



*Ottawa Watercolour Society  
La société d'aquarelle d'Ottawa*

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# NEWSLETTER

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'You Sound Like a Cello,' by Victor Pavlov

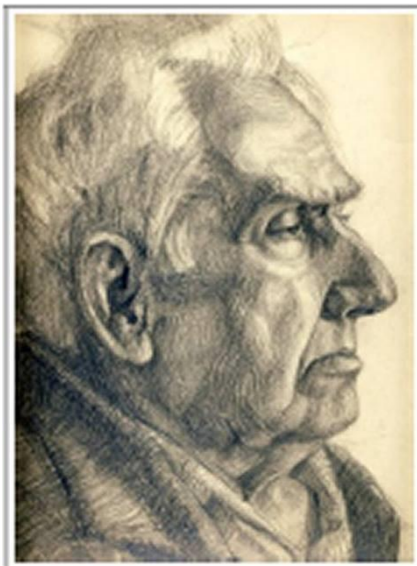


## INTRODUCING ARTIST VICTOR PAVLOV

by Elizabeth Hogan



"Painting," Victor Pavlov says, "is what melody is to a musician or movement to a dancer. It helps me to discover, define, and express my feelings, thoughts, and concepts." Victor's earliest influence was his father, who supported the family as an electrician but was also a very gifted artist. As a young boy, Victor began to draw and paint with his father, at first watching what his father did and then branching out on his own, replicating what he saw in books of Renaissance paintings at home, or in French comic books, amazed by the dynamics of movement, composition, and graphic virtuosity.



As a teenager in Sofia, Bulgaria, where he was born, Victor was obsessed with drawing. At school he took part in the art program and was introduced to impressionism, post-impressionism, cubism, and modern art. He was particularly drawn to the surrealism of Dali and to Klimt's symbolism.

Victor came to watercolour by chance. When he was 13, his family rented a room to a boy studying at the nearby art school. They quickly became friends, and in the evenings Victor's new friend would tell him what he

had learned at school. They would go to the train station to sketch—homework for his friend but a great learning experience for Victor. When he left after two years, he gave Victor a beautiful Russian watercolour set as a gift. Today Victor's friend is a well-known Bulgarian sculptor.



## INTRODUCING ARTIST VICTOR PAVLOV (Cont'd)

When he was young, Victor thought watercolours were for kids. He was using watercolours mainly when he went on trips because they were easy to carry and set. After he saw what his friend could do with them and then saw the paintings of Albrecht Dürer, he was hooked. Now it is Victor's preferred medium; he smiles when he says, "it is very spontaneous, fast, and easy to clean."



Victor took private lessons in perspective and architecture and studied drawing and portraiture under well-known Bulgarian artists Professor Toma Grigorov and Georgi Kyoseliev. He went on to study architecture and engineering and obtained a bachelor's degree in civil engineering. He jokes that he is "an engineer by education, a computer programmer by profession, and an artist at heart."

Although watercolour is now Victor's preferred medium, he also likes to use whatever is available and often mixes materials in his paintings when inspired. He has used charcoal, pencil, or ink for drawings and sketches. Victor began with oil, as his young friend did his homework in oil and Victor liked the smell and the texture of it. Victor has done drypoint etching, monotype prints, and linoleum prints, and has painted in tempera—"mostly icons on wood";

he adds. He has done a few big murals, some using oil and some with acrylic paint. He has even experimented with mosaics, wood carving, and stained glass. Victor says he loved working with stained glass, but it requires a dedicated space and power tools.

Speaking to his philosophy or approach to art, Victor says that art is primarily an intuitive form of communication. "For me, it is a visual manifestation of emotions, inspirations, observations, and ideas. It is a spiritual journey in search of our origin." This is evident in Victor's life drawings and in his landscape paintings.

For those just starting out, Victor's advice is simple: "Follow your passion and enjoy the process, without questioning whether your technique or the final result is acceptable to the experts. If you do not feel inspired, do not paint. Money is not the best motivation for art."



## INTRODUCING ARTIST VICTOR PAVLOV (Cont'd)



Most of the time, if not painting from life, Victor paints from memory, an approach that he believes charges the painting with freedom and excitement. As a rule, Victor does not paint from photographs; however, he may use a photograph as a reference point for something he hasn't seen in reality or for a moving object that is too fast to sketch or to memorize. To do anything more, he feels, would be to remove the freedom and spontaneity of the process. He says, "Painting from a photograph doesn't inspire me; I feel like I'm competing with a

printer." He notes that what photography gives us is what the realist painters were missing during the Renaissance. In contemporary realistic paintings, Victor believes the use of photography is evident in the overwhelming variety of detail, movement, and colour.



When asked if he paints en plein air, Victor says he does not do it as much as he would like to, but he believes that being outside gives the painting energy and showcases nature's vibrant colours.



Victor Pavlov has been a member of the Ottawa Watercolour Society since 2000. He became a Fellow of the Society in 2009. Victor is also a member of the AOE Arts Council.

