

Stephen Shortridge

Born in Iowa, 1951, and raised in Southern California Stephen excelled in art throughout his schooling but had mainly studied commercial art. He took his first painting class while attending Idaho State University on a Water Polo Scholarship (Stephen was an All-American).

"It was probably 1985 when I finally admitted to myself and everyone that I wanted and needed to pursue my art. I had been acting for several years and although I had been successful, it was never where my heart was. Art was my first love and always was. I had taken art throughout my schooling but had only one painting class in college; I still don't remember what drew me to oil painting. Looking back over time I realize that painting provides a constant challenge. It reminds me of golf in that you can enjoy it or be frustrated by it but never completely master it. That's fine with me; it's always exciting to see where a painting ends up. I tell people that for the most part I am self-taught . . . but, the truth is, I have been taught by everything and everyone."

Stephen Charles Shortridge, the artist may be more familiar to you as an actor. During the seventies and eighties, Shortridge built an enviable career appearing in such well-known television series as "Welcome Back Kotter" and "The Love Boat". He co-starred with Debbie Reynolds on the ABC show "Aloha Paradise". He spent the year of 1987 playing the role of David Reed as part of the original cast on the CBS daytime soap opera "The Bold and the Beautiful". Stephen also worked regularly as a model and appeared in over fifty TV commercials.

Stephen enjoyed acting but found painting much more creatively satisfying and explains, "In acting a large part of the creative process had taken place by the time I was involved. In contrast, painting gives me complete control from start to finish, which is good and bad. Good when the work is good, . . . bad, when there is no one else to blame for bad but me."

"I think the most important aspect of creating is staying true to your heart and trying to share that passion. I think too often we pursue knowledge rather than experience or relationship. Knowledge never creates anything, but intimate experience of the heart does."

"Romantic Impressionism is what I do. . . I think the term best expresses how and why I paint. I appreciate, or try to appreciate, all forms of art, but the one that first stirred me was Impressionism. To me it was bold, and full of life and color. It was uninhibited and had a magic quality to it. Rather than attempt to tell you something accurately, it just made you feel it! That's why I set out to interpret life through this style of art; it invites the viewers' emotions to take part."

"Over the last several years the two artists that I most admire are, Josquin Sorolla, and John singer Sargent. Sorolla, for his passionate expression, and Sargent, for his simple mastery. However, what I am most passionate about, as an artist, is holding on to MY expression of what I paint. I think Richard Schmidt, an excellent contemporary artist, put it best, "it's not WHAT do you see! . . .It's what do YOU see!."

He met his wife Cathy on the beach, on the beach after surfing, in Newport Beach, California. They married in 1976 and shared an adventurous life, experiencing career changes from modeling and acting, to gift stores and art publishing. They've made homes in Manhattan, Connecticut, and Southern California. For the last 13 years they've lived in the mountainous region of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. They have three grown children and two grandsons.

Two years ago, Stephen and his wife Cathy added his dream studio to their home. On the best days, he wakes early in the morning, to coffee, reading, and a sauna. Refreshed and focused his best painting takes place before noon, enjoying music from the Classics to Rock, Worship to Bossanova.

"I thank God for everything, the least of which is to be creative, and to paraphrase a famous line from "Chariots of Fire", ' . . . when I paint I feel His pleasure' . . . this I certainly do!"

"If I could convince the world of one thing, it would be that God loves us . . . and the second would be, that you were created unique to be uniquely creative . . . We all have something creatively unique to offer. if you say you are not creative, it's just not true. It would be more true to say you are just not creating."

"I have such fun painting, that you sense and share in that is my hope. Now that I am over 50 I realize that for all these years I've been doing what I'll do when I retire. For me as an artist, to see beauty is my job. As I pursue to improve I see more and more beauty all the time. It's a pretty nice job."

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