

Artist Statement:

I have always been attracted to street performers, buskers, and musical entertainers. I feel a sense of kinship with those who express themselves musically and believe we share a similar creative impulse. My most inspired studio work often follows a sidewalk encounter with a transient musician or the discovery of a good act in a local pub. I am particularly drawn to western music and to traditional western instruments like the fiddle, guitar, banjo, harmonica, and mandolin. I have been creating thematic artwork influenced by this genre for many years and I am still inspired by it.

Most of my paintings are oil on canvas but I occasionally use acrylic, collage, and encaustic techniques. I generally start by creating a loose pencil sketch and rather than attempting to “tighten up” the image I strive to retain its fluidity. I do this by focusing on the initial free-formed lines, adding to them, and then using these raw markings as the groundwork for the completed image. In my musician portraits the primary figure often appears with secondary shadowed or mirrored figures penciled beside them. This creates a sense of movement as though the performer is being captured during segments of time rather than at one static moment.

I use vibrant and rich colour palettes allowing the background shades to carry through into the main illustration. This technique gives a dynamic but “ghost-like” quality to the figures. It allows the people I paint to become transparent leaving the space that they inhabit seem more solid and permanent than they are.

Through the physical qualities of my paintings I attempt to capture the feeling of transition, vitality, and movement. Like a western ballad, my goal is to create work that eludes to a story, to a place and to a history.

Artist Biography:

David Grud was born in Calgary in 1956 and raised in Lethbridge Alberta. He completed his BFA at the University of Lethbridge and graduated with a Studio Art Major in painting. After graduating he travelled to Europe to participate in a self-directed museum immersion program. His travels gave him the opportunity to study in an enriched cultural context and to deepen his historical understanding of art. In 1990 he moved to Montreal where he developed a disciplined studio practice and exhibited his work in several group and solo shows.

Four years later, drawn by his western roots, David returned to Alberta and settled in Calgary. Here he opened Catherine Studio Art Gallery and dedicated the next several years to developing and showing his work. During this time he exhibited both nationally and internationally participating in shows in Western Canada, Montreal, and in Europe. In the early 2000's he was selected to participate in The Calgary Stampede Fine Art Auction and Gallery.

In 2011 David began research on his current body of work entitled MUSIC OF THE WEST. With the intention of fostering a deep connection with his subject matter he embarked on an experiential research process and taught himself to play both the banjo and guitar. He has spent the past three years fostering a direct connection with western music allowing him to create fully integrated thematic paintings. David continues to live in Calgary and currently works out of his Studio Gallery located in Inglewood.