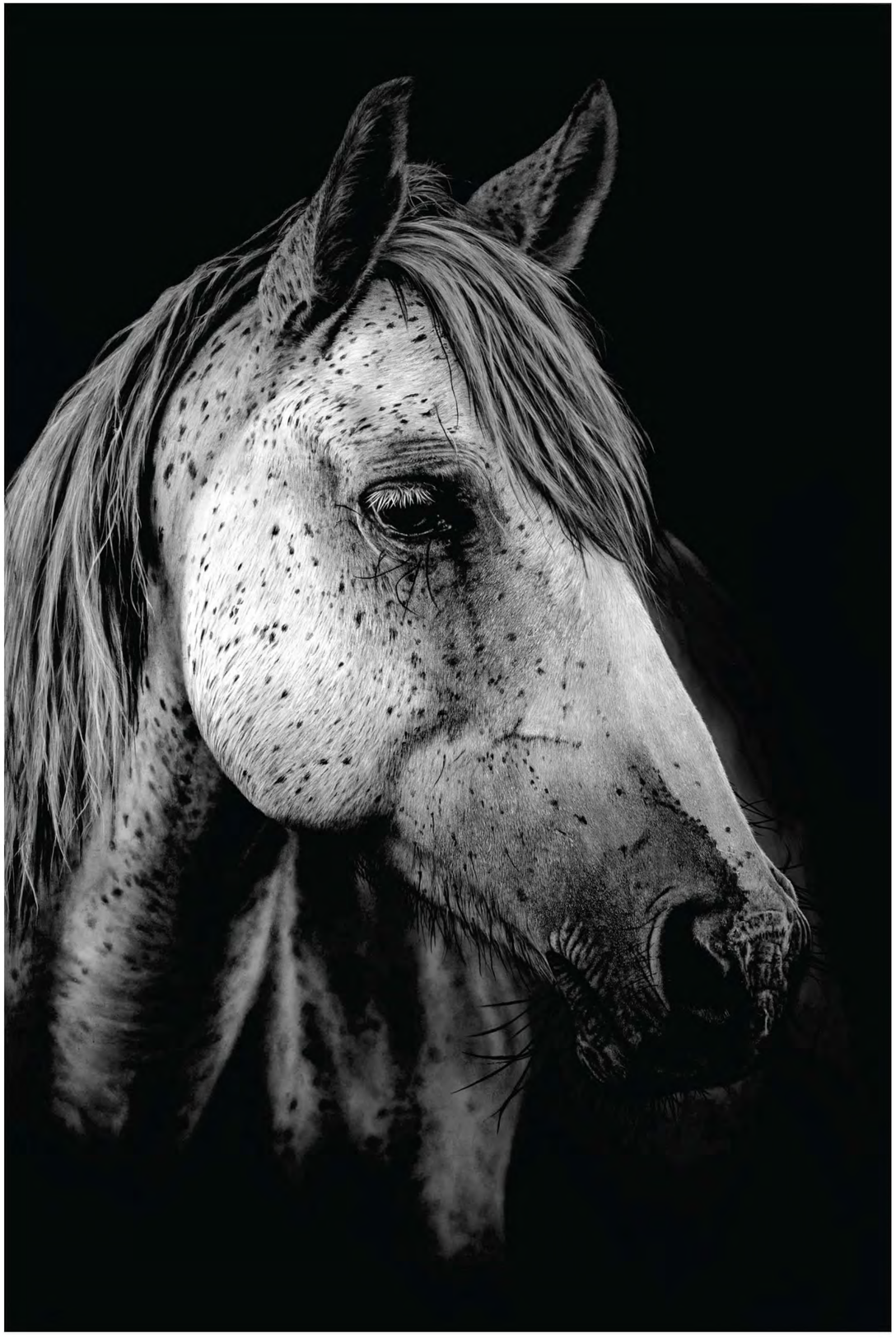
KEITH ANDREWS

This Page, above, ***Artist painting Presence***
Following Page, ***Presence,*** *oil on panel, 60" x 40"*



One Brush Stroke at a Time

Keith Andrews
One Brush Stroke at a Time

THE PAINTOHOLIC

written by Ed Miller
atruckerstale@gmail.com, www.atruckerstale.com

Previous Page, ***Curiosity,*** *oil on panel, 36" x 36"*

To say that Keith Andrews loves to paint is as preposterous as asking why water runs downhill, because he says, "I think about creating and improving my art from the moment I sip my first cup of coffee to the moment my head hits the pillow." Keith is a man of his words, since you will not find him surfing the net, or mowing the grass, or just goofing off. "I just paint," is his mantra.

Keith lives and paints in Calgary, Alberta and according to the artist, he and his "amazing wife," have two children, two dogs and a guinea pig, who keeps Keith company while he paints. He is also incredibly lucky to have this wonderfully supportive wife, who not only lets him feed his passion for painting, but she also serves as the family's lawn mower operator

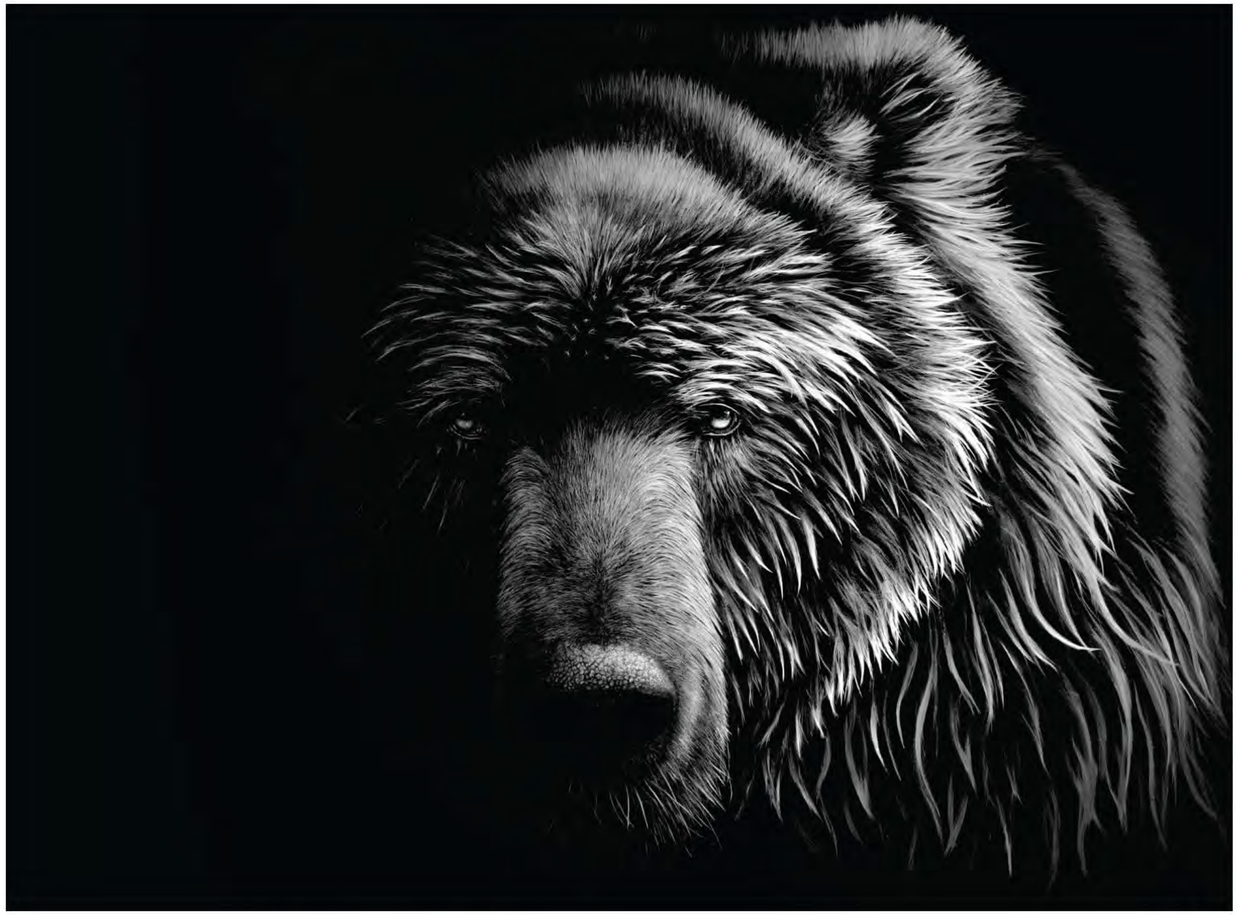
Born in Canterbury (Kent), England, to wonderful and encouraging non-artist parents, Keith Andrews gravitated towards artistic/creative endeavors, by drawing movies and utilizing hundreds of frames as a slideshow.

In the Beginning

The artist's creative spark ignited in the 1980's when he read and reread and reread the book, '*The Art of Robert Bateman*' and during his 20's, learned from one of the best as he mimicked Bateman's art and painting by painting copied his work style.

During Keith's 30's, he was absorbed with photography. "I worked diligently to understand composition, proportion, lines and color. I began experimenting with black and white photography, which became my obsession for many years."

In his 40's, he realized he was struggling to stand out as he painted in the Bateman style. Something pulled the chain on his proverbial 'light bulb' and he thought he would try combining black and white photography with black and white painting. His first black and white oil painting was titled, Explore. "It was well received and I began to push, more and more in that direction." Keith now only paints in black and white oils. "I have no desire to return to the days of color," he says.



Previous Page, ***Gaze,*** *oil on panel, 30" x 40"*
This Page, above, ***Powerhouse,*** *oil on panel, 36" x 48"*

Having a Mentor

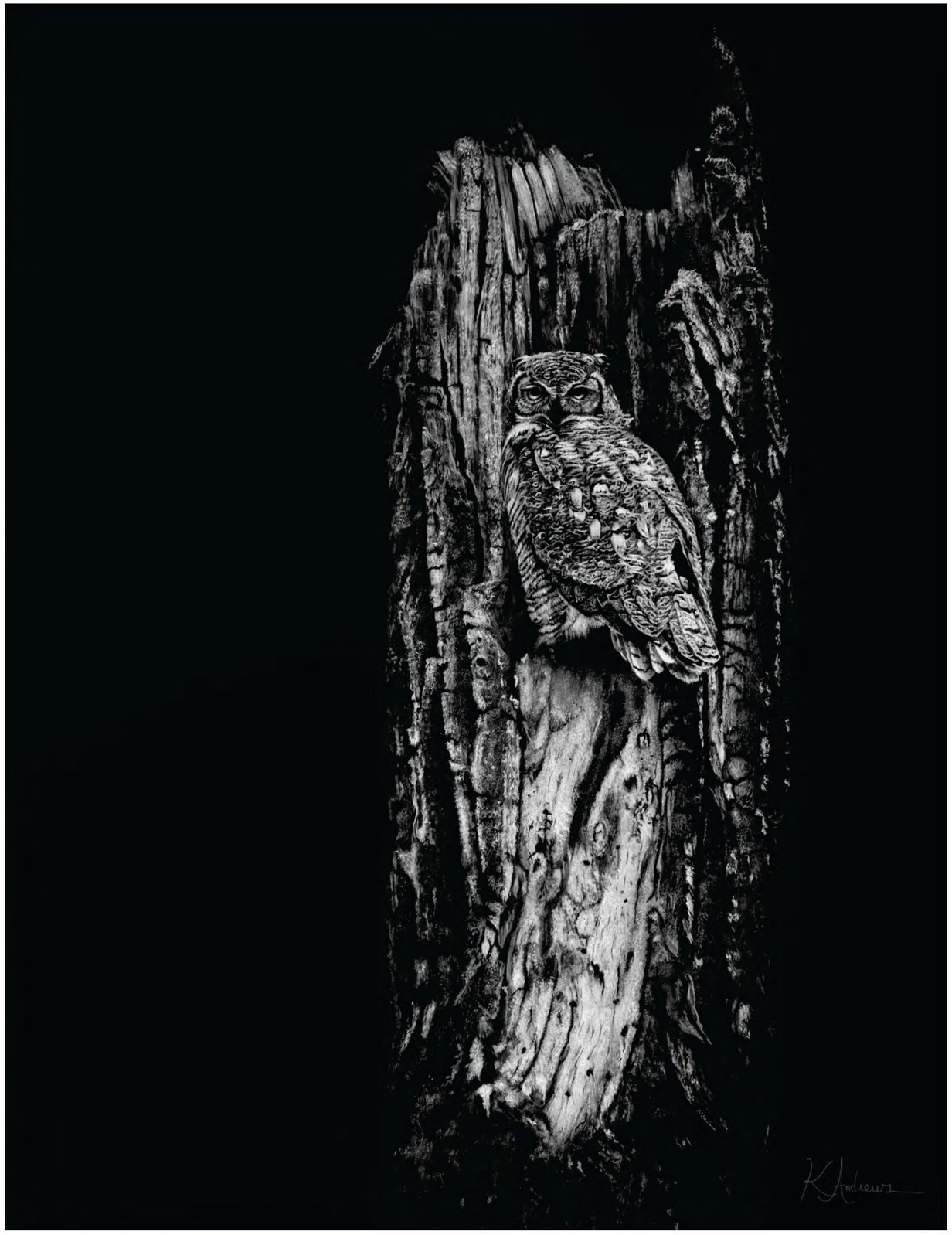
In 2003, Keith met Terry Isaac, an American painter from Salem, Oregon who was known for his realism paintings of wildlife. When Isaac saw Keith's just - finished painting of an elephant, Isaac exclaimed, "It gave me goosebumps," and this praise added fuel to Keith Andrew's artistic flame.

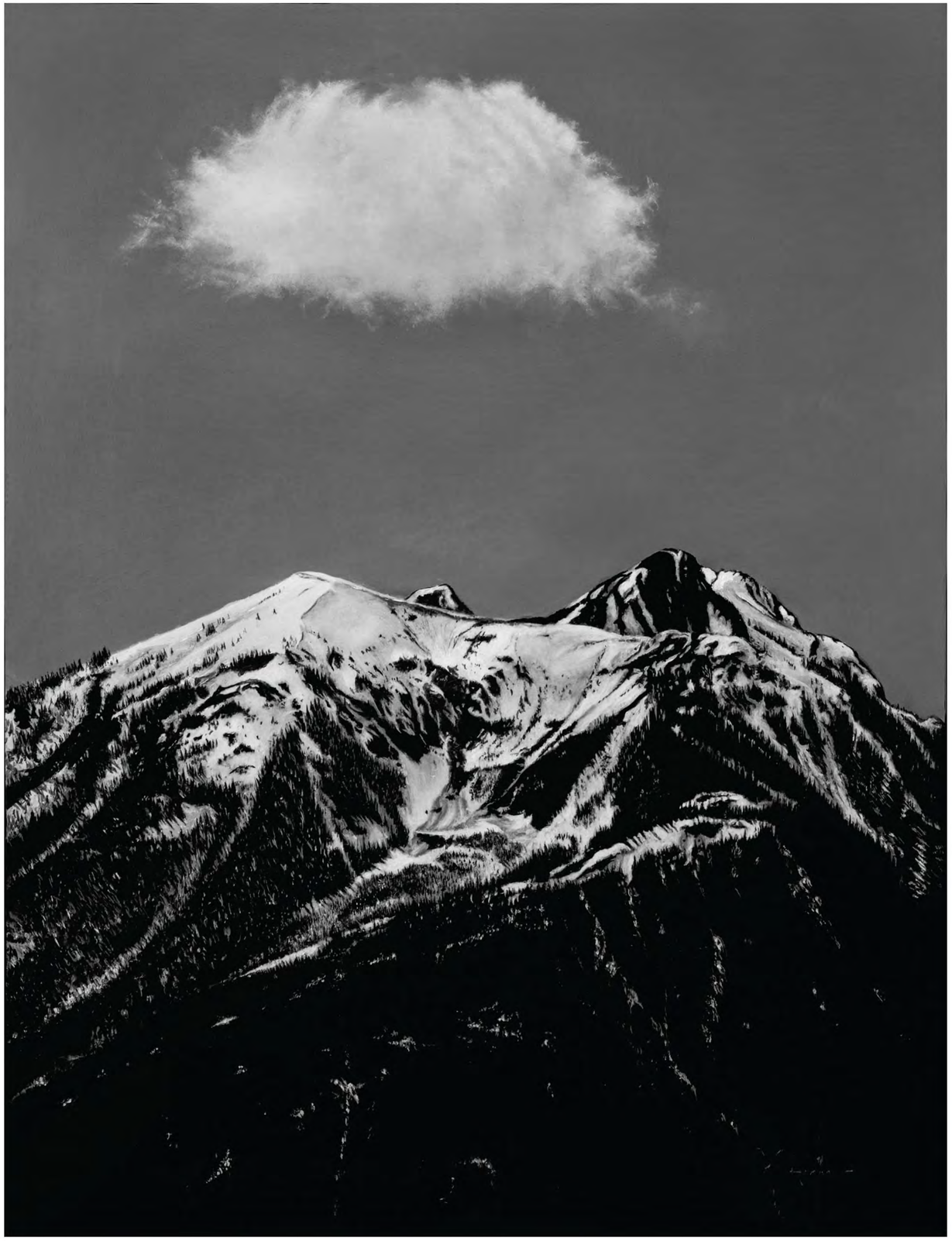
Isaac became Keith's mentor for the next 15 years. Their sessions were done mostly via email and phone, due to the 600-mile distance between them, although Keith travelled to visit Isaac twice each year for one-on-one sessions and critiques. My guess is that the old adage, "An apple doesn't fall far from the tree," because just as you read that Keith's parents were, "wonderful and encouraging," Keith compensated Isaac for, "every hour he spent training Keith. "Not only is it fair for him, but it keeps the relationship professional and I never wanted a critique from a friend. I wanted the hard truth from a master." I would like to think Keith's kids are growing up with this same philosophy.

In the Studio and Out

One could probably eat off Keith's studio floor, because he believes that a clean and professional work space informs his clients that they can walk in any time to view his work. It also reminds Keith that he is a professional artist who is selling expensive artwork to clients who expect this professional attitude.

When Keith needs inspiration, he finds it in absorbing other art or by travelling. When he desires a truckload of inspiration, he will go to the Rocky Mountains in Alberta's Banff National Park. Besides the incredible views of the scenery, the elk and grizzly bears have provided numerous images which Keith has vividly captured in black and white oils. Some of these bears are just as ferocious in oil as they are in the wild.


K Andrews



This Page, above, ***Echo,*** *oil on panel, 36" x 48"*
Previous Page 1, top, ***Echo,*** *oil on panel, 36" x48"*
Previous Page 1, bottom, ***Echo,*** *oil on panel, 48" x 72"*
Previous Page 2, ***Hover,*** *oil on panel, 24" x 36"*
Previous Page 3, ***Hidden,*** *oil on panel, 24" x 20"*
Previous Page 4, ***Wisdom,*** *oil on panel, 24" x 18"*
Previous Page 5, top, ***Rise,*** *oil on panel, 24" x 32"*
Previous Page 5, bottom, ***Arise,*** *oil on panel, 30" x 48"*

If Keith is not in the mountains looking for his inspiration, he is either with his family, or (get ready for it) painting. Keith proudly proclaims, "I have tried to reduce all other distractions." For the record, although you may meet Keith 'in the mountains,' one place you will not see him is hanging around in the city. He has images to capture in oils.

This Page, above, ***Golden,*** *oil on panel, 22" x 28"*
Following Page, ***Three,*** *oil on panel, 18" x 24"*

Inspiration and Advice

Keith was asked what impresses him about other artists' work. "Perfect paintings, which look technically excellent, may not work for me. The painting needs to stir an emotion over being photorealistic." Artists who impress Keith today are David Yarrow, Nick Brandt and Renato Muccillo. These artists, "make my jaw drop."

The artist's advice to those people who are just starting to explore painting, "Paint what you love, or it will turn into work and consume art as much as you create it. Incorporate what influences you into your work until you have your own unique voice." He also advises individuals to find a mentor to guide you and to make sure to pay them.

Another piece of advice is not let rejection frustrate a new artist. "What they seek will only come if they sit and paint, with patience and self-awareness. It will not come if they fill their life with distractions. Every mistake or success builds on top of each other until the artist finally breaks through. Only then does it become clear why the rejections and failure happen. They were meant to lead you there."

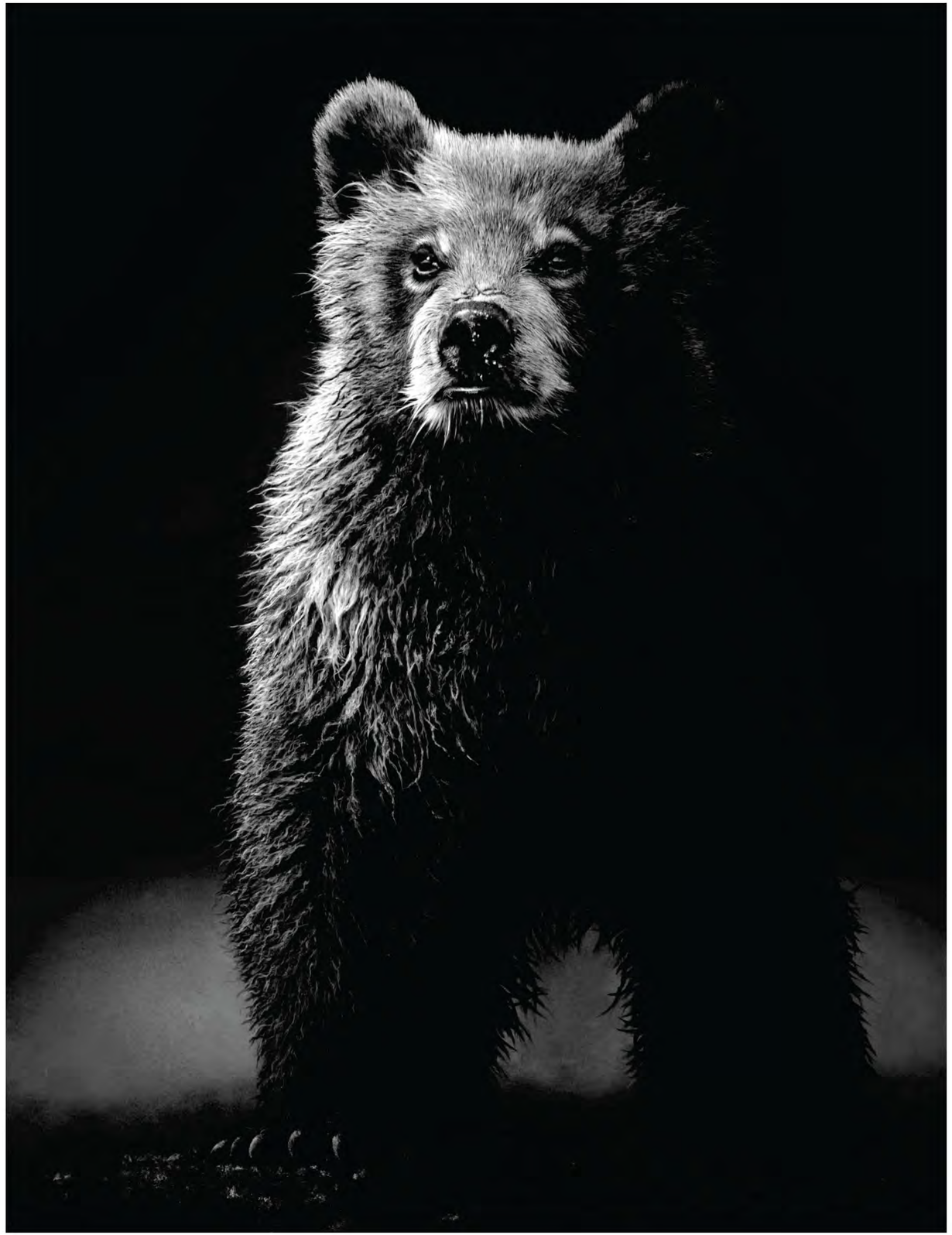
The Process

The uniqueness that differentiates Keith from other artists is his decision to paint in only black and white oils. It finally gave him, "his voice." Another quality that sets him apart is the way he finishes his artwork. "It has to be perfectly smooth with no brush strokes. I finish the sides, corners and back. I frame and polish to a perfect shine." The process starts for Keith when he orders a birch panel, primes it and begins to work.

This Page, above, ***Morning Light,*** *oil on panel, 30" x 40"*
Following Page, ***Adore,*** *oil on panel, 20" x 28"*

"I lay down multiple layers of oil allowing it to dry in my heated drying room and then do transparent washes over each layer to push and pull the values. I then paint with more and more detail for each layer, rinsing and repeating. I paint very thin and actually lightly sand each layer after its dry to keep the painting perfectly smooth. Once the painting is done, I sand and paint the panel edges. I then add a Tyvek black paper backing, wire and varnish. The varnish has to be 100% perfect with no hairs, dust, brush strokes or flaws. The entire painting, front and back needs to be a work of art in and of itself. Finally, I place the painting in a floating frame and release."

He also described the hardest aspect of his craft is getting the black and white painting perfect and he is now able to do so without dust or hairs. Keith sometimes has an issue with the hairs, since he does have the guinea pig keeping him company while he paints.



This Page, above, ***Explore,*** *oil on panel, 18" x 24"*

When asked what types of art and materials he has explored and what is his favorite, Keith says, "I have only ever been interested in realism and nothing else interests me enough to experiment with it." He has experimented with other mediums in his effort, "to be able to produce a realistic effect of hair, clouds, mist and hard and soft edges."

Oftentimes Keith will take photographs while travelling, or while in the mountains. Working with and manipulating animals, forests, mists, etc. on his computer, he will arrive at a certain scene he thinks he wants, then he saves it. He then steps away from it for a few weeks. If he still likes it when he goes back to it, he will begin painting what he created and saved.

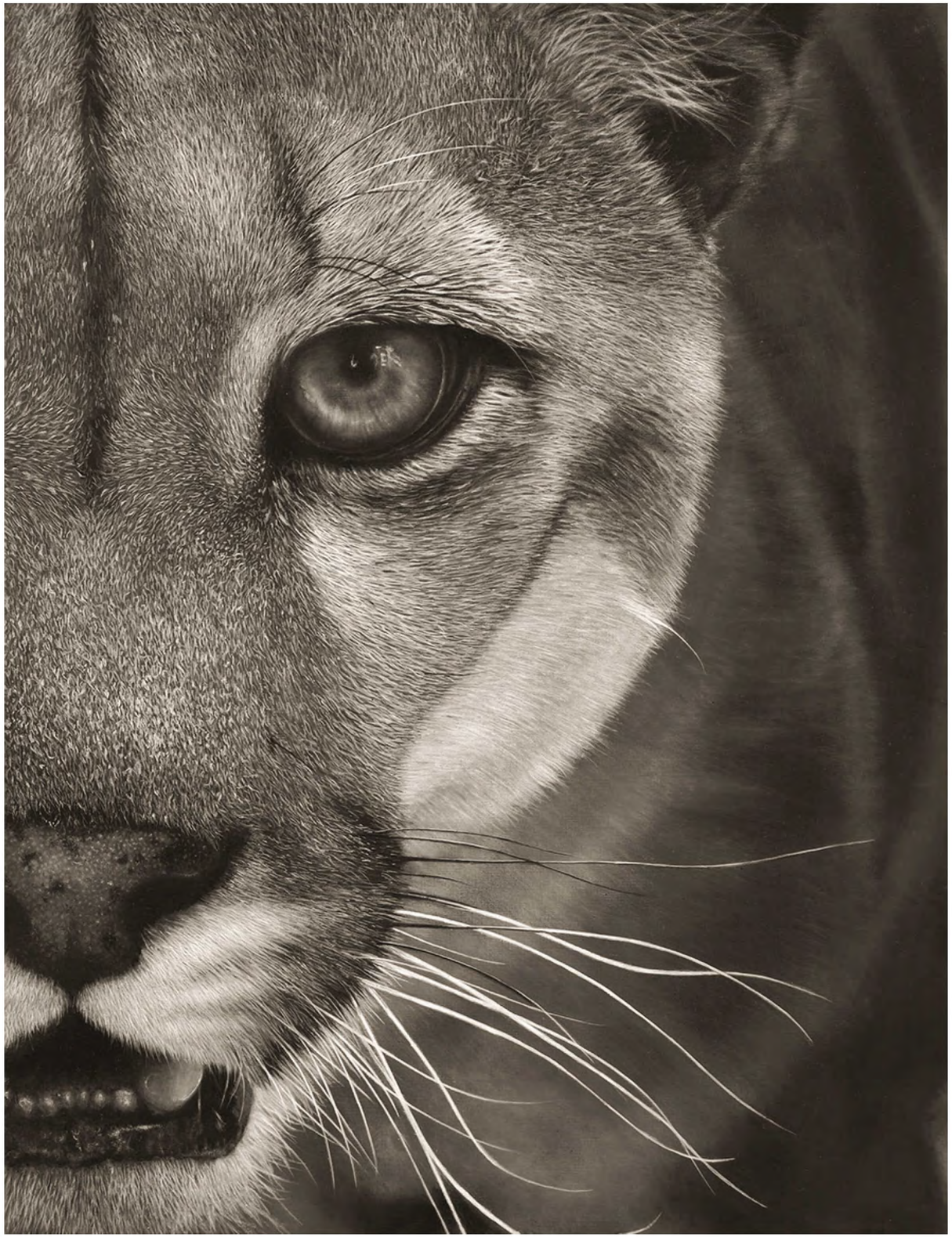
90% of Keith's paintings originated from what inspired him. The other 10% are commission works. The perfectionist in Keith makes it difficult to provide a customer with a painting that is 100% right with the client, due to the back and forth involvement between artist and client. Although sometimes there is a positive aspect to doing a commission painting.

This Page, above, ***Sisters,*** *oil panel, 18" x 24"*

"The upside is that often the client's eyes help to guide the work to the next level. Keith completed a Moose commission with a new client. "It went through a lot of iterations and restarts, however in the end the piece was much more powerful than if I had gone with my first attempt. Much credit to the client for his patience and help in the process."

Paint and Protect

Keith Andrews is an avid wildlife conservationist who truly puts his money where his mouth is because he donates a minimum of ten percent of all sales to the charity of the purchaser's choice. 'Paint and Protect' could be one of Keith's descriptions. When Keith is asked what motivates him to paint, his answer is always that he does not need motivation, because, as I wrote in the first paragraph, "all I ever think about is creating and improving my art."



KEITH ANDREWS

*This Page, left, **Watershed,** oil on panel, 36" x 20"*

*Previous Page 1, **Serenity,** oil on panel, 48" x 30"*
*Previous Page 2, **Intensity,** oil on panel, 24" x 18"*
*Previous Page 3, **Ferocity,** oil on panel, 24" x 18"*

I have included this quote again due to the fact that this is Keith Andrews in a nutshell: He just paints. He wakes up painting. He goes to bed painting. This writer does not doubt that his dreams are of painting a thoroughbred stallion, or a bald eagle, or an old moose with antlers-a-plenty. What a great life he must enjoy. Paint on, Keith Andrews.

Keith Andrews can be contacted at keith@keithandrews.art or you can visit www.keithandrews.art.

Galleries handling his work are listed below:

GRANT BERG GALLERY
Grande Prairie, AB
www.grantberggallery.com

BERG GALLERY
Kananaskis, AB
www.berggallery.com