



# An Interview with Bryan Larsen

By Linda Cordair

I love my job, not only because of the beautiful art I'm surrounded by every day, but because of the exceptionally talented, accomplished, passionate people I have the privilege of working with. One of those people is Bryan Larsen, an artist our gallery has represented exclusively since the beginning of his career. Currently, our most productive painter, Bryan has become our most popular, and rightly so. What makes him tick? How does he do it and why? I took some time to sit down with the artist to discuss his work.

**Thank you for your time today, Bryan. It is truly an honor to**

**represent you. Why did you choose to become an artist? Why Art, as a profession?**

Anytime you can find a way to make a living doing what you love, it's a pretty easy career choice, I think. It appeals to me as a creative outlet, but it also suits my detail oriented, meticulous side. I love that it's hands-on, physically tangible work and that it allows me to have a flexible schedule so I can spend time with my kids. It's no small thing to occasionally be able to bring beauty and inspiration to other people's lives either.

**Why have you chosen to work in the particular style that you do?**

Realism suits my preference in subject matter. The more skillful I can become at observing reality and manipulating my materials to recreate it, the more effectively I can portray my subjects. Sometimes that requires exaggerating certain things or leaving others out. I guess I didn't really choose my style so much as I am slowly developing it.

**In terms of style, do you consider yourself a Romantic Realist?**

In that I am a realist and tend to romanticize my subjects, yes. I'm not overly concerned about classifying myself one way or another, but if I had to try to pin my style down, I would say it's some

mixture of Romantic Realism, Classical Realism and Illustration.

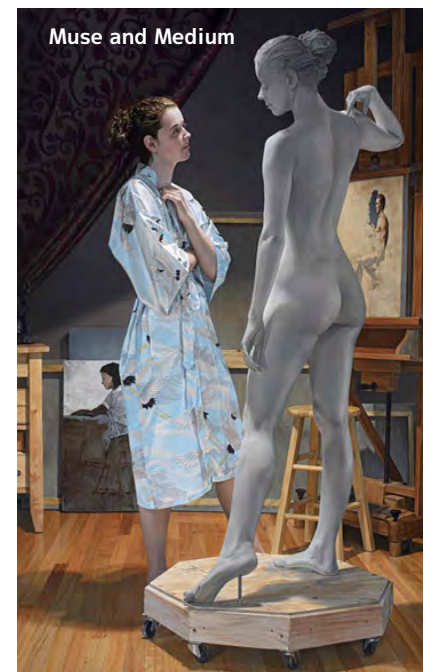
**What is it about the human form as a subject that attracts you?**

As a human, I find it highly relatable as a subject. It's also incredibly beautiful and expressive—and versatile and complex and always a challenge.

**You've created a body of work that celebrates man's mind and ability. How do you choose your themes?**

I paint things that interest me or inspire me personally.

**You use mainly oil paint on linen and have recently experimented**



Terra Incognita



**with painting on aluminum dibond. How do they compare?**

I like the traditional look and feel of the linen, but the archival qualities of the aluminum are far superior. I miss the springiness of the canvas, but far prefer the smooth surface of the panel. In terms of cost and preparation time, they're about the same. I'll have to work with the aluminum more before I can make a final judgment, but as of now, I don't see myself going back to the linen.

**How do you find your models?**

Most often, they are people I know who look the part. Occasionally, I'll ask a stranger to model if they have the right look. I've also had some luck putting flyers in the ballet school at the University. Once I find a good model I tend to use them again and again.

**One of your recent paintings, Muse and Medium, includes a sculpture. Have you ever considered sculpting?**

I consider it all the time. I love sculpture.

**What is it about painting that fulfills you?**

It's great to be able to inspire other people and occasionally bring some beauty to their lives, but mostly I just enjoy making pictures that I like to look at, images that reflect what I think is important, inspiring or beautiful.

**How did you find your current representation?**

I found Quent Cordair Fine Art online 15 years ago, while searching





for potential galleries to approach with my work. Quent was willing to take a chance on a fledgling artist with almost no body of work and no formal training. It's been a wonderful relationship.

**What awards have you received for your work?**

I've been an Art Renewal Center Annual Salon finalist the past five years. Muse and Medium and Ready for the Day both received an award of merit in the Springville Museum of Art's Spring Salon. In 2006, Waking among the Clouds was judged "Best in Show" in the Intermountain Society of Artists juried exhibition.

**Are there particular subjects that you want to paint that have not made it on to your easel yet?**

Yes, many. On the immediate horizon, I'd like to add a third piece to the Liberty and Justice series. I'm still working out the details, but it would be titled Truth or something along those lines. I have a pile of sketches leading towards a spiritual sequel to How Far We've Come. There are a number of scientists and thinkers I'd like to

eventually get around to painting: Nicola Tesla, Issac Newton, Thomas Jefferson and Hypatia to name a few. And, eventually, I'll get around to the large multi-figure Daedalus and Icarus composition that Study for the Triumph of Icarus was an early study for.

**You sometimes offer signed and numbered, limited-edition reproductions of your work on canvas. Can you tell us a little about the process used to create them?**

When I finish a painting, I almost always take it to be photographed before I send it off to its new home. These days, they call it a digital scan, but it's basically just a really high resolution digital photograph

taken under carefully controlled lighting conditions to get the best color and to reduce as much as possible the glare off the canvas texture and brush strokes. Ideally, provided there is no rush getting the painting shipped somewhere, I then take the original and the image file to my printer to have a proof made and color matched. I keep the proof and the file carefully squirreled away in case I ever decide to produce a print run. The prints I have made are digitally printed Giclee prints on archival artist canvas. I have a long working relationship with my printer and have always been impressed with their commitment to producing the highest quality products, and staying up to date on the latest improvements in printing technology.

**Which artists past or present influence your work and why?**

That would be quite a list if it were complete, and it tends to shift over time, depending on what I'm currently working on. I love Bouguereau's translucent flesh tones and the way he is able to transition from a very loosely painted background to tight, beautifully rendered figures while keeping a uniform, coherent feel throughout an entire composition. I'm a huge fan of Maxfield Parrish's draftsmanship, attention to detail and airy light. Alex Ross is always good inspiration for a dynamic composition with a lot of motion. There's something I really like about John Berkey's work too. He paints very loosely, but very precisely. Lately, I've been on a Norman Rockwell kick. His narrative ability is incredible, and his compositions are really amazing.



There are also a number of contemporary painters who influence my work, not only because of their own skill but because they are willing to share their process and discuss art and art technique. To list a few off the top of my head: Jacob Collins, Graydon Parrish, Douglas Flynt, David Gray, Jeff Hein and Scott Waddell. That list could go on much further. There are a lot of incredibly talented painters and sculptors out there.

**In addition to the body of work that you make available through**

The Unknown  
Awaits

**Quent Cordair Fine Art, you also paint commissions. Can you tell us a little about your most recent commission painting, Terra Incognita?**

The Terra Incognita commission was an incredible experience. The process was documented in detail on the Quent Cordair Fine Art website in the Artist's Studio, complete with in-progress image—so I won't get too specific here. Basically, I was approached by a client who wanted a painting about discovery and exploration. I started out with a book the client recommended and a few basic pieces of information about the client's interests and favorite paintings. I worked with the client for several weeks to eventually come up with and refine a composition based on two children, dressed in homemade space-suit costumes, lying in their tree house imagining themselves exploring the surface of Mars. Between the children at the bottom of the painting and their imagined selves are representative individuals of human discovery and achievement, from the era of nautical navigation to the moon landings, including John Harrison and his maritime chronometer, Cook's Endeavour, Copernicus, Galileo, Alan Turing, Rosalind Franklin and a Saturn V rocket. It was a huge project, but I absolutely loved working on it, and I believe the client was truly pleased with the result. It was really satisfying, and I hope to be able to do a lot more of that kind of work.

Thank you, Bryan. We look forward to seeing and sharing much more of your work with the world.

"The contrast between the linear structure of architectural forms and the organic structure of the human form is an endlessly fascinating combination for me as an artist. I enjoy mixing these contemporary and classical elements together in my paintings, using traditional materials and techniques. I hope to evoke in my viewers a sense of potential and possibility, while satisfying the mind's desire for detail and the eye's desire for beauty." – Bryan Larsen

Bryan Larsen's available work and portfolio can be viewed at Quent Cordair Fine Art in Napa, CA and on the gallery's website at [www.cordair.com](http://www.cordair.com). To purchase any of Bryan Larsen's paintings or to discuss commission possibilities, please contact the gallery at 707-255-2242.