



PETER BONNER

A Pilgrim's Progress

All my love and thanks to my friends Shane Kent and Davis Gatiss at SOCA
and to Eric for sharing his observations and deeply felt thoughts.

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Front & back cover:

Detail of Early morning Montana, 12 July 2009 #1 (Violets) (Charcoal on paper 46 x 61 cm)

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CLAY AND ART

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0408 002 419

A Pilgrim's Progress

By Eric Holzman

A good art education can bring with it many blessings. For Peter Bonner, his education both prepared him for a quest and created in him a hunger for another more personal way of working. Peter's mission has been to make work that feels vital and alive both in the making and in the viewing, a full experience akin to that of life in the present. In Peter's words, "It is like an unguarded interaction with another person, or any other aspect of nature for that matter." His desire is to make work that "lives, breathes and vibrates with life."

Peter explains that his first important breakthrough came through the desire to be more precise and articulate in his drawing. Instead of erasing, as the drawing developed and as it demanded greater clarification, he purposefully applied white tape, which cleanly removed an area of notation and simultaneously adjusts how that area relates to the whole. The placement of the tape ensures the drawing's freshness while asserting a new and sculpturally physical surface to the drawing itself. The edge of the tape also set up secondary counter rhythms, which supported the literal drawn image whilst creating air, and the whiteness of the tape reflected light in new and refreshing ways. From here he was off and running. A new consciousness of intense mark making and notating ensued.

Peter's journey has taken him to the Australian desert, the American southwest, to NYC, to London, and to a deep immersion in School of Paris artists, Matisse, Bonnard, and Picasso. In conversation he also mentions Titian, El Greco, and the icons of Rublev. He has taken many paths, moving freely from abstraction to figuration. He has allowed himself to follow the dictates and imperatives of the moment.

Peter's quest has been, equally, an inward journey. It is a desire to truly connect both his inner and outer worlds, and, in short, to know and experience life fully in his art. His paintings make experience visible. His sense of life around him is given form and a pictorial coherence so that we experience this heightened awareness as well. The rough and rugged primitive physicality of Bonner's recent painting can be viewed through the lens that called Delacroix to Algeria, Gauguin to Tahiti, Matisse to Morocco, and the entire School of Paris to the knees of African art, all in the name of the liberation of the western soul.

Peter's drawings successfully reflect the fruits of his search in their vivid sensitivity to place. His responses to his visual sensations are unfiltered. He varies his touch like an athlete, a musician, or lover, awake to every possibility at all times. The urgency is beautifully modulated; his touch is varied from one visual sensation to another in weight, speed, and attack. He can be hard, forceful, and muscular, and gentle, delicate and slow; his mark reacting to and expressing light, form, volume, air, and space. In the landscape drawings done from life over the last twelve years, there is a clear and powerful desire to represent nature and to meld with her. He has succeeded in his original mission. The drawings are unguarded, spontaneous, and even accurate in his depiction of clouds, sky, tree, and mountain made of strokes that are entirely free of pretense, born before conscious thought, but full of knowing and confidence. It is as if he has become one with his subject in a two way dance of energy and love.

Eric Holzman is an artist and teacher, and has exhibited extensively in New York and the world over.



Sleeping sheep creek- Montana, early morning, July 7 2009 (Charcoal on paper, 46 x 61 cm)



Morning- Norway, looking at mountains and telemetry, March 22 2015 (Charcoal on Paper, 46 x 61 cm)



Waking Mountain- Montana, early morning, 13 July 2009 (Charcoal on paper, 46 x 61 cm)



Top; Study for a Tear for Sophie or Crucifixion February 27 2010 (Charcoal on Paper, 23 x 30 cm)

Bottom; Study for a Tear for Sophie or The Flood, May 16 2010 (Charcoal on Paper, 23 x 30 cm)



Study for a Tear for Sophie, September 19 2010 (Charcoal on Paper, 23 x 30 cm)



Could you stop the noise, I'm trying to get some rest, 2013 (Charcoal on paper 28 x36 cm)



Flies are buzzing round my head in the key of F, 2014 (Charcoal on paper, 36 x 28 cm)



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