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## Magazine®

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*Luke Steadman celebrates his life in Vero Beach*  
PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST  
AS A FAMILY MAN



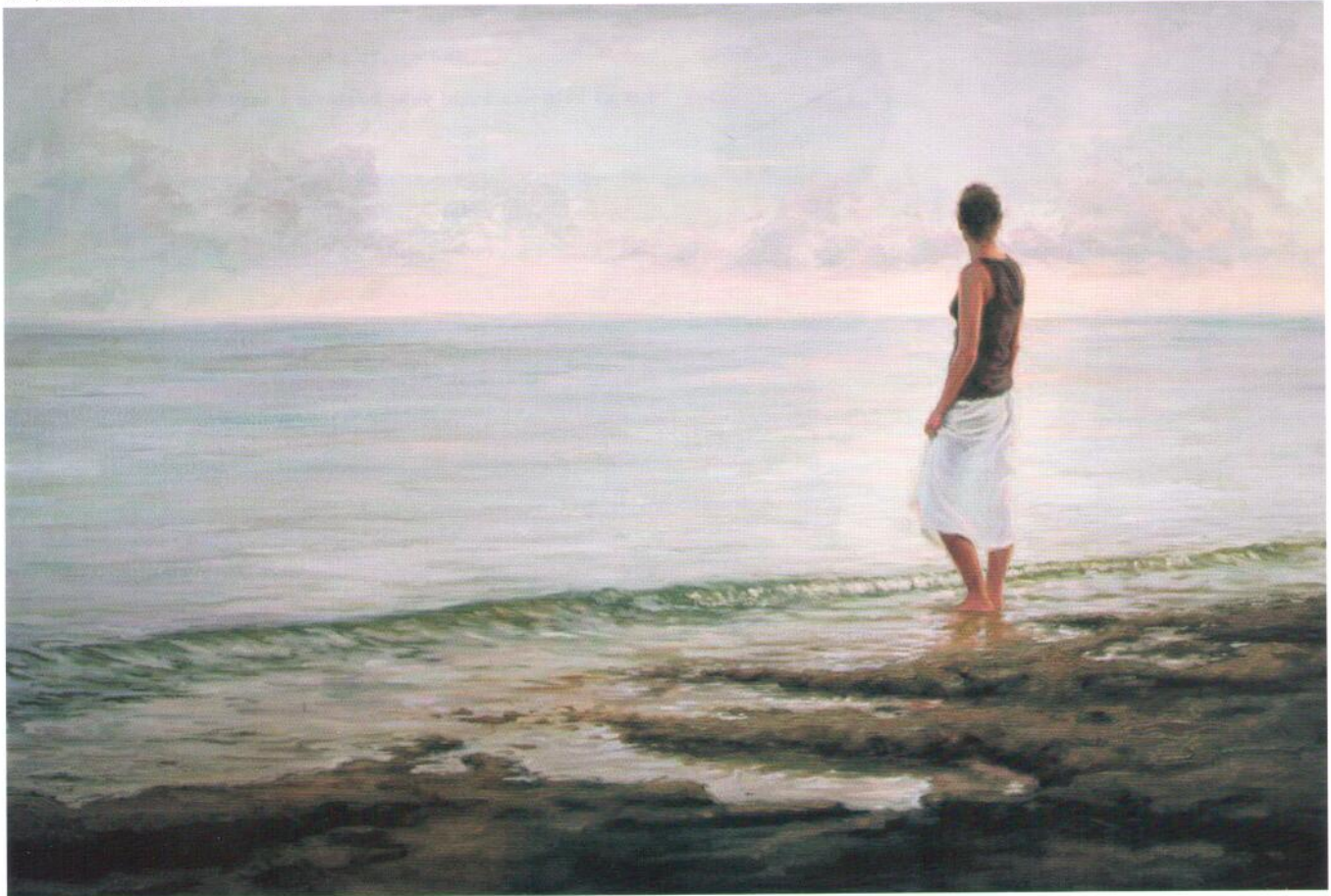
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Using his wife and the local scenery as his models, Vero Beach painter Luke Steadman is proof that a quiet life does not detract from artistic quality.

## PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A FAMILY MAN

BY JULIA DOUGLAS



Amanda Steadman is the model for some of her husband's paintings. This work, *Moment of Clarity*, was chosen by the American Society of Marine Artists to tour the United States throughout 2012 and 2013.

“For me a strong work of art is the result of a powerful experience. I am attracted to everyday sensations and find myself responsive towards the subtle beauty of things, the hours when there is tranquility of light, the rhythms of nature,” says painter Luke Steadman.

On a sunny fall Saturday afternoon, the artist and his family are gathered in the front yard of their

house in Vero Beach. Luke’s 5-year-old daughter Ava hugs her father, hops on her bike and tears down the lane followed by her mother, Amanda and baby brother Ty.

After giving a tour of his garage studio, this serious and articulate young man continues the discussion of his work. He says, “I want my viewers to see evidence of my experience. I want to convey my moods and emotions through my paintings

and awake the viewers to the wonders of being alive in this spectacular universe.”

The artist views the world as a wondrous place and reacts with poetic and sensitive perceptions, finding adventure underlying the routine of daily life. He endeavors to imbue his paintings with his joyous outlook.

Luke is practically a native son of

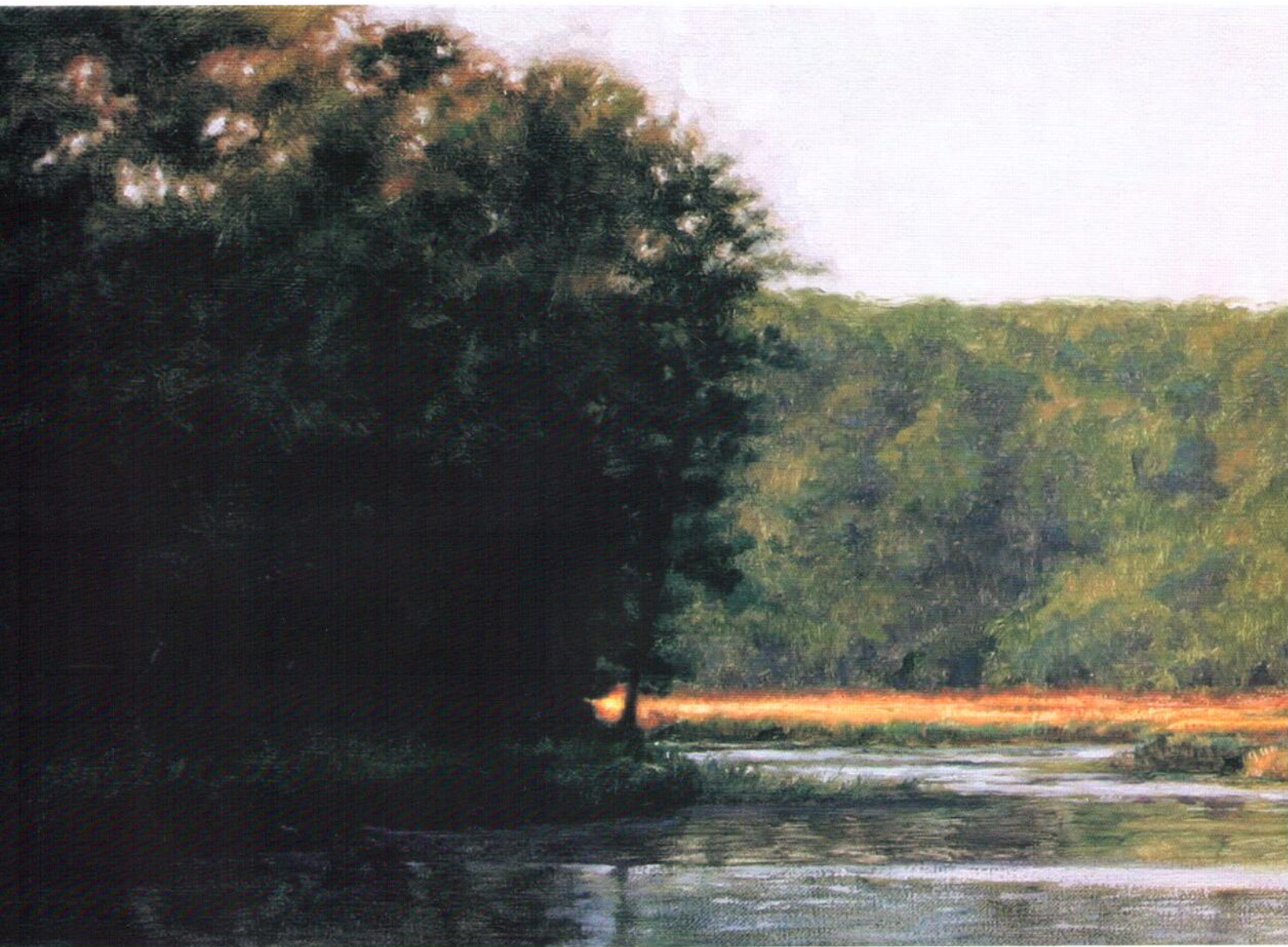


DENISE RITCHIE



*A relaxed Luke in his studio garage by one of his seascapes. A head he sculpted is visible in the background along with a stack of art magazines.*





*This calm and contemplative scene titled Marsh captures Luke's poetic vision of the world.*

Vero Beach, having come to the city with his family at the tender age of six months. He was educated in the local public schools and graduated from Vero Beach High School in 1998, as did his wife, Amanda. It was there that his interest in art originated. In his junior and senior years, Luke dabbled in photography and created etchings and pen and ink drawings.

A desire to learn illustrative

*"My time in Florence was invaluable," Luke says. "It was an amazing experience, learning from some of today's leading classical realists alongside a number of other students who also wanted to excel in their craft."*

techniques and draftsmanship motivated Luke to enroll in the Ringling College of Art & Design in Sarasota. His four years there were tremendously productive and enriching. "It was," he says, "a total immersion in art." Luke praises the courses, the library, the demonstrations, visiting artists and the caliber of the teachers.

He says, "I began to discover and fine-tune my powers of observation." He credits his study of the academic





*Once again, Amanda is the model for this painting, Low Tide. Luke artfully marries the figure of the bent woman with the shoreline and sea.*





*In Soul Searching, the figure of a woman poised on the rocky shore seems lost in thought. Her mood blends perfectly with the mood of the ocean and sky.*

tradition with instructor Carl Johnson as a huge step forward and one which led him to the Florence Academy of Art in Florence, Italy, where he studied the summer after graduation.

“My time in Florence was invaluable,” Luke says. “It was an amazing experience, learning from some of today’s leading classical realists alongside a number of other students who also wanted to excel in their craft.” His training included long and arduous sessions of drawing live models.

While at Ringling, Luke’s work caught the attention of a gallery owner in Sarasota who purchased a number of his paintings. Luke graduated with honors and was the recipient of a series of awards: during the four years he participated in “The Best of Ringling Show,” he received the Maria Von Zichy trophy award in his sophomore year, which is usually awarded to a senior, placed second in *The Artists Magazine’s* 2003 student art competition and in 2005 received an honorable mention. Also in 2005, he won Ringling’s “Senior Award.”

Luke is a Signature Member of the American Society of Marine Artists. His painting, *Moment of Clarity*, is part of their national exhibition and will be traveling to eight different museums throughout the U.S. in 2012 and 2013.

As well as being a wife and mother, Amanda teaches yoga at clubs and private homes in Vero Beach. She and Luke coordinate their schedules





*The Steadmans, in their Vero Beach yard, are a close and loving family. Luke holds 16-month-old Tyson while Amanda hugs 5-year-old Ava.*





*Luke returns to the local river as a setting for his paintings over and over, as in Indian River Opus. Here the reflection of the river banks doubles the beauty and serenity of the work.*

so that one of them is always with the children. Luke relishes his role as father and caretaker. He says, “We are a strong family unit. And I enjoy caring for the kids.”

On Mondays and Fridays, he spends half a day with Ava and Ty.

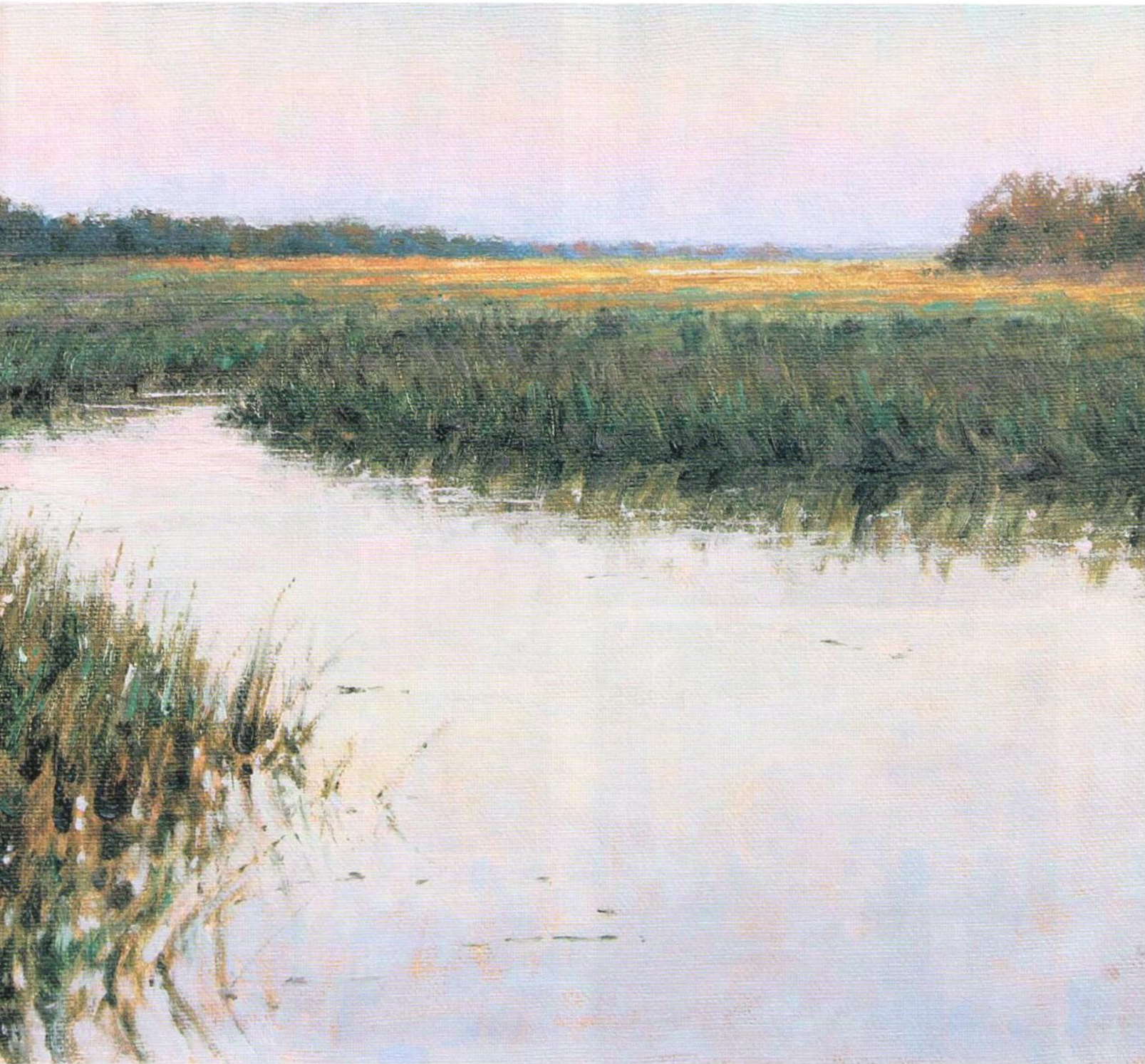
*Many of Luke’s paintings depict the rivers and marshes of Indian River County. His scenes are quiet and contemplative and convey the peacefulness of nature.*

The rest of the week, when Amanda takes over, he is free to paint and does so for six hours at a stretch, sometimes forgetting to break for lunch. After supper with Amanda and the kids, he often paints late into the night. Sunday is strictly a family



*The nearby ocean is a subject that Luke enjoys painting. Here in Riomar Wave he has captured a still-forming wave with great skill. The pastels reflected in the water create an immediacy to the scene.*





*Luke has painted a series of landscapes of Kiawah, South Carolina. The subtle pink in the sky, reflected in the water, gives a luminous glow to the artwork.*

day. The Steadmans spend it together enjoying the beach, boating or visiting family and friends.

Many of Luke's paintings depict

the rivers and marshes of Indian River County. His scenes are quiet and contemplative and convey the peacefulness of nature. "I want the viewers

of these scenes to feel a sense of peace and find refuge," he explains. "I think the paintings reflect my temperament."





*Early Moon, Kiawah, radiates a quiet and calm beauty. A barely discernible moon delicately punctuates a pale pastel sky.*

**A**manda is the model for Luke's distinctive beach work. The paintings evoke calmness and serenity. Luke explains that it is not an easy effect to render

since Amanda's mood and gestures must echo the atmosphere of the sea and the light. He strives to create a harmony between model and scene.

In 2009, the Admiralty Gallery on

Ocean Drive accepted Luke's work. The owner, Ann McEvoy, recounts his coming in with some paintings for her to critique. "I was really blown away by the quality and maturity of





*These abstract works are a contrast to Luke's traditional paintings. The work on the left is an impressionistic version of the sea, sky and shore. The painting on the right explores textural appearances and the impact of different color combinations and tones.*

his work," she says. Ann, who has a master's degree in Art History from the University of California at Los Angeles, told him she was not looking for any new artists, but that she would make an exception in his case. "His work has been very well-received and bought by numerous clients of mine," she says. "Not only is he a good artist, he's also a very nice young man."

Standing in the fall sunshine, Luke talks with enthusiasm about the coming year and the paintings he's planning for the Admiralty Gallery, as well as his commissions. "For 10 years I have strived to build up my technical facility and develop my perceptions by laborious training," he says. "So when it comes time to paint I am fully aware of what I am trying to express, and control of the

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Luke's painting of his daughter Ava at a beguiling 18 months exemplifies his skills as a portraitist. He has been commissioned to do a number of portraits of children.

means of expression has become almost automatic."

Luke speaks of rare, treasured moments when he is painting purely from his intuitive emotion and unaware of technique. As Ava's purple bike helmet comes into view, he explains, "My paintings pull me in towards that which captivates me, and at times take on an irresistible momentum, as though the painting is just happening. I become lost in the moment, time goes by and suddenly I am aware that the painting is finished!" ❁

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