing for granted, but it is really a learned skill and learning to drawing is as useful a tool as any, in developing our ability to see. More than that, it is important in cognitive development. I know that Peter Zokosky shares my concern about drawing. We did have a conversation on this very subject, and I understand that he also teaches drawing.

Peter Zokosky's exhibition is one I highly recommend, but is only up on the walls and available to the public until April 2, but is really is a must see show. Mr. Zokosky is a Masterworks artist-in-residence. The Masterworks Foundation is to be commended to initiating this program, for it injects new ideas and excitement into the Bermuda art community.

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