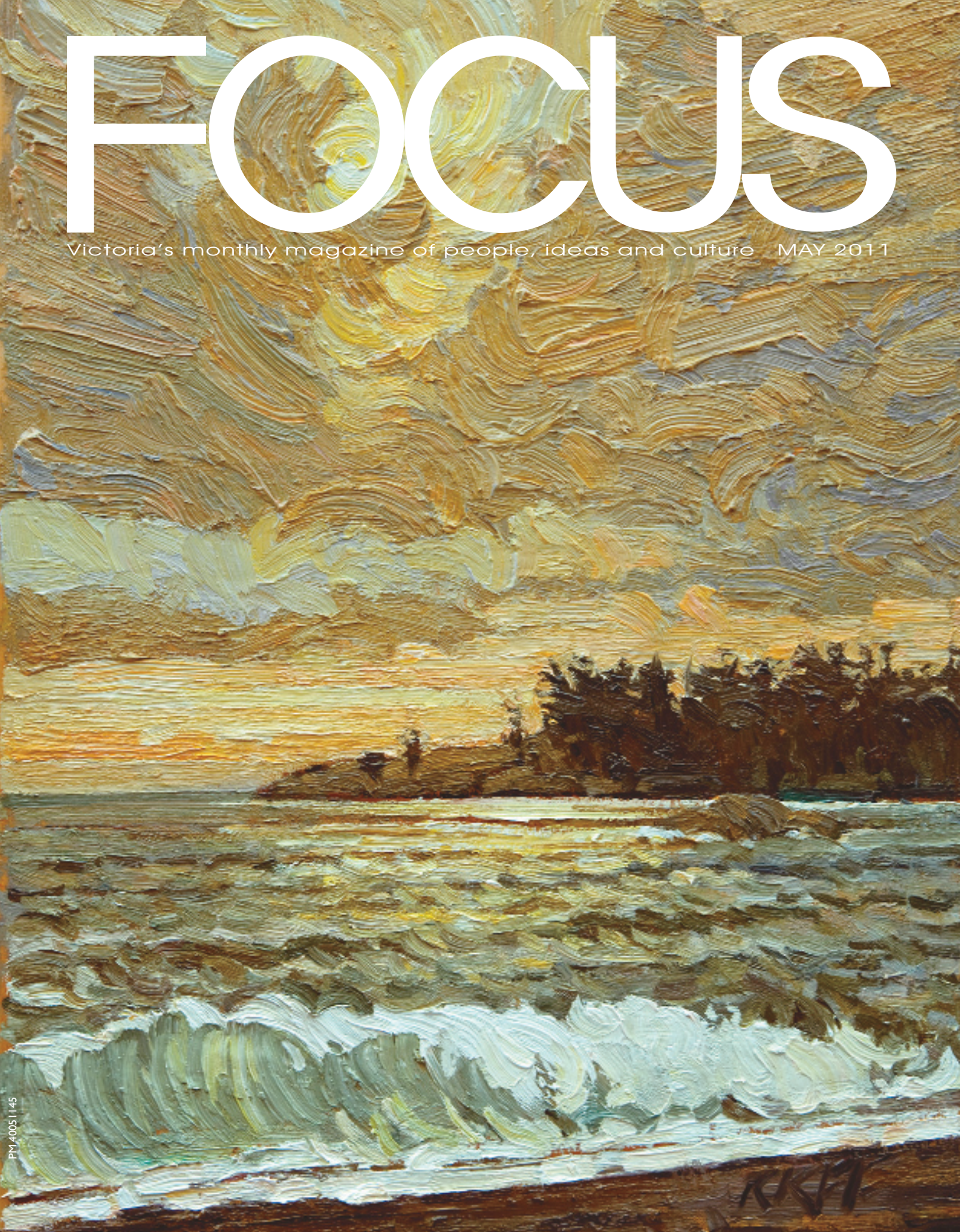


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Painting the sky

AMANDA FARRELL-LOW

Ken Faulk's painterly gaze is often drawn above the horizon.



PHOTO: TONY BOUNSALL

Upon meeting Ken Faulks, one might not immediately peg him as a fine artist. The gregarious, down-to-earth man, who looks younger than his 40-odd years, seems more like the kind of guy who would be applying coats of paint to the side of a house as opposed to a canvas or piece of board. But Faulks is an accomplished Victoria artist who works in a wide variety of mediums, from digitally-crafted abstract works to hand-drawn illustrations to *en plein air* landscape paintings.

"It keeps me off the streets," Faulks jokes. "It's almost like a public service."

Faulks only briefly flirted with the idea of living the blue-collar life. After graduating high school, he delivered for McGill & Orme Home Health Care and loaded trucks at Canadian Tire for a couple of years before deciding he wanted to do something different.

"I was going to get a job at Dockyard as a machinist because my dad worked there as a machinist, but I thought, 'Maybe I'll do [art] because I've always been doing it,'" he says.

Faulks has been drawing "since I could hold a pencil" and kept up with art by taking correspondence classes throughout school, which "kept me painting when I got too interested in girls and sports." He became a professional illustrator in 1984 (he still freelances) and took up painting *en plein air*—a French expression meaning "in the open air," which is a reference to the artist working outside—a few years later as a way to get himself outside and away from his desk, where he was mostly working from photographs for his illustration work.

"You know the old London Drugs 4x6s: the darks get black and the lights get white and where's all the colour?" he says. "The eye can see so much more than the camera when it comes to contrast...all of a sudden, you're pulling all these colours out that you wouldn't see in the photograph."

It's these *en plein air* works that will be showcased at Bringing Home the Light, Faulks' upcoming exhibition at Coast Collective and Mercurio galleries. Mercurio owner Kym Hill wanted to open the show at Coast Collective Gallery—which is housed in a mansion on Esquimalt Lagoon—before moving it to Mercurio for a couple of reasons.

"I really want to give him some big room, because he's going to have some large pieces. His work, you need to stand back from it a ways," says Hill. "It's also somewhat to do with what they're doing out there ... [the gallery] is slightly less-known than it should be. They've done quite a bit to foster the *en plein air* work."

Hill feels Bringing Home the Light could be a breakthrough exhibition for Faulks, who she's been representing at Mercurio for about four years, since the young gallery's early days.

"He's got a strong following, he's got collectors, people from all over the world, but more importantly, to me, is that the local painters, of which there are reams of them, they follow him closely, which is high praise," she says. "It's just really great to see him treat the local landscape in that great Canadian tradition of oil on board. It's not the Group of Seven from long ago, it's here and now."

The show will feature very recent work by Faulks—mostly paintings he's created in the past two months—some of which he's done with the AI Frescoes, a loose collective of local artists who have a common interest in painting outside. While the AI Frescoes have been around for 17 years, Faulks has only been painting with them the past couple—and he says their casual attitude is a good fit with his pragmatic style.

"I'm not into pissing contests or egos or keeping up with the Joneses, I just want to be around good people," says Faulks, adding he's about 60/40 in favour of painting with people as opposed to going it alone. "Definitely, if I'm painting with somebody, I might be throwing out the smart-ass lines as much as I am painting. The banter is always good."

"Dallas Road Waterfront" Ken Faulks, 12 x 16 inches, oil on board





“Saanich Peninsula Snow” Ken Faulks, 10 x 8 inches, oil on board

Faulks’ oil-on-board *en plein air* works are often thick with paint, giving rich texture to his West Coast landscapes. “At the end of the day, the paint is the subject, not the tree or the sky or the water,” he says. While he’s attracted to close-up subjects that offer perspective, his painterly gaze is often drawn above the horizon.

“I like skies, definitely skies,” he says. “There’s nothing more boring than just a blue sky, so you kind of have to raise the horizon line and find something below the horizon line that’s interesting. But if there’s a really interesting sky, the horizon line goes way down and I paint the sky.”

And it seems Faulks’ affinity for skies is infectious. “Ever since I’ve seen Ken’s work, I look at skies differently,” says Hill. “Every time I see a sky, I look up and think, ‘I wonder what Ken would do with that.’ It’s had a big effect, which says something to me.”

Ken Faulks: Bringing Home the Light runs from May 19-22 at the Coast Collective Gallery, 3221 Heatherbell Road, then moves to Mercurio Gallery at 602 Courtney St (250-388-5158) from May 24-June 4. There will be an opening reception from 2-4 pm, May 21 at the Coast Collective Gallery. See www.kenfaulks.com, www.coastcollective.ca, and www.mercurio.ca.



Amanda Farrell-Low is a Victoria-based arts and culture writer. She spent five years as a staff writer and arts editor at *Monday Magazine*.



SEEING RED? Calm skin down.

Rosacea typically begins as a redness or flushing on the cheeks, nose, chin or forehead that may come and go. Over time, the redness becomes more persistent, and visible blood vessels may appear. Since rosacea is progressive, if left untreated it may become especially troublesome and even disfiguring.

“As a rosacea sufferer myself, I knew I had to find a better way to deal with this common and bothersome disorder,” says **Shelley Rollick**,

founder of Glow Rescue. “I feel I have done this with the development of my 10/10 program for rosacea.”



To look at Shelley’s skin, one would never know hers is a skin prone to blushing and flushing. “I have had an enormous amount of success treating rosacea with this program, including my own,” says Shelley. “The result is unequalled in any other treatment regimen I have seen,

and it is very rewarding to be able to provide an effective solution for my clients.”

“Generally when one goes to their physician with the types of concerns associated with rosacea, clients are often prescribed antibiotics or even accutane,” says Shelley, “There are very few safe and effective options available to physicians in the treatment of this disorder, with the list of prescription drug side effects being virtually endless.”

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