

The Power of Paint

Paul Schulenburg shares his love of art, one brush stroke at a time

BY TAYLOR FITZPATRICK

Schulenburg Studio is located on a quiet back road in North Eastham. The modern space, in a newly built garage, has many windows to bring in the natural light that creates an ideal workspace for its inhabitant, artist Paul Schulenburg.

Most recognized for his paintings of working fishermen and Cape landscapes, Schulenburg also paints portraits, figures and interiors. His brushstrokes are fluid and he captures texture, color and shadow in a magnificent way. His favorite color scheme? Flesh tones. He enjoys finding the perfect combinations of yellows and neutrals to create a realistic look. The Addison Art Gallery in Orleans has represented Schulenburg for nearly 15 years.

For many years after studying art at Boston University, Schulenburg moved back and forth from Boston to the Cape, in and out of different careers. He never thought he could really make a living as an artist, so for a period of time he worked as a freelance illustrator. It wasn't until his wife, Pharr, also a painter, suggested that he pick up a paintbrush again that he finally decided to do it.

According to Schulenburg, the key to being a successful artist is to simply paint, and paint often. He loves what he does and

is known in the community for holding weekly figure-painting sessions at his studio, mostly in the off-season. The artist begins these evenings by actually painting, not sketching or drawing with a pencil. He prepares his canvas by using a tonal oil wash over the entire surface of the panel, sketches out the composition with a brush and oil paint, and wipes away highlights with a rag. Schulenburg then mixes colors and applies those colors to the surface.

Schulenburg also participates in painting trips with other recognized artists, traveling to places like Maine, Mexico and even Utah for the purpose of painting, and to let loose a little. When asked whether the artists get competitive, Schulenburg says that, surprisingly, they leave their work on view around the house and do their best to remain nonjudgmental. It is inspiring to see a variety of interpretations and ideas, and Schulenburg uses these trips as a way to get somewhere new, paint something he hasn't before, relax a little and focus strictly on painting for seven to 10 days—with no distractions.

Part of Schulenburg's success is rooted in his education. As a high school student, he was taught that it was acceptable to pursue art and to think creatively. In addition to his supportive family and primary school teachers, he appreciates the classical



Cape Fisherman With Crate oil on canvas, 30x30



Shaving Mirror oil on canvas, 30x30

training he received as an undergraduate at BU. Schulenburg says he knows many people who have attended art school but who say they still don't know how to draw. By studying anatomy and bone structure, and by focusing on mediums other than the painting that took up his last two years of college, Schulenburg became a versatile artist.

Schulenburg recently visited Falmouth High School to talk to the honors art students about pursuing a career in art. Often, says Schulenburg, people don't view art as a viable profession. Although he has struggled with this himself in the past, including once owning a bed-and-breakfast on the side, Schulenburg holds a positive outlook for aspiring artists. With hard work, practice and dedication, you can do anything or be anyone you

want to be—even a painter, he says.

Schulenburg's words ring true, as he has become a prominent and successful Cape Cod artist. He says every artist is their own worst critic, but he finds that if he paints something he likes, other people will probably like it too. "Keep it fresh," he says. "People enjoy when you show them something they haven't seen from you before."

For more information on Paul Schulenburg's art and painting workshops, visit www.schulenburgstudio.com, or visit the Addison Art Gallery, 43 Route 28, Orleans, 508-255-6200, www.addisonart.com.

Clearing Sky at Crows Pasture oil on canvas, 30x40