



Blue Self Portrait
24" x 30", oil on linen

Sphere of Influence

From police sketches to landscapes, a unique economy in technique leads to a bountiful range in both subject and style — influencing a generation of painters here and abroad.

BY GREG HUDDLESTON



While this issue's featured artist is a resident of Hamilton in Loudoun County, it is more accurate to say that, in the greater art community, Maggie Siner is a citizen of the world. She has lived, painted, and taught in France and China, and maintains a residence in Venice, Italy, where she paints and frequently exhibits her work in galleries. She also exhibits in Paris, New York, Washington, Saint Paul de Vence, Marseille, Atlanta, and Boston.

While her paintings hang in collections around the world, she is well known and highly regarded here at home with frequent shows at local galleries and a large base of collectors in the greater Washington area as well as throughout the Piedmont. Also a teacher, Siner has influenced a generation of painters. She is a frequent guest artist and public speaker whose lectures are well-attended by art lovers throughout the region.

But let's look at the source of all this acclaim, at what's important here — Maggie Siner's art. Although classically trained, Siner's style of painting is contemporary. Her work is characterized by bold brushwork that plays a major role in defining her unique vision. Siner handles paint freely, almost slapdash at first glance, but the initial impression is quite deceptive. Her canvases show a strong sense of underlying structure and a control of paint that amazes.

Among her many gifts is her ability as a painter to transform the ordinary — an unmade bed, a dress or coat on a hanger, a visitor to a museum — into the extraordinary. The end result dances with visual drama that illuminates and enhances the everyday world — revealing its not always obvious beauty.

Whether Siner's canvas is a landscape or streetscape, a portrait or a still life, an interior or something else, the art created is intense — a distillation that seems to have been born through the process of reduction. There is no visual clutter in these well-edited compositions. If the important element of the painting is the play of light on a stone wall or drape of bed cover, that light is captured with the perfect brush stroke perfectly placed. This characteristic economy of technique is evident in every painting. Colors are subdued (whites, a large family of grays, muted browns, dull greens) except when they are not, and the viewer is surprised with a bold red, blue, or mustard.

"I use only six colors on my palette," she says. "Therefore almost every color on the painting is a mixed color, and it is very carefully (accurately) mixed. I paint what I see — the relationships that exist between one color and another." Additionally, one notices that Siner does not color within the lines. In many paintings the balance between light and dark, between object and shadow, is refracted — creating a scene that almost seems to be viewed "through the mirror cracked."

The end result: a uniquely fresh harmony of light, color, and composition.

Interestingly, Siner often paints many versions of a similar motif. She has been fascinated by and has done numerous paintings of bowls of cherries; puppets and dolls, including Barbies and trolls, dresses (or as she calls them, "frocks"), lavender fields, Venetian architecture, art lovers visiting museums, and beds to name just a few of her thematic interests. It is also interesting that this artist paints only from life, a rule that often necessitates working quickly to capture the ever-changing light.

In the 1970s Siner studied medicine in France, then returned to the United States and studied medicine here. Reminiscent of Leonardo de Vinci, she worked as a medical illustrator and taught anatomy, both in medical school and in art school. This knowledge of anatomy, as well as her artistic skill of portraiture and sculpture and attaining a likeness, were put to practical use when she created facial reconstructions for the police — leading in one instance to the identification of a murder victim. Whether serving a useful purpose as in this case, or simply to be enjoyed as art that changes how we see our world and enriches and elevates our appreciation of its beauty, Siner's talent is a gift to be cherished by art lovers everywhere.

To learn more about this highly acclaimed Piedmont artist, go to www.maggiesiner.com.

Eve 20" x 24", oil on linen



PORTRAITS



Jac 16" x 20", oil on linen



Mireille 20" x 22", oil on linen



Yellow Blanket;
26"x 30"; oil on linen



BEDS

Single Unmade Bed,
18" x 30", oil on linen"



FROCKS

New Year;
18" x 24"; oil on linen



Green Jacket 10" x 14"; oil on linen



Wedding Dress 20" x 24"; oil on linen



Fur Collar; 18"x 24"; oil on linen



Gla Vecchia 12"x 18"; oil on linen

ART LOVERS



Headphones 20"x 24"; oil on linen



Mme Butterfly
13"x 20"; oil on linen