

## FIRST PLACE BEGINNER

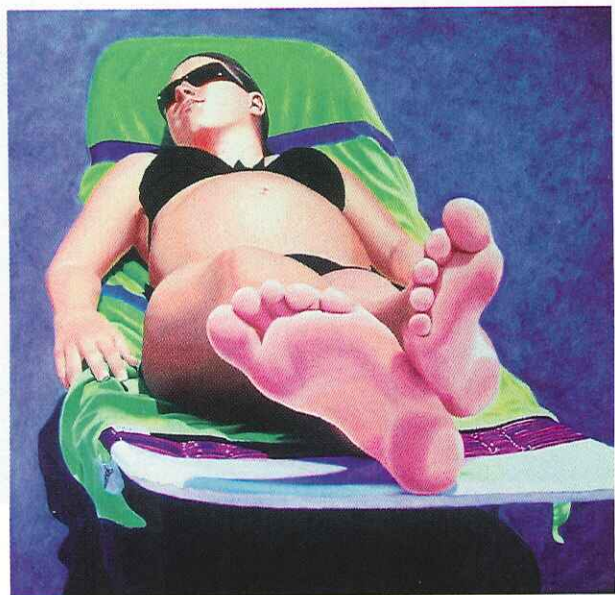
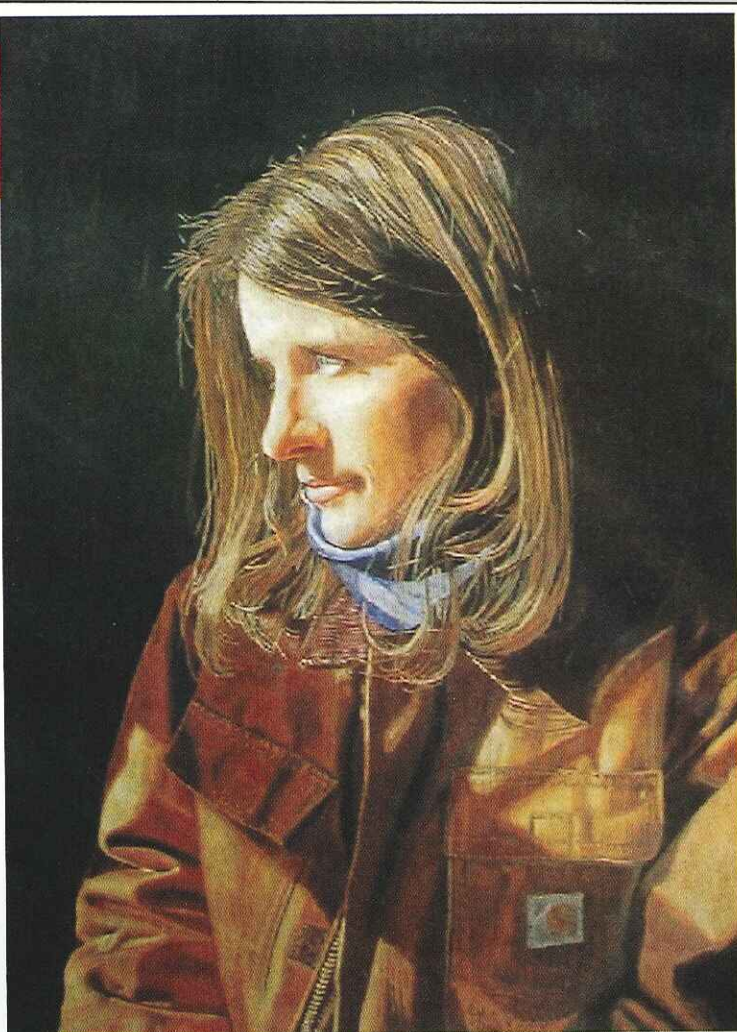
### Eileen Nistler

This is no ordinary portrait of a lady. The artist wanted others to see all that she admires about her niece. “[I was] thinking about this little girl growing up into a wonderful woman,” Eileen says of her subject.

Dressing her in a Carhartt jacket from her niece’s own wardrobe, she suggests, conveys the hardworking nature of this “real-life Wyoming beauty that is contemplating ranch life.” Previously, Eileen’s daughter had done most of the posing for the artist’s portraits, so stepping outside of that comfort zone was challenging. She shot about 30 photos of her niece to capture all the possibilities and necessary details.

A full-time mother of three and a part-time artist—she spends about 50 hours per month behind the easel—Eileen had taken art classes in architecture school but never tried colored pencil before January of 2004, when she spotted a Carrie Ballantyne painting and a book she found particularly helpful. “I mostly follow the techniques that Ann Kullberg outlined in her book *Colored Pencil Portraits Step by Step*.”

MARSHA JO, 15x11 inches, colored pencil



BAREFOOT AND PREGNANT, 36x36 inches, oil

### ▲ 3rd Place Beginner — Deborah Tidwell Holtzscheiter

This painting of a willing model the artist met on a Florida beach has its roots in its creator’s own life story. “At 41, I quit my job as a marketing manager to seek a different career path,” Deborah says. Four weeks later, she discovered she was pregnant with her now nearly two-year-old son. “I teased my husband about being taken care of, and the idea of ‘barefoot and pregnant’ came to mind.”

Aside from the humorous take on subject and title, Deborah was inspired by the artwork’s unique point of view. “I think it would’ve been an interesting painting if I had painted her in a more common way,” she says, “but it would not have been as strong without the perspective!”

### ▼ 4th Place Beginner — Aruna N. Sarode

Believe it or not, this is the artist’s first attempt at painting with acrylics. Before this painting, Aruna mainly worked in oils and dabbled in colored pencil and watercolor. Her goal in portraying this brilliant, uncommon flower was not merely to get the viewer’s attention, but to demand it. “I enjoyed painting the extreme values, the bright highlights and the rich, dark shadows,” says Aruna, a software programmer. Along with reading plenty about working in acrylics, she shot several photos and played with different design possibilities to prepare for her first painting in the medium. “I did several sketches to balance the strong curvilinear vertical shape with leaves in the horizontal direction to come up with a well-balanced composition.”



KAFFIR LILY, 16x13 inches, acrylic