

ARTIST PROFILE

James-Paul Brown: *An Eye for Beauty*

By Devon Pettengill / CASA

REMINISCENT OF VAN GOGH AND MONET, James-Paul Brown, who is perhaps better known for his presidential inaugural portraits and official Olympian depictions, offers expressive colorful paintings at an exhibit of his new work that opens at Artiste Gallery, with a reception on September 20th from 1 to 3pm.

“Put all those mainly French artists in a blender and mix them up... My paintbrush dabs paint on the canvas with their hands guiding my hand,” revealed Brown about his philosophy that all artists build upon the work that has come before them.

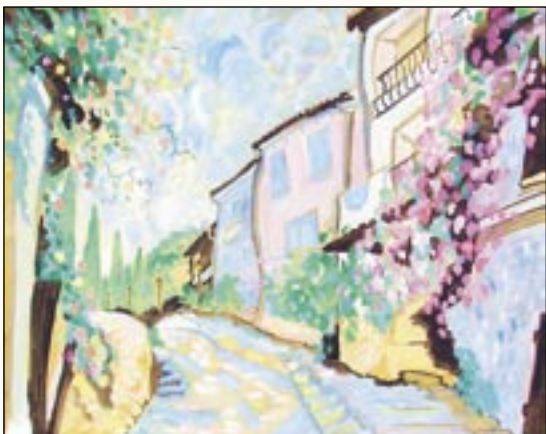
As a child in Crown Point, Indiana, Brown discovered his talent for art early, despite being born into a family that included no other artists. After graduating from Rollins College, he briefly followed in his father’s footsteps by starting a career in banking. In the 1970s, Brown moved to California and soon focussed his life upon his true passion, painting.

Brown’s work includes a wide variety of subjects from flowers and landscapes to performing arts and athletics. Many of his portraits are of notable and famous faces in sports, music, Hollywood, and world politics. He painted the Inauguration portraits of presidents Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, and Bill Clinton. He has also painted the likenesses of Mikhail Gorbachev and Nelson Mandela.

The official artist of several Olympic Games, Brown has also been designated as the artist to capture the Las Vegas International Marathon, the Pan American Games, and Wimbledon.

When Brown is commissioned for such an event, part of his process is personal interaction with his subjects.

“I try to hang out with the protagonists and bond with them,” Brown shared. “When I started painting athletic events



Village Road (----1927) by **James-Paul Brown**, gouache on paper, 30" x 38"

I would sleep on the floor to be like the athletes. I would eat the same food. I would try to become that person or that event.”

Brown has created paintings for New York’s Balanchine Ballet, the Los Angeles Ballet, the Russian State Ballet, and the Bolshoi Ballet. Like Degas, he attended rehearsals. There, Brown took photos,

returning to his studio to paint the dancers later.

Though he is perhaps better known for his portraits and portrayals of events of international interest, Brown says that what he truly likes to paint is beauty.

“I like to paint flowers. I like to paint my wife,” he shared. “When I was younger, roses gave me a problem, but I’ve conquered that. They’re so beautiful.”

Many of Brown’s paintings have a curved perspective, in which the images arch toward

the horizon. He explains that this is a result of emotion, whatever he is feeling at the time of the painting.

“A crooked line is more interesting than a straight line,” he shared. “It might not be intentional, it might be emotional.”

Brown has established a presence in the Santa Barbara community. The Arthritis Foundation has used one of his paintings for their Taste of the Town event for the last twelve years. Eros, one of the most successful wines at Sunstone Winery in the Santa Ynez Valley, features Brown’s painting *The Kiss* on its label.

Examples of Brown’s paintings can be found in many places around Santa Barbara, such as restaurants Petit Valentien, Sea Grass, Bouchon, and Café Buenos Aires.

Brown and his wife Juliet, a professor at Antioch University, live in the Santa Barbara area, which he appreciates for its likeness to the Mediterranean, with good light and few gray days.

“This is Provence,” he shared.

New works by James-Paul Brown are on display at Artiste Gallery, 3569 Sagunto St. in Santa Ynez, from 11am-5pm Daily. Contact Artiste at 686-2626.



White Flowers by **James-Paul Brown**, acrylic on canvas, 24" x 16"



Cobblestone Steps (----1936) by **James-Paul Brown**, gouache on paper, 30" x 38"