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A Slice of Life  
Roth-Moore's portraits put a new twist on an old tradition

By Andy Stonehouse

A long time ago in a world far, far away, a finely painted portrait was the very embodiment of class and power—a permanent reminder of the grace and style of the subject at a certain time in their lives. That artistic and cultural tradition may have been a bit lost on us in the many years since the development of portrait photography, but there's still something special and particularly long-lasting about a custom-painted portrait.

Eagle-Vail's Andrea Roth-Moore has spent more than 35 years mastering the not-entirely-long-lost art of the portrait. Working with oils, pastels and charcoals, Roth-Moore's work captures all of the color and vitality of her subjects, with lifelike results.

For the past 22 years, Roth-Moore has been based in the valley. She's become one of the community's most recognizable art figures, largely through her daily artistic appearances at Beaver Creek Village, where her exposure to the wandering masses of skiing tourists has earned her commissioned work literally across the globe.

"I have about 300 leads to follow up on from this winter," Roth-Moore says. "I've got a big oil painting to complete for a client in Gainesville, Fla., and I'll probably be driving through Texas later this year to meet up with folks who want paintings done. I'm also flying out to New York and Italy to take photos to start work on some new paintings."

Roth-Moore's portrait process and workload has typically meant a six to eight month waiting period for those who enlist her services. She's quite literal with her business catchphrase, "Your place or mine": consultations for her paintings can either be done at her Beaver Creek studio (located across the way from Blue Moose Pizza) or, more typically, at a client's home. There, she'll spend several hours becoming acquainted with her subject and surroundings, discussing the formality, pose and clothing to be involved in the image, not to mention the medium. Roth-Moore uses photographs to capture the light and mood and says she can rely on those to help convey the subject's personality as she begins work on the pieces back at home.

This season, Roth-Moore has tried out a couple of new strategies. Every day from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., she paints outdoors in the band tent across from the Beaver Creek ice rink; she's also developed a photograph and watercolor-based portrait system which allows her to turn around results in the same day. Kids and pets have been favorite subjects.

"Starting in November, I began to work with a digital camera and a printer," she says. "Clients come by and I do a few pictures; they go skiing and within an hour I have a painting ready for them. It's absolutely painless, with no long sitting required. And it's been great—I used to be booked a whole year ahead and now people can have paintings done in a few hours, which is wonderful for gifts."

Using her new system, Roth-Moore is able to offer original, sepia-toned watercolor works for just \$95 and full-color paintings for \$125. She's enjoyed the immediacy of the new medium as well as the experience of doing her work in public. "There's something to be said for a painting environment where you get so much vitamin D," she says.

Roth-Moore traces her artistic career back to her childhood in Connecticut, winning a coloring contest at the age of 5 ("that kind of got the ball rolling," she says) and visiting art museums on Saturday mornings to experience a variety of painting styles. She later majored in art at Skidmore College and studied both art and photography at Yale University, traveling to Mexico on scholarship in the summers to practice her craft. While active as a graphic designer and painter, she'd never considered portrait painting as a steady craft until she and her husband were temporarily based in Casper, Wyo.

"I decided to do some portraits as part of a grand opening at a mall, and I only had two days to practice-I was flying by the seat of my pants. I thought, well, this is a small town and I can leave if I have to, if things don't work out."

Luckily, Roth-Moore's portrait talents blossomed and she began to specialize in the field. She moved to the valley in 1983 when her ex-husband was invited to work with former Vail mayor John Dobson to help set up radio stations (including KZYR). Cissy Dobson was one of Roth-Moore's first local subjects; in addition to shows in Minturn, Roth-Moore used to do fast-format paintings she dubbed "Face Lifts" for patrons at McCoy's as well as working special events.

Roth-Moore still loves to do full size oil, pastel or charcoal portraits and says the art of the formal painting is still an honored tradition, although it's less well-known in the American West.

"You do get a lot of CEO types who like to have their portrait done; generally people want their children or pets captured in portrait. It's still a more common idea in the South or Europe; we seem to be used to the Kodak moment out here."

*Information on Andrea Roth-Moore is available online at [www.portraitartist.com/roth-moore/roth-moore.htm](http://www.portraitartist.com/roth-moore/roth-moore.htm) or by calling 949-0166.*