

David Beynon Pena, 2016



Audubon Artists' Artist Spotlight is pleased to feature an interview with former Audubon President and native New Yorker David Beynon Pena, artist, portraitist and live event painter.

A protégé of Everett Raymond Kinstler, Mr. Pena studied at the High School of Art and Design, Pratt Institute, the Art Students League, the National Academy of Design, and the Santa Fe Institute of Fine Art assisting Kinstler from 1994 to 2004. John Russell of the New York Times describes Pena's work as "prize-winning painting with real teeth to it."

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PH What are you presently working on?

DBP Well, I have been painting a handful of portraits each year and around 40 to 50 live event paintings from life annually, among other odd jobs and personal paintings. I also teach a drawing class in Summit, NJ, which I enjoy immensely. I work with beginners to professional levels.

PH So David, what exactly is a live event painting?

DBP A live event painting is an alla prima picture, that is, finished painting done in one session. The artist arrives at the venue prior to an event such as a wedding, establishes the interior composition of the banquet room, then places the bride and groom and various guests as the festivities progress till the event's conclusion. The painting is complete, signed, dry to the touch and presented to the bride & groom by evening's end.

PH So how does live event painting differ from one of your portraits?

DBP A portrait takes between 90 to 100 hours, usually with a single figure. The function of live event painting is to make an alla prima painting in two to six hours for the bride and groom while I entertain the guests.

PH What was your most challenging and exciting 1999-2004 assignment?

DBP I would have to say the most exciting and challenging assignment I think I ever accepted was serving as Audubon Artists President. Every professional artist needs to develop executive abilities and skills in order to succeed in this highly competitive economic climate.

Serving as Audubon Artists President gave me that wonderful opportunity. I still serve on other boards that are meaningful to me like the Artists Fellowship Inc., a group I urge everyone reading this to look into and join. Read the Fellowship's mission. There is nothing like the responsibility as president of steering the ship through both calm and stormy waters. The buck stops with you. PH Thanks, David, for sharing your thoughts with the Audubon Artists newsletter. DBP Thanks for inviting me to Audubon Artists' Showcase, Pat. I would urge all Audubon

members to get involved. Sign up for a committee or a position on the board. Help make a difference. You get out of it what you put into it. If you give it your all you'll never regret it.



Michael Miller and D. Beynon Pena unveil the official portrait for the New York County Lawyers Association



The artist beginning a portrait of Missouri First Lady Georgeanne Nixon