

Portrait of a Westminster Winner

Drew Thurston was eager to tackle his latest commission-- painting the official portrait of an internationally famous star.

"I love the painting...This is stunning," says the portrait's new owner.

Good Morning America, The Today Show, Martha Stewart and Charlie Rose were all enthusiastic about featuring the painting's subject. You might even say he won an Oscar® -- or the Oscar's ® equivalent in the dog world-- the Westminster Kennel Club's Best Of Show award of 2007.

His name is James, aka Felicity's Diamond Jim-- an English Springer Spaniel. The aforementioned owner of the portrait and the dog is Teresa Patton, who resides in Northern Virginia. There, James has retired from show business, devoting his time to being a certified therapy dog helping Alzheimer's patients.

Thurston, whose work has been exhibited at the Denver Art Museum paints a wide variety of subjects, but has of late taken to painting dogs and other creatures in imaginary landscapes that harken back to the mid nineteenth century and earlier. Aside from the pleasing color harmonies he finds, the mood of these works is both lighthearted and sophisticated, fun but classic.

"Art, especially in the case of idealized landscapes like these, domesticates nature-- and it's just lovely to place a domesticated, noble creature in such a setting to commune with that kind of nature," he says.

The arts have captivated Thurston since his childhood-- not only drawing and painting but playing piano and violin. He plays both instruments in the Littleton Symphony, the orchestra of his home town. Writing is another love, although he has no particular plans for the short novels he's written.

"I caught the bug from Leonardo Da Vinci when I was twelve," he says, "-- the impulse to let my creativity and passion for life assume many forms."

He's acted in community theater and just this month performed a ventriloquist act for students at a local private elementary school. In the same program he showed the children his process for creating illustrations for his regular clients in the magazine and book industries.

"The opportunity to paint James was a tremendous privilege. He is a magnificent dog." This painting can be seen at drewthurston.com

About the Author

Thurston lives with his wife, Lisa, and daughter, Annora, in Littleton, CO.drewthurston.com

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