

# Portraits and relationships

*Portrait Origin: mid 16th century: from Old French **portraire**, to depict (someone or something) in a work of art*

I love painting portraits. Every painting has so many stories and I really want to sit down and start writing about them. I wonder about the point of painted portraits? In the past, before photography, painted portraits were an important element of the art world. An example are the prolific portraits of Martin Luther in the 16<sup>th</sup> C. Today, photography has taken over the portrait market. So my painted portraits, from multiple photographs, are intended to reveal stories around those whom I have portrayed. But it seems to me that a painted portrait may actually reveal more about the painter than the subject. Each portrait is a form of self-portrait revealing some aspect of my inner world – my love, appreciation, pleasures, concerns and admiration.



Portraits of Martin Luther by the workshop of Lucas Cranach the Elder, 1483 - 1546

*Christl Beigobion*



Dejeuner sur l'Herbe

#221 oil on canvas 2001  
23" x 30"



**Mine (David Sleeping)**  
#393 oil on canvas 2014 48"x 60"



**Four Davids**  
#169 oil on canvas 2003  
3 - 12"x 12" and 36"x 36"



Carrie at Mill Creek Pool  
#266 oil on canvas 2003 24"x 36"

# An artist under the influence



**Gilbert Bouchard**  
Visual Arts

Christl Bergstrom has no problem giving credit where credit is due.

"All artists refer to other artists," says the artist who runs a Mill Creek storefront gallery devoted to her artwork. "That's why picking out my titles becomes a sort of meditation on the personal influences that informed the work."

For her most recent exhibit, the Edmonton artist goes as far as to produce a running and detailed commentary across the whole show, producing work-specific mini-essays that deconstruct the layers of artistic inspiration behind each canvas

## PREVIEW

**Christl Bergstrom's  
On Being Didactic — But Not  
Necessarily Pedantic**

**Showing at:** the Red Gallery, 9621 82nd Ave.

**Until:** Closing date to be announced; opening reception Saturday, June 7 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

hanging on the brightly painted gallery walls. This adherence to self-commentary is brandished in the very title of her ongoing show, *On Being Didactic — But Not Necessarily Pedantic*. "Didactic" means to instruct or teach, as in a didactic essay that accompanies an art gallery exhibit.

Bergstrom's references can be indirect, like the large oil painting of herself and her husband (architect David Murray) based on an early-'70s Christmas card photo that aped the composition of Grant Wood's *American Gothic*, while others are downright slavish, like a series of paintings paying stylistic homage to a parade



SUPPLIED

**Detail of Carrie at Millcreek Pool by Christl Bergstrom**

of canonic modernist painters (including Wassily Kandinsky, Jackson Pollock, Francis Bacon and Gerhard Richter).

Some influences are even on the salacious side. Bergstrom's lone "joke painting," a playful canvas called *The Satyr in Fall*, pays homage to both Lucas Cranach and a *Playgirl* magazine centrefold as well as working in a light-hearted, self-referential usage of a tiny stone installation she'd featured in one of her

earlier domestic paintings.

Obviously this is an artist who's not afraid of taking inspiration from wherever she may find it, be it cruising the Net, touring local art shows to peruse the work of her peers or taking in various shows and exhibits in her travels.

Case in point: currently working on a series of riverscape paintings, the long-time landscape artist decided to depict both exotic waterways (the Arno, the riv-

er that cuts through Florence) and water flows close to home (Edmonton's own North Saskatchewan and the banks of the Pembina not far from the rural chunk of land Bergstrom and Murray own).

Part and parcel of her love of self-analysis is her fearlessness in mining her own life and personal history for inspiration.

"All art is about self and I'm happily self-indulgent. Lots of artists pick subject matter than reflects them in some fashion."



Janna

#176 oil on canvas 2001 12"x 12"

Mom's Eyes

#358 oil on canvas 2010  
30"x 36"





**Impassive Reality**  
#009 pencil crayon on paper  
27"x 39" 1980





Smokin' Kids

#334 oil on canvas 2006 38"x48"



Smokin' Kids

#335 oil on canvas 2006 38"x48"





Lola 1  
#413 oil on canvas 2023 12"x 12"



Lola 2  
#414 oil on canvas 2023  
12"x 12"



Ripley 1  
#415 oil on canvas 2023 12"x 12"



Ripley 2  
#416 oil on canvas 2023  
12"x 12"

### The Sufi

#257 oil on canvas 2003  
24"x 24"



### Just Passing the Phone?

#350 oil on canvas 2009  
24"x 24"

### Lake O'Hara

#337 oil on canvas 2009  
24"x 24"



### We'll Always Have Paris

#351 oil on canvas 2009  
24"x 24"



Jason's Love #390  
oil on canvas 2003 16"x 16"



Bandaged Teen #071  
acrylic on canvas 1989 60"x 32"



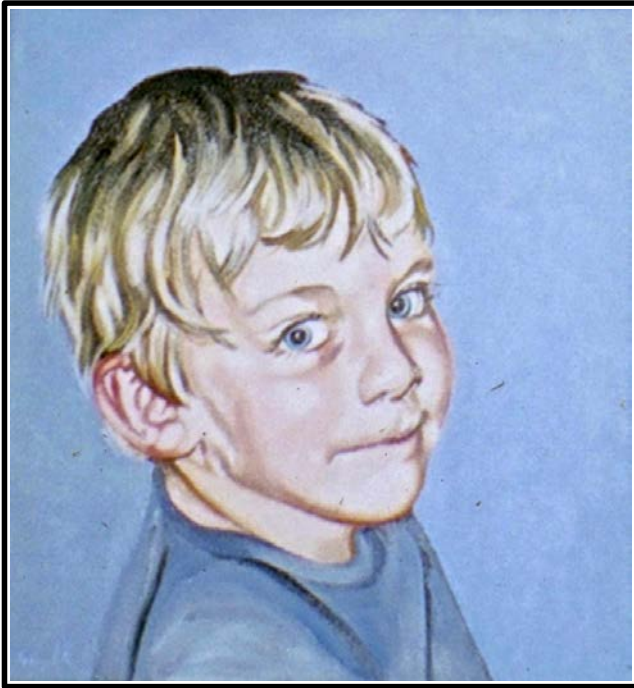
Keala 1

#332 oil on canvas 2005 12"x 12"



Keala 2

#417 oil on canvas 2022 12"x 12"



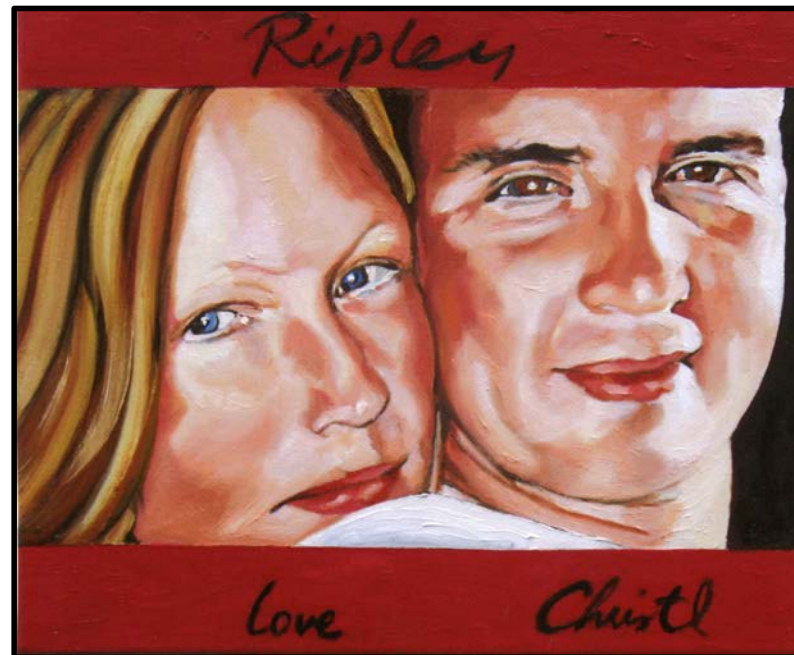
Andrew 1

#333 oil on canvas 2005 12"x 12"



Tori 1

#331 oil on canvas 2005 12"x 12"



Love Ripley #359 oil on canvas 2010 8"x 10"





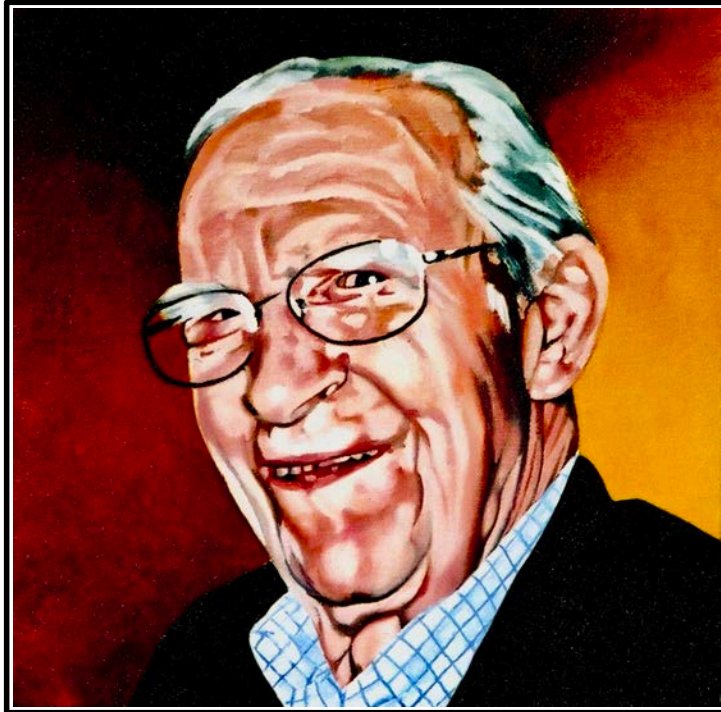
Head of a Child

#263 oil on canvas  
2007 12"x 12"

Carrie

#128 acrylic on canvas  
2007 32"x 32"





Fred #311 oil on canvas 2005 12"x 12"



Virginia #250 oil on canvas 2002 12"x 12"



**Butch** #178 oil on canvas 2002 12"x 12"



**Carolyn** #181 oil on canvas 2002 12"x 12"



Soft Dog #291 oil on canvas 2004 20"x 20"

Odin #419 oil on canvas 2023  
12"x 12"



# RED GALLERY

