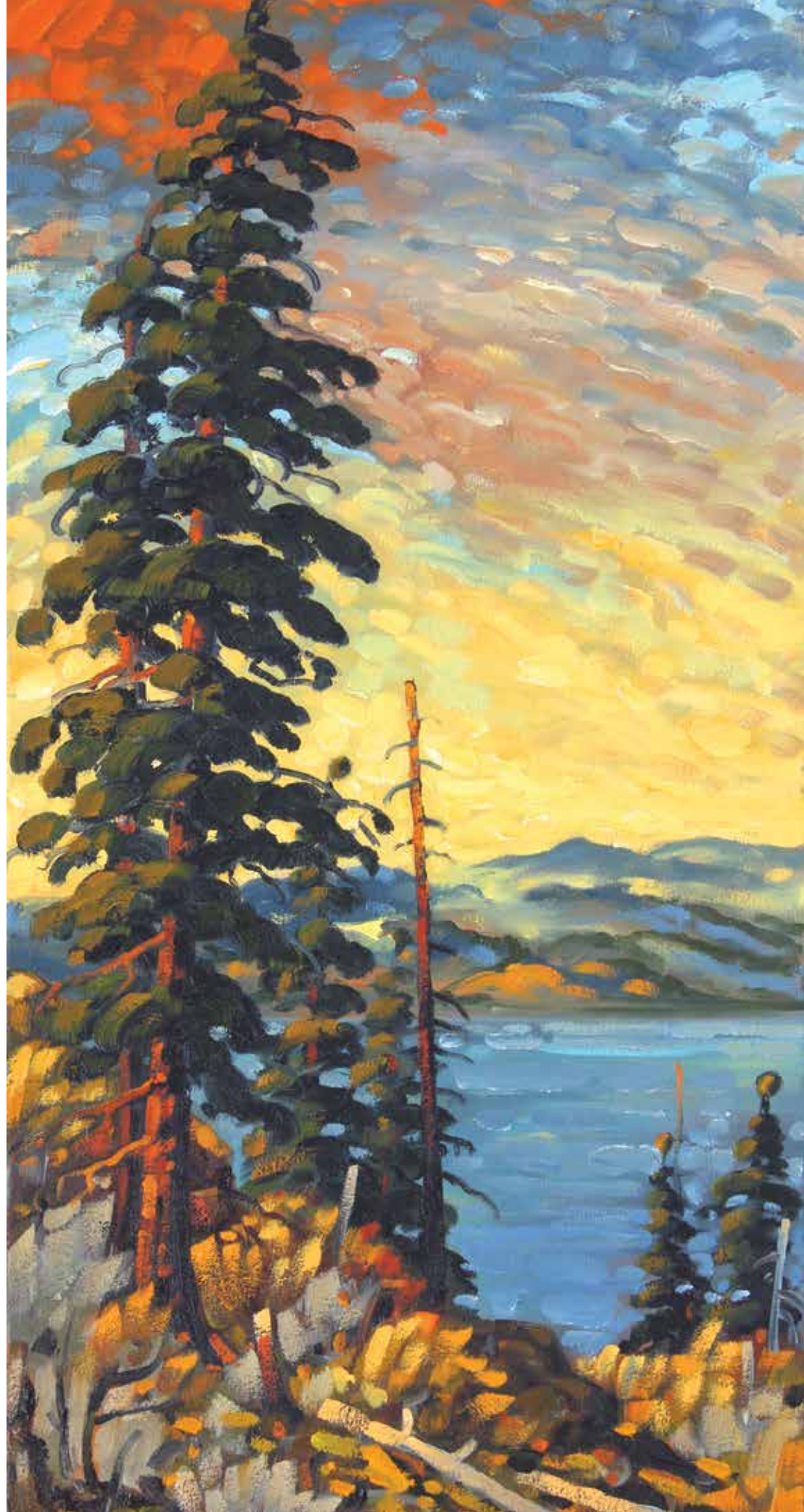


Artist to Collect

## Rod Charlesworth



# Emotional Paint

written by Lorie Lee Steiner

From bold landscapes to whimsical child's play, Rod Charlesworth captivates the viewer with a menu of home-grown Canadian content, served up on canvas in his vividly unique style. Adored by collectors worldwide, his iconic works portray our home and native land in a true 'Charlesworth' light.

He was born in 1955 in northern BC in the town of Terrace, where his father was a carpenter and his mother a stay-at-home mom. "I remember at a young age my mum peeling labels from Campbell's soup cans and letting me draw on the back of them," Rod recalls. "When I was seven, my parents moved to Kelowna in the Okanagan in hopes of more job opportunities and a better education for me and my siblings. Throughout my school years my passion for drawing and creativity grew. My notebooks contained more doodles than schoolwork."

After graduating from high school, Rod went on to Okanagan College and earned a Fine Arts diploma, then put his art on the back burner and worked as a sign painter and construction worker. In 1977, he married his wife, Jan, and a year later the first of their three boys was born. Rod started spending more time around the house and it was then he began painting seriously.

He tells of his first gallery affiliation with a small business in Kelowna called The Collector's Gallery: "My first sale was a small 8x10 oil, sold to a man who collected the Group of Seven. From there I was able to get my work in some other galleries. I even drove down to Vancouver in hopes of obtaining gallery representation. In particular, I remember approaching Ken Heffel of Heffel Fine Art. He sat me down in his office, a beautiful Tom Thomson behind his desk, and I presented my work to him packaged in black garbage bags."

Heffel found his work refreshing and gave





Evergreen, Forest Edge, oil on canvas, 36" x 36"

him the opportunity to show some pieces in the gallery. In the mid-80s, Rod was hired by a gallery in Yellowknife as a framer. While there he began painting watercolors of the rugged northern landscape and selling them. At the same time, his wife, who was still living in Kelowna, began getting phone calls from galleries asking to represent his work.

"It was at this point," says Rod, "I dedicated myself full time to being an artist. Since then I have extensively travelled and explored the Canadian landscape, from the Maritime Provinces including Newfoundland, to the mystical shores of Haida Gwaii off the northern coast of British Columbia. To this day, the Okanagan Valley still visually intrigues me the most and provides me with endless information which I translate into my work."

#### Artistic Influences

Rod credits the support of others for his artistic evolution. "My high school art teacher, Mr. Wasden, really encouraged my creativity. At Okanagan College, my painting professor, Murray Johnson fuelled my passion for painting with his bravado approach to making art. During college, workshops with Jack Shadbolt and Molly Lamb Bobak furthered that passion. Helen and Gordon Wilfert of the Hambleton Galleries in Kelowna always promoted me and held sell-out exhibitions of my work."

As with artists around the world, Rod bows to the iconic and diverse Canadian landscape as a significant influence in his work. "I will forever be intrigued by the diversity in the culture and landscape of Canada. There is endless information for me to translate into my visual language," he



top, The Western Sky, oil on canvas, 12" x 12"

below, Stewart River, September, oil on canvas, 12" x 36"





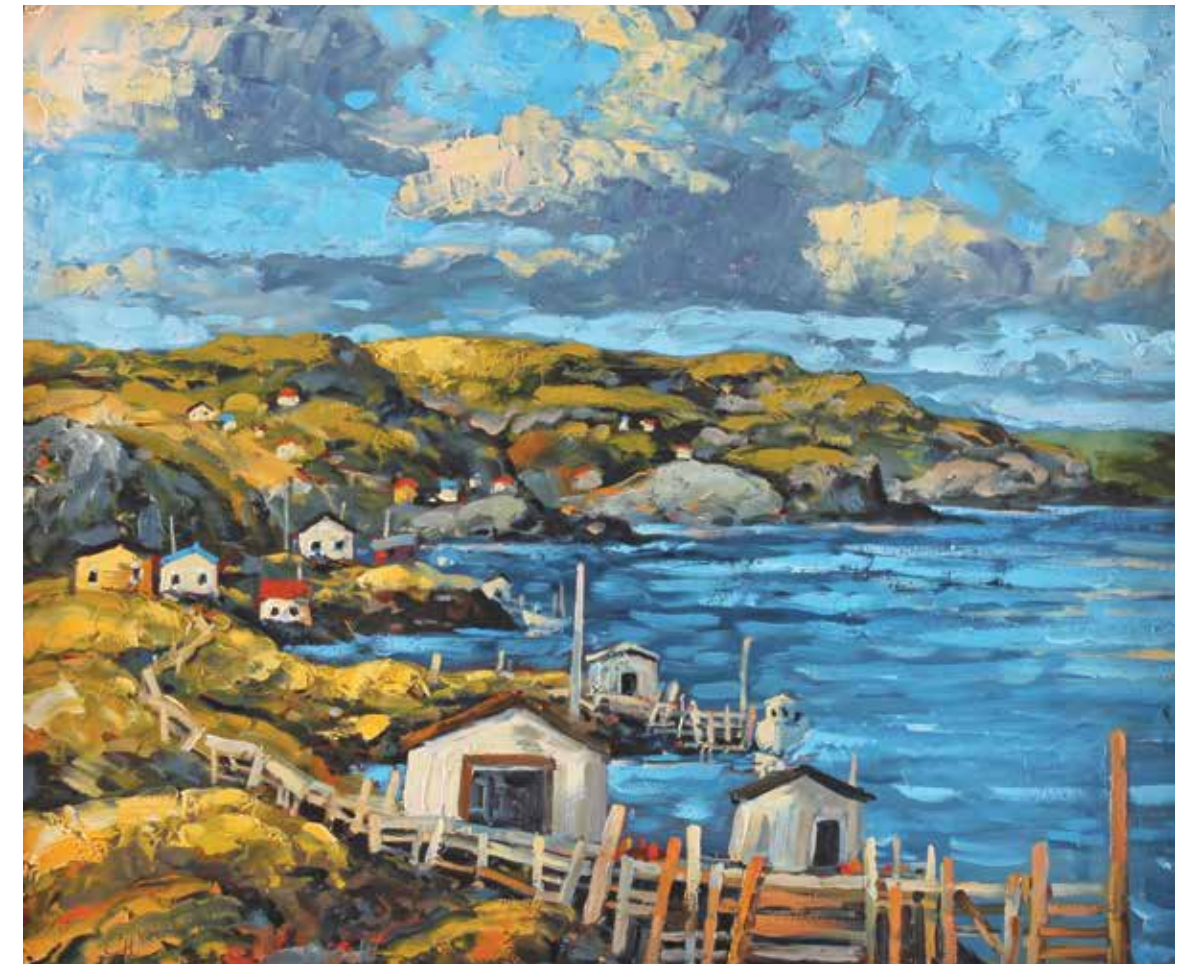






previous page, Homage to the North, oil on canvas, 24" x 36"  
above, Northern Ontario, Vermillion, oil on canvas, 24" x 48"

below, High Tide, Bay of Fundy, oil on canvas, 36" x 48"



Newfoundland Coast, oil on canvas, 20" x 24"

notes, adding that the Group of Seven and Tom Thomson were major influences.

Growing up, Salvador Dali and the Surrealists informed Rod's early work. Later on, it was the work of the impressionists and post-impressionists. He has always been impressed by Rene Richard and his intriguing ability to blur the borders between representational and abstract. He also finds the works of Gordon Applebee Smith and David Alexander "visually striking".

#### Music as Muse

At an early exhibition opening, a gentleman, speaking of a particular painting, told Rod that he'd "hit it like Van Gogh". That saying stuck and is now posted in Rod's studio. "I find I do my best work when I'm spontaneous and inventive and listening to my favourite music," says the artist. "I use music as a creative backdrop and enjoy a range from classical to the more contemporary work of Bon Iver and Arcade Fire."

The painting "Maria's Sky" is a beautiful testament to the power of music in Rod's artistic life. He notes, "I executed this piece very quickly,

I think my passion for paint and movement is evident here. I was actually listening to Maria Callas while painting, and the highs and lows of the music seemed to propel my brush. For me, trying to convert musical emotion into 'emotional paint' has been a part of the way I create."

His studio is organized chaos – full of creativity, ideas, references and an array of cultural diversity. Carved masks, books and artworks from various cultures stand as nostalgic reminders of where he's travelled. As well, blank canvases and fresh tubes of paint inspire him to "get out there and create!"

#### A Bold Style

Rod believes, "As artists we all work to establish ourselves stylistically. Over time I've established my own personal visual language which I feel is unique to me. As well as having a signature style, I strive to evolve and keep my work visually dynamic. I would describe my technique as being expressive and painterly, with lots of brushwork and bold colour."

He has had renowned success with landscape, still life and abstract while exploring acrylics,













previous page, *Sunset, White Lake*, oil on canvas, 44" x 62"  
above, *The Last Gleams*, oil on canvas, 12" x 12"



*Gulf*, oil on canvas, 24" x 24"



*Autumn Sky, Okanagan*, oil on canvas, 36" x 36"

watercolours and multimedia. acrylics, watercolours and multimedia. But oil paint is Rod's medium of choice and his biggest inspiration. "The properties and qualities; the texture and impasto effects one can achieve, as well as the blending qualities...gets me excited just talking about it!" He particularly enjoys doing oil sketches on small birch panels, which quite often are worked into larger pieces.

#### Process of Creation

The finished results are nothing short of brilliant, but Rod talks about his painting technique as if it was the simplest, most natural thing in the world. "Initially I like to sketch or photograph outdoors. Once in the studio, I start the painting with a brush sketch. Next, I lay in large areas of colour, working wet on wet until I have the desired image. Details do not matter; suggestions of detail are what my eyes want. I continue to lay down calligraphic

brush strokes until the colours are working in harmony and there is sufficient suggestion of what I am attempting to convey, which for me is an aesthetically satisfying manipulation of colour, light and texture. The subject is of importance, but without these elements of painting the subject will simply have no voice. When satisfied, I put the piece aside to cure for a few days and then finish off the final details."

He says the biggest challenge of the craft is "to continually reinvent myself to keep the work interesting and pique the interest of clients. I do commissions but I prefer painting what inspires me. I believe that a client who sees a painting and falls in love with it is getting my best work."

Rod advises beginners in the field to "do hundreds of small, experimental sketches that are not product oriented but rather process oriented. Have fun doing so and allow your passion to flourish!"

#### In his Father's Footsteps

When not working, Rod enjoys spending time with friends, family and Monet, the dog. He embraces an active lifestyle which includes working out at the gym and on the golf course. He is also a big fan of junior hockey and can often be seen at the rink cheering on the local team. Foods from the sea are particular favourites, accompanied by robust red wine from nearby Okanagan Valley.

Recently, son Connor has become interested in art and is currently doing his Bachelor of Fine Art at the University of British Columbia, Okanagan. Ever the proud dad, Rod says, "We are now playing ideas off each other. It has been somewhat of a rejuvenation for me seeing how he approaches the process of art making."

Like father, like son, the talent continues ...

For more on the works of Rod Charlesworth, visit [www.rodcharlesworth.com](http://www.rodcharlesworth.com). Work can be viewed and purchased at the galleries below.

#### Alberta

Canada House Gallery, Banff, Alberta  
[www.canadahouse.com](http://www.canadahouse.com)  
Gainsborough Galleries, Calgary, Alberta  
[www.gainsboroughgalleries.com](http://www.gainsboroughgalleries.com)  
West End Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta  
[www.westendgalleryltd.com](http://www.westendgalleryltd.com)

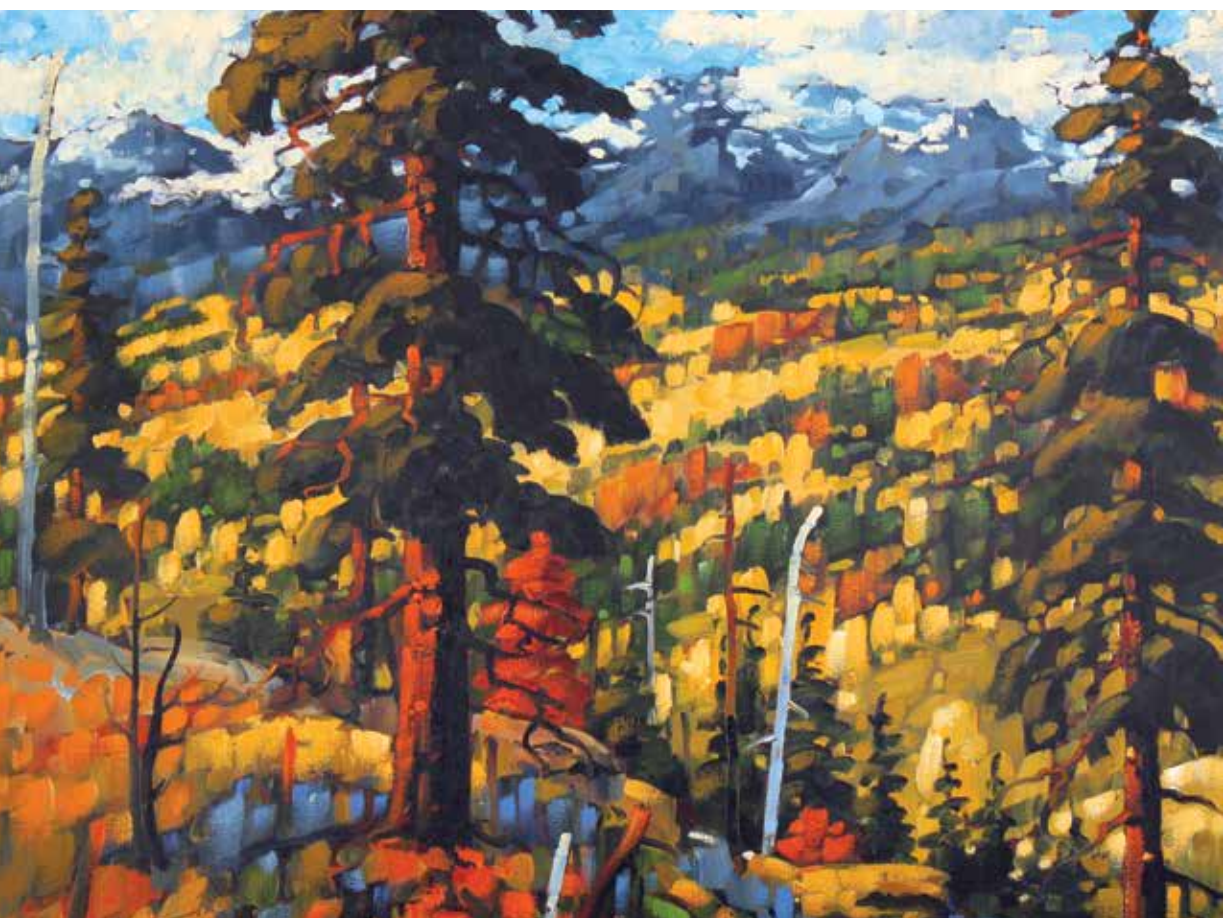
#### British Columbia

Adele - Campbell Gallery, Whistler, BC.  
[www.adelecampbell.com](http://www.adelecampbell.com)  
Rendezvous Art Gallery, Vancouver, BC.  
[www.rendezvousartgallery.com](http://www.rendezvousartgallery.com)  
Tutt Art Galleries, Kelowna, BC.  
[www.tuttartgalleries.ca](http://www.tuttartgalleries.ca)  
West End Gallery, Victoria, BC.  
[www.westendgalleryltd.com](http://www.westendgalleryltd.com)

#### Saskatchewan

Assiniboia Gallery, Regina, SK  
[www.assiniboia.com](http://www.assiniboia.com)





above, Serenity, Northern Ontario, oil on canvas, 30" x 36"  
below, Turner Valley, Meadows & Mountains, oil on canvas, 22" x 28"

Early Autumn, Fading Light, oil on canvas, 36" x 36"





above, Almost Time to Pack it in, oil on canvas, 12" x 12"  
below, Pond Memories, oil on canvas, 12" x 36"



Snow in Autumn, oil on canvas, 40" x 48"



December - Skating Party, oil on canvas, 18" x 24"

