



GLENN PRIESTLEY
DAYS OF WINTER

Front Cover: Winter Sun (DETAIL)



Winter Sun
oil and chalk on board, 36 x 35 in.

Glenn Priestley: Days of Winter

Glenn Priestley says he paints and draws tobogganers the way Edgar Degas painted ballerinas: not to glorify the subject matter, particularly, but because the subject matter comes imbued with all sorts of interesting elements for artistic consideration.

There's the question of light, of course – whether it's capturing the cold, hard edges of a crisp winter's day, or the soft, golden rays that provide just enough light for one more heart-pounding run down a snowy hill. And there's movement, too. But rather than gliding into pirouettes like Degas' dancers, Priestley's subjects are captured in the precious moments of pause between trips down snow-covered slopes. His sled-wielding children contemplate whether the trudge back up-hill is worth the effort (it usually is). They tolerate being bundled up by their parents against the biting chill. And they (sometimes reluctantly) allow those same parents to carry them home at the end of an exhausting day, gazing out at us as if pleading for one last run.

As interested as he is in light and movement, however, Priestley is fundamentally concerned with technique and composition. He constructs eloquent, balanced images where no element reads as an after-thought. Compelled by the language of painting, Priestley has confessed his own fascination with the complexities inherent in adding elements to a scene. Every new figure, he says, adds a level of compositional complexity akin to a composer adding instruments to a musical work.

Some of Priestley's most daring works, however, are those wherein he opts to leave large portions of the surface unfinished. In these, his subjects emerge out of yet-unrealized spaces like moments of pristine truth and beauty in an otherwise uncertain world. They are physical manifestations of the drawing process, boldly straddling sketch and highly polished likeness. They balance in an ambiguous place that leaves just enough room for our own imaginations to come and fill in the gaps, to finish the story.

Though he now lives in Saint John, New Brunswick, Priestley grew up in Scarborough, Ontario. That's why the tobogganing hill he often depicts is Tabor Hill, the same one he slid down as a boy. It's fundamental to note, however, that Priestley's work never slides into the kind of sentimentality that might go hand-in hand with depicting children, or indeed, one's own memories. Instead, these works triumph a more objective observing of the past. They celebrate the shape of it, allow us to gaze upon the familiar without wading into nostalgia.

Ultimately, we can't help but bring our own narratives to Priestley's work. Seeking out stories is, after all, a human impulse. His images conjure up our own memories of play. They invite us back to the place where having the wind whip at our faces as we hurtled down snowy hills was the most carefree feeling in the world. And where succumbing to momentum and the will of the sled provided it's own precious freedom.

Meredith Dault
January 2010 at Kingston, ON



French Bulldog
oil and charcoal on paper, 49 x 54 in.



Saint John
oil on canvas, 46 x 64 in.



Solstice
oil and charcoal on paper, 33 x 45 in.



Standing Blue Green
oil and charcoal on board, 36 x 35 in.



Blue Grey Twist
oil and charcoal on board, 36 x 35 in.



Family Group
oil and charcoal on board, 36 x 35 in.



Red Gloves
oil on board, 36 x 35 in.



Burundi
oil on board, 36 x 35 in.



On a Hill
oil and charcoal on board, 36 x 35 in.



Snowsuit
oil and charcoal on board, 36 x 35 in.



Approaching a City
charcoal on paper, 15 x 25 in.



Sledding
charcoal and white chalk on paper, 26 x 19 in.



Sledding (Colton)
charcoal and white chalk on paper, 26 x 19 in.



Indian Mound
oil on canvas, 72 x 68 in.



River
oil and charcoal on paper, 49 x 66 in.



Terra Cotta
oil and chalk on board, 36 x 35 in.



Boys and Dog
charcoal and chalk on paper, 20 x 26 in.



Hill and Monument
charcoal and white chalk on paper, 47 x 46 in.

EDUCATION

- 1982-83 University of Toronto, Continuing Education Department, Anatomy
1976 Graduated from Ontario College of Art, Toronto, Honours Diploma (AOCA)
1975-76 Ontario College of Art, Off-Campus Studies, Florence, Italy
1973-75 Ontario College of Art, Toronto (Admitted to second year, Fine Arts Programme)
1969-73 Cedarbrae Collegiate Institute, Scarborough, Ontario (Vocational Arts)

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2010 Days of Winter, Odon Wagner Contemporary, Toronto
2006 Yard Sale, Gerald Peters Gallery, New York
2004-5 Variations, Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton
1999 Paintings and Drawings, Tatistcheff & Co. Inc., New York
1997 New Paintings and Drawings, Mira Godard Gallery, Toronto
1994 New Paintings, Mira Godard Gallery, Toronto
1992 Priestley/Boileau: Dialogue, Mira Godard Gallery, Toronto
1991 Priestley and Fordham: Two Canadian Contemporary Realists, Rodman Halls Arts Centre, St. Catharine's
1989 The View from Tabor Hill: Paintings and Drawings by Glenn Priestley, The University of Waterloo Art Gallery, Waterloo
1989 The Art Gallery of Windsor, Windsor
1986 Paintings and Drawings 1983-1986, Nancy Poole's Studio, Toronto
1981 Glenn Priestley: Paintings and Drawings, Lemay Carell Gallery, Toronto

RECENT GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2009 International Introductions, Arcadia Gallery, New York
Curator's Choice, Ingrid Mueller Art + Concepts, Fredericton
Women in Art, Odon Wagner Contemporary, Toronto
Toronto International Art Fair, Toronto
Creating a Legacy, Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton
2008 Curator's Choice, Ingrid Mueller Art + Concepts, Fredericton
Toronto International Art Fair, Toronto
Celebrating 40 years New Brunswick Art Bank Anniversary Exhibition (travelling exhibition: Nov 3, 2008 – Jan 10, 2010)
2007 Toronto International Art Fair, Toronto
The Figure, From Cubism to Post Modern, Gerald Peters Gallery, New York
Drawings, Ingrid Mueller Art + Concepts, Fredericton
Marion McCain Atlantic Art Exhibition, Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton
2006 New Acquisitions, Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton
Gallery Introductions, Gerald Peters Gallery, Dallas
Works on Paper, Armory, Park Avenue & 67th Street, New York
2005 US Artists, 33rd Street Armory, Philadelphia
Art 20, Armory, Park Avenue & 67th Street, New York
2004 Egos and Icons: Portraits From the Permanent Collections of the University of Toronto Art Centre, Toronto
2003 Contemporary Realism, Edith Caldwell Gallery, Sausalito
2002 Atlantic Canadian Artists: A Selection, Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton
Connections to the Real, Mira Godard Gallery, Toronto
2001 Suburbia, Art Gallery of Peel, Brampton
2000 Artists in a Floating World, The Marion McCain Art Exhibition, Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton
Dalhousie Art Gallery, Halifax

London Regional Gallery, London
Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon
Figuratively Speaking, Michael Gibson Galley, London
The Amazing Small Works Show, Peter Buckland Gallery, Saint John
The Single Tree, London Regional Art and Historical Museums, London

COLLECTIONS

Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock
Art Gallery of Mississauga, Mississauga
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax
Onex Corporation, Toronto
Bank of Nova Scotia, London, England; Toronto; Halifax
Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton
Blackburn Group, London
Dupont Canada Inc., Toronto
Harvard Business School, Cambridge
McIntosh Art Gallery, University of Western Ontario, London
MacLaren Art Centre, Barrie
New Brunswick Art Bank, Fredericton
The Market Gallery of the City of Toronto Archives, Toronto
Rodman Halls Arts Centre, St. Catharines
Standard Broadcasting Inc., Toronto
Stephen B. Smart, Toronto
SunLife Financial, Toronto
University of Toronto Collection, Toronto

GRANTS & AWARDS

2009 Strathbutler Award Nominee
2007 New Brunswick Arts Board, Creation Grant
2007 Strathbutler Award Nominee
2001 New Brunswick Arts Board, Creation Grant
1988 Ontario Arts Council, Materials Assistance Grant
1985 Canada Council for the Arts, Arts Grant "B"
1982 Graphic Litho Plate Purchase Award, Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colours

CREDITS

CURATORS	Odon, Rafael and Nicholas Wagner
INTRODUCTION	Meredith Dault
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