

## Bart Lindstrom - June Program

### “Brokers and Digital Photos”

*“Success is what comes off your easel.”*

**T**he featured speaker at our June 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting was Bart Lindstrom, friend of the PSA and acclaimed portraitist from Chattanooga. A large turnout of Society members and guests were on hand to hear his engaging presentation of tips, advice and anecdotes told in his own inimitable style. A California native, Mr. Lindstrom graduated from USC with a Marketing Major, and made his start in advertising. Later, he taught at The University of Texas before pursuing his public career as a portraitist. Represented by Portrait South since 1993, Mr. Lindstrom began his talk covering this aspect of the art world.

Portrait South, located in Raleigh, NC, represents a number of portraitists through a wide network of agents. Lindstrom explained he began as a watercolor portraitist because Portrait South needed that niche filled in their overall portfolio. He described the brokerage system as one of “chairs,” filled as need arises by artists of quantifiable skill and price levels. He elaborated that agencies look not only for quality, but for uniqueness. An artist prospect may *not* be signed because his particular ability and price range are al-

ready represented in the company portfolio. A 40% commission fee is usual for an agency and typically they have a “showroom” portrait by each artist, i.e. an example, and about a dozen high quality 8X10 photographs of the artist’s other work. Mr. Lindstrom admonishes all artists to not undercut these representatives if one wishes to have a long career, “. . . and if you *discount* – have a good reason, such as a repeat customer, or additional figures in a composition.” For a *successful* career he offers this advice: “One- learn to make an *exquisite* product, it has to have the ‘wow’ factor, and two - *SHOW IT TO AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE!* Art isn’t so much about reality as it is about a dream or a memory. It has to be poetic.”

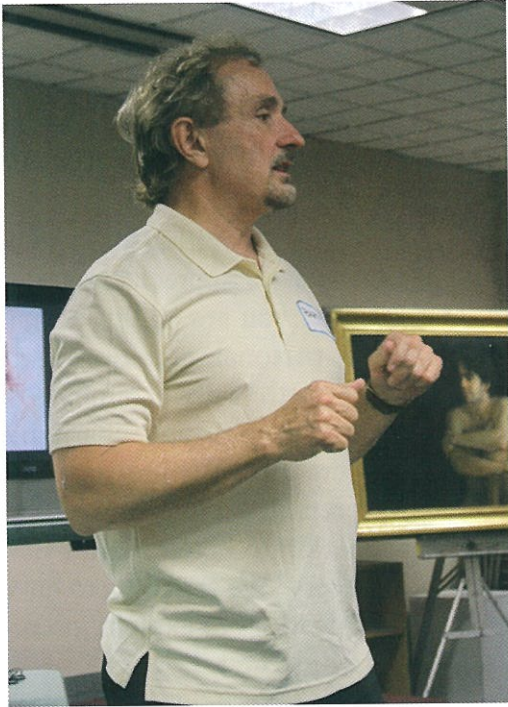
Mr. Lindstrom is a complete convert to digital photography and uses a Canon 10D with a 28 – 75mm zoom lens. He doesn’t think cameras need more than 5 or 6 mega-pixel capacity to get good images for portrait work. He uses a monopod (as opposed to a tripod) for ease of use and for image stability in the low light interiors he often works in, and for consistency in height above the floor. With animated expressions he emphasized the

duty of the artist to be professional. “Have lots and lots of giga-bites on your flashcards – *HAVE AN EXTRA [camera] BATTERY – MAKE SURE THE EXTRA BATTERY IS CHARGED!*” Lindstrom went on to stress the importance of backing up computer files to prevent their accidental lost in fire or theft, adding dryly that off-site back-up is preferable to on-site, should your studio ever burn down.

Sharing numerous stories of his experiences with clients and posing them and their children, Lindstrom added suggestions on how the inevitable awkward moments with clients can be avoided or finessed. He pointed out that building a relationship between your clients and your art is like building a romance. “Clients sense your passion and respect it. Success is what you are proud of. Success is what comes off your easel.”

After the break, Lindstrom demonstrated camera distortion and how to avoid it in the taking of reference shots. He discussed the various computer programs available for manipulating and correcting photographs, including his own choice of *Paintshop Pro*.

Using his laptop and video



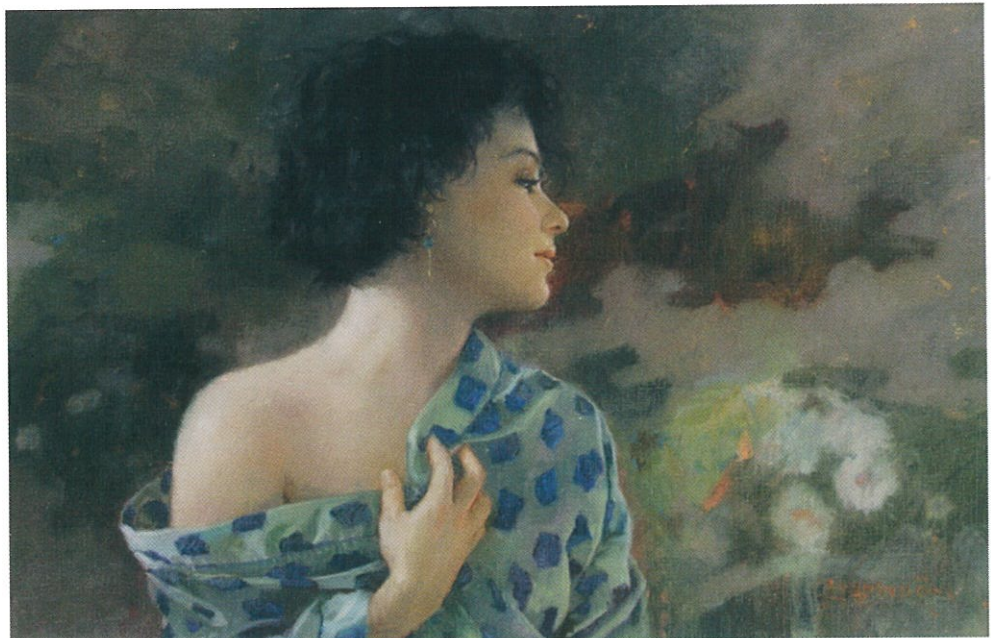
screen he gave the audience useful insights into his working methods and palette. He arranges his hues in two concentric circles which resemble color wheels. In his portraiture he uses what he calls “my workhorse brown,” a blending of 1 part alizarin to 5 parts sap green, because the hues are translucent and the result is a clean brown that doesn’t muddy adjacent flesh tones. Another useful combination he shared is 10 parts raw umber with 1 part black, mixed with a little white, yielding “swamp green.” He point-

ed out that the use of blues to cool flesh can be problematic and recommended greens or lavenders instead. Correct values play a more important role than color in successful portraiture, a point he brought home emphatically . . . “NAIL values – NAIL values – NAIL values!”

Lindstrom believes true painting is making every brush stroke have purpose. “One brush stroke should be correct for placement, shape, color, value *and* edges.” He paints in a preliminary mosaic style, dark to light, and does no blending

until all the white of the canvas has been covered. For blending, he prefers to use a large, fluffy watercolor brush as opposed to a fan brush. He portrays heads slightly less than life-size, with the optimum measurement being about seven to seven and a half inches, chin to top. As a final bit of professional advice, he said he always delivers his paintings framed, and carries along a travel box of brushes and paint for any last touches.

Packed with information and quick wit and many illuminating and humorous asides, Mr. Lindstrom’s talk will be long remembered by the members of The Society. ■



*Laura in Profile*, 20x30, Oil