

Paul Jorgensen



Previous Page, Beachcomber Hill, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 36"

Free-Spirited and Fabulous

written by Lorie Lee Steiner

It's not unusual for an artist's bio to tout the fact that "I grew up with a pencil in my hand." With many of today's most talented creators, the passion for drawing/doodling often took hold at an early age and grew into a lifetime career connected in some way to the arts.

In the Beginning

British Columbia's own gifted painter, Paul Jorgensen, is a prime example. His earliest memories are of drawing with coloured pencil; always encouraged by his Mum and later by his grade two teacher, Miss Marg McClellan, who recognized her pupil's interest in painting and showed great support. Yet, where the subject matter and style of many 'adult' artists takes on a more serious bent, Paul's works are full of the wonder and vibrant colours inherent in a child's-eye look at the world... inviting the viewer to partake in the joy of their own imagination.

Paul Jorgensen was born in 1947 in Tofino, BC on the west coast of Vancouver Island. When he was four years old, his family moved to Nanaimo on the Island's east coast, where he received his public and high school education. Following graduation, he attended the Vancouver School of Art (now known as Emily Carr School of Art + Design) to hone his creative skills. After that, life got a lot more interesting. In 1968, Paul travelled to Europe on a freighter and lived and worked in Norway for a year before touring around the continent in a van with four friends. Inspiration from that amazing '60s experience is made manifest today in the lilting, whimsical journeys he portrays on canvas.

The Route to Becoming a Full-time Artist

In 1970, Paul fell in love and married a fellow art student. The happy couple lived in Vancouver for several years until the temptation to travel whisked them away to Mykonos, Greece for six months. There they enjoyed an idyllic life – painting and soaking up Greek Island culture. When they returned to Canada, they made their home in Nanaimo and never moved again. Paul describes himself at that time as "mostly a hobbyist painter" but became a full-time artist 20 years ago when his work was accepted by the West End Gallery.



Above, *The Long Staircase*, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 48"

His Studio

Paul reflects, "My studio, which I built in 1987, is in our back garden so I am surrounded by lovely greenery and calmness. I like to imagine a story about the painting as I work, while at



Following Page, *English Bay*, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 36"

the same time listening to a wide range of music and podcasts. On the wall of my studio, I sometimes hang prints of subject matter or photos of other people's art that will inspire my painting. Lately, I have been following figurative artists like Rusudan Khizanishvili, and Billy Childish and Anne-Sophie Tschiegg on social media. I have discovered so many great painters on Pinterest. I have been influenced by many other artists, as well, in magazines and illustrations."



Above, **Sanoma Searching**, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 36"
Following Page:
top, **The Long Staircase**, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 48"
bottom, **Niel's Yard**, acrylic on canvas, 18" x 36"

To anyone starting out as an artist, Paul advises, "Just keep at it. The more that you do, the more that you learn. Lots of times, I have found a painting that really strikes me. I study it to find out what it is that attracts me, and then try to use that one piece of information, technique, perspective, colour or whatever and apply it to my painting...or at least attempt to.

Below, *Return to Riomaggoire*, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 36"
Following Page, *Torreone*, acrylic on canvas, 40" x 30"



My paintings are often described by others as colourful or joyful or whimsical. Most of them are imagined so anything is possible with colour or the landscape. Most of the craft is the problem solving. Lots of time the painting starts as one thing and ends up as another."

Back in the days when Paul was a student at the Emily Carr School of Art + Design, "hard edge" paintings (flat coloured panels in structured grids) were trending.

But it was The Group of Seven, The Impressionists and magazine illustrators who really caught Paul's attention, filling him with inspiration, then and now. It's all about story or the mere glimmer of a story in a specific landscape that intrigues him. An open gate, a fleeting vehicle, a path where someone may just have passed...



Previous Page 1, *The Evening Glow*, acrylic on canvas, 45" x 45"

Previous Page 2, *The Table is Waiting*, acrylic on canvas, 48" x 48"

Following Page, *On the Edge of the World, Vernazza*, acrylic on canvas, 48" x 36"

As for technique, Paul explains, "I use acrylic paint and use many layers. I like the colours very saturated but I don't do a lot of mixing on the pallet, the colour comes from the layering. I start with black or gray gessoed canvas and have something in mind. I start the drawing with white chalk pastel. On top of that drawing, I will use white paint to block in the values and over that I will start using colour. Nothing is written in stone, so changes occur. I have used many materials, including making small slab ceramic objects and even some larger wooden pieces that I have then painted."

While he has taken on some commissions, Paul prefers painting his own chosen subject matter. Which comes as no surprise – in his hand, that free-spirited brush just loves to wander on canvas into its own magical dimension. The excitement he hears from people who are smitten by his paintings is another source of inspiration. He recalls, "Years ago, I was approached by the Canadian Art Prints to submit four images. One day I got a phone call from a friend who lives in New Mexico. She told me that she saw my work in a national home design store all framed up, and had to tell the shopkeeper that she knew me!"

When he's not in the studio, Paul can be found checking out what's new and beautiful in the garden, or checking-out other artists online, or boating in good weather. Reminiscing about life before the Covid-19 pandemic, he says, "It was always nice to meet friends for dinner on a weekend; we miss that." Indeed, these days we're all ready for some smiles, and peace, and just maybe a rollicking adventure in a land where who knows what's around the next bend... welcome to the world of Paul Jorgensen!

The artist, Paul Jorgensen, can be contacted by email at Jorg1@telus.net or by phone at 250.753.9492. To enjoy his remarkable paintings online, visit www.jorgensenart.net.

Paul Jorgensen's work is represented by the following fine Galleries:

West End Gallery
Victoria, BC and Edmonton, AB
www.westendgalleryltd.com

Bezanson Art Consulting
www.bezansonart.com

Paul Scott Gallery
Phoenix, AZ
www.paulscottgallery.com

Howard/Mandville Gallery
Woodinville, WA
www.howardmandville.com

Gallery Merrick
Nanaimo, BC
www.gallerymerrick.com





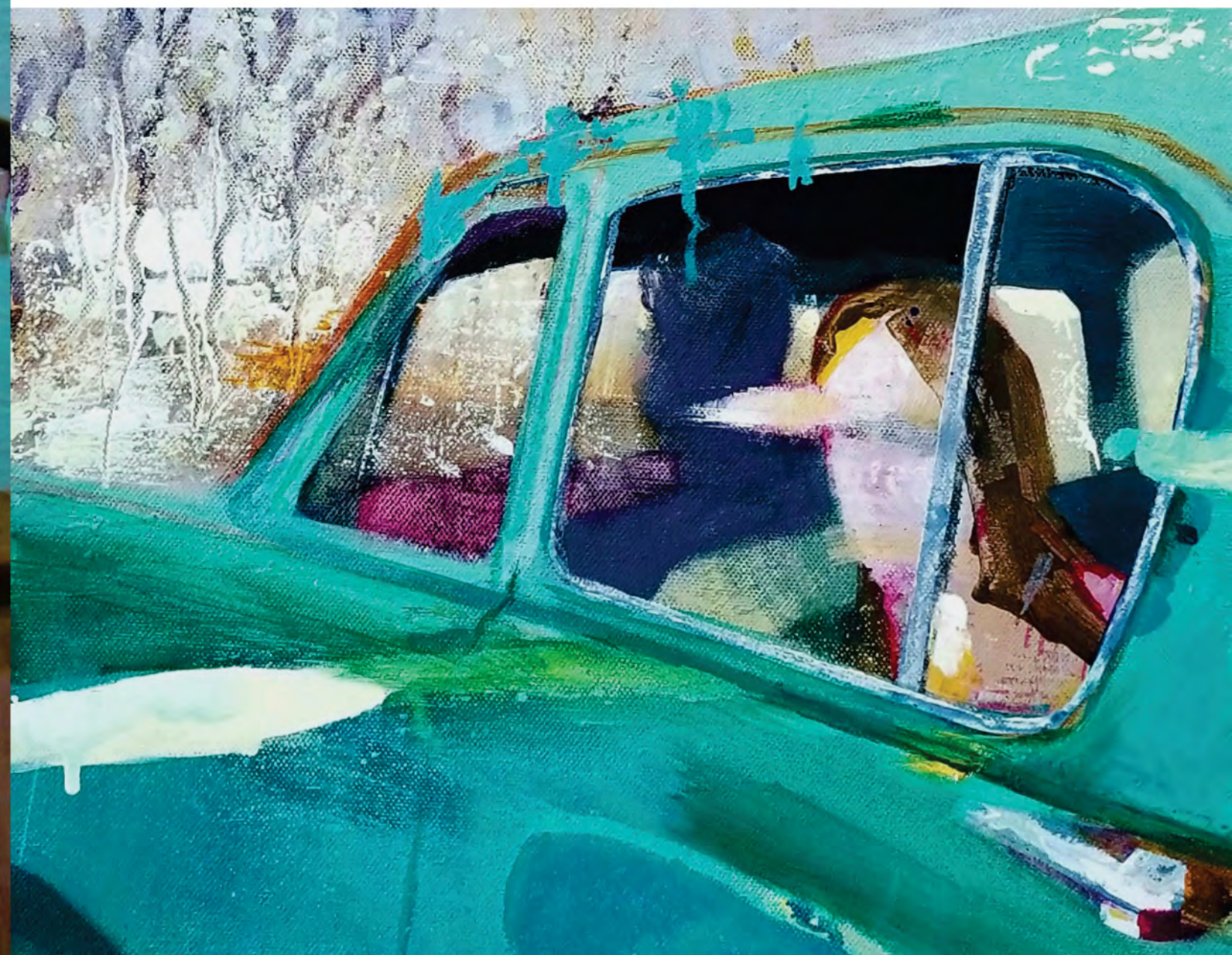
During COVID-19 Paul Jorgensen has been experimenting with new works and new styles. He has introduced characters into his paintings along with a general feeling of film noir but in Paul's hand the whimsy comes through, as well as the bright colours. What might be a somber or an uncomfortable scene plays out just a little bit differently when Paul's brushes start painting.



Some of the colour schemes are changing and he has become looser and less complicated in some of the pieces. There is a hint of mischief and sadness and of course there is always a story. Although Paul is not known for his figurative work I think they might be showing up in more of his new pieces. The faces although slightly hidden still portray an interesting array of emotions.



Previous Page 1, *The Filberg Stairs*, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 36"
Previous Page 2, *We are Home*, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 36"
Above, *Going to Town*, 1947, acrylic on canvas, 24" x 24"
Following Page, *Communication*, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 30"





One thing is for sure though - the work of Paul Jorgensen will always catch your attention and make you wonder just what is going on.

"My paintings are not intended to be a serious view of the world. I like work that involves imagination and technique and that suggests stories. I just want to make people happy when they are looking at my paintings," says Paul Jorgensen.

Previous Page 1, *The Evening Glow*, acrylic on canvas, 45" x 45"
 Previous Page 2, *The Old CPR Dock*, acrylic on canvas, 24" x 30"
 Top left, *Desert Bar*, acrylic on canvas, 24" x 24"
 Top right, *Just Around the Corner*, acrylic on canvas, 20" x 20"
 Bottom, *Reluctant Farewell*, acrylic on canvas, 18" x 20"
 Previous Page 3, *CPR Ferry, 1935*, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 36"
 Above, *Easter Egg Hunt, The Origin*, acrylic on canvas, 20" x 20"



Paul's world is full of vintage cars and Gotham City buildings without the gloom. Here is a world that some of us can remember and that might be only in our mind. The buildings are topsy turvy and seem to move with the sun and the wind. The paintings of Paul Jorgensen are always an adventure and for a while one would like to be lost in one of these paintings. Such a fun journey.

Maybe it is time for you to come and explore the world of Paul Jorgensen. You will be glad you did.

Previous Page, Modern Times, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 36"
Above, The Pink Deli, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 36"

Paul Jorgensen
www.jorgensenart.net