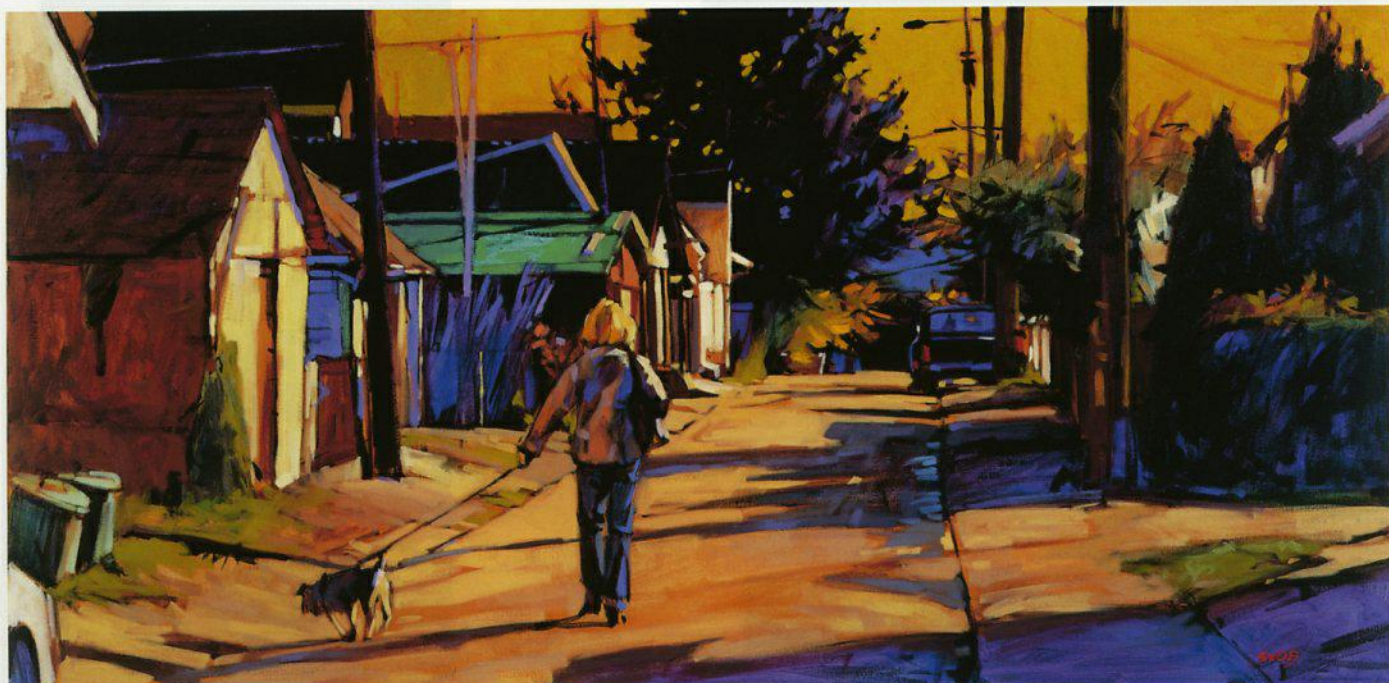


Mike Svob

West Coast Impressionism



EVENING STROLL, oil, 20 x 40 in.

“A rt is the ultimate form of human expression... and artists ultimately have the power to determine how we see the world.” – Artist’s Statement

Mike Svob was born in Welland, Ontario. After completing his studies at the University of Western Ontario he worked under several established artists, including Canadian watercolourist Allan Edwards. Svob and his wife Nancy moved to the West Coast in 1980 after falling in love with British Columbia. He made a name for himself early in his career by entering competitions and winning them.

“I have always been deeply moved by landscape. The play of light, the dance of the trees in the wind, the waves crashing on the rocks. As an artist I try to capture these moments, distill out what is unnecessary and leave the viewer with an impression of the Canadian landscape that will endure through time.” The power and movement of light is captured in his work. Nature interacting with people plays an important role in his art.

Svob has been a full time artist since 1982. He has mastered watercolours, acrylics and oils and applies watercolour techniques to other mediums. Thanks to

his signature use of strong bold colour Svob has been identified as an impressionist. Early in his career his work was tight and realistic as he worked to perfect his technique, now it is more impressionistic.

“I have an off-kilter sense of colour that surprises people. I know I probably stray from reality but I like to paint my subject matter in whatever colour I want. Many of my paintings are actually very abstract in the sense that nothing you see in them exists in reality but I find that having something to tie the painting together makes them better paintings.”

To date Svob has had over 50 exhibitions and has produced over 22 large scale murals throughout North America. One mural done in his home town of Welland is a three panel work depicting the local dairy industry. He is a past president of the Federation of Canadian Artists and a senior member (SFCA) of the society. An organization with more than 450 artists whose aim is to promote the work of B.C. painters and graphic designers. As an award-winning artist and a leading teacher and workshop instructor he has written three books designed to help artists improve their work.

Svob’s choice of subject matter varies with what he

is interested in at the time. Once a week he paints from models to practice technique. An avid hiker and mountain climber he believes in location painting and enjoys travel. He would probably suffocate if he stayed in his studio for too long. He has painted his way across Canada from the Queen Charlotte Islands to Peggy's Cove.

In 2004 he spent the summer painting in Southwest England. As a teacher he juries and leads workshops in Canada and the United States. For 2005 Svob is planning workshops in Mexico and France. He is a regular instructor with the Federation of Canadian Artists and one of the perennial artists in residence each May at *Painters at Painters Lodge*, Campbell River, B.C.

"The classes stress design in painting. You learn that a visual artist sees in a different way and the knowledge gained will help you tie your ideas together into a painting you can call your own. They help you find your muse."

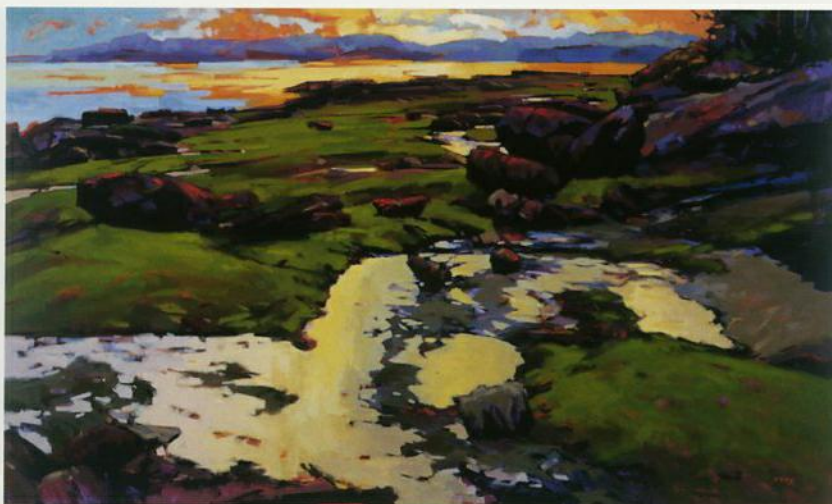
Svob's usual way to start a painting is to pick a dominant colour like warm orange and as he goes along he uses colour to bring out interest in different areas of the painting. He will often underpaint in one colour to provide the finished painting with a greater impact. His palette is limited and made up of warm and cool yellow, red and blue usually topped with orange or violet to provide transparency or opaqueness. Some characteristics of his work are that he focuses on edges and how they melt in with one another and uses layers of paint to create an opaque or transparent glaze.

"It's a battle as an artist between making it look interesting and making it look real. Sometimes real is boring, so it's more important to make the painting look interesting, so I ask what do I leave out and what do I put in to improve the painting?"

Some artists want a painting to look realistic to the point that they don't want to see the brushstrokes but Svob wants his work to look like it's painted by a human hand. He wants his brushstrokes to be part of the painting like the ripples on the water.

"What we tend to do as artists is simplify things by making them more dominant or more important. Because there is so much clutter one of the best ways to get your message across as an artist is to remove the clutter and what you're left with is what you're trying to say."

Over the years Svob has come to realize the importance of light. "Light is a function of colour and colour is a



SILENT SHORE, acrylic, 36 x 60 in.



OESA MAGIC, acrylic, 48 x 60 in.



FRESH SNOW, oil, 16 x 20 in.



TWO SENTINELS, oil, 18 x 24 in.

function of light and the light is never the same, it's always changing. No artist looks at his subject for what it is. It is your impression of what it is."

Snow is one of his favourite subjects because it provides a good tone contrast with other shapes and reflects light. His snow is anything but white. It is yellow, orange and violet because it is a reflective surface and becomes an abstract value in his alpine paintings. His water and his snow reflect the colours around them. "In my work I try to bring the viewer into my space to see the world through my eyes. As a child I would spend hours tramping around in the sparkle of fresh snow or staring in awe at the power of a thunderstorm."

Svob has been extremely disciplined in his professional life and one of the results is that his work sells but exactly

why it sells is still something of a mystery for him. "In the end I have no idea why people like my paintings. I'm just glad they do."

His next show is a two-person exhibition in November with Rick McDiarmid at the Stephen Lowe Gallery in Calgary *Travel Impressions in Double Vision*. Mike Svob, his wife Nancy and their two children live in White Rock, British Columbia. **I**

**Interview by Richard Waugh
Article by Noel Meyer**

Mike Svob is represented in British Columbia by the White Rock Gallery, the Adele-Campbell Fine Art Gallery in Whistler and the Birthplace of BC Gallery in Fort Langley and in Alberta.



SPRING MELT, oil, 24 x 30 in.