

The Sky's the Limit – Ken Faulks Brings Home the Light

BY ANDY GRAFFITI

Some people go fishing. Ken Faulks goes painting. He has stood for two hours in the ocean wind with a small log anchoring his easel, spray from the rollers hitting the beach rushing past him the whole while. When he puts down his brush, he has completed *Albert Head Morning* – the latest in a series of paintings of the shores of Vancouver Island. Some painting days and locations are sunnier, and more serene than this; some even wilder and harsher.

Ken's catch is made up of pictures of the ever-changing expanse of the skies above him, and the fleeting play of light on the land and seascapes of Vancouver Island. Each represents a period of perhaps a few hours in a specific season, in a specific place. Also, like any good painting, each is an appealing artifact in itself. Ken has said, "When you come away from painting outdoors, what do you have? Not mountains and rivers, but paint. The paint has to be visually interesting; the paint becomes the subject. I love paint." And his love of paint shows clearly in his lavish brushstrokes and vibrant palette of colours.

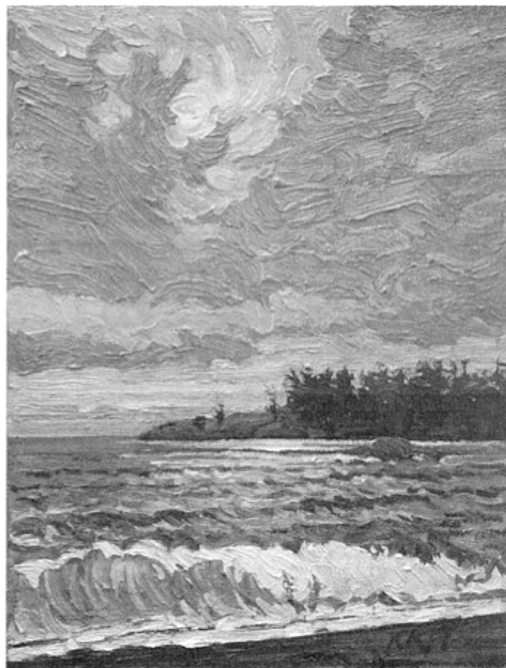
Born in Victoria in 1964, Ken became interested in drawing and design at an early age. He began painting *en plein air* (literally, in the open air) in 1989. This kind of painting has become perhaps Faulks' greatest forte. He is respected by his peers both for his skill with the brush, and his enthusiasm for seeking his subjects in all weathers. In late May an exhibition of his recent work will be presented by Victoria's Mercurio Gallery. The Plein Air Painters group gave up some days from their group show to allow Ken a special weekend opening at the Coast Collective Gallery. This will be followed by a two-week show at Mercurio.

Faulks is making abiding images from the transient beauties of the place we live, through a direct engagement with the land, sea and sky. An overview of his prolific and wide ranging output over the last few years also reveals that

each is a tile in a mosaic of our surroundings, even as forces both human and natural wear inexorable change on these vistas.

Ken dismisses the idea that this is his mission. He chooses his subjects strictly for their appeal to his painter's eye, and the additional pleasure he takes in working on location in these natural settings. Nevertheless, he is also creating a large and enduring record of the visible world around us, here and now, from the Strait of Juan de Fuca to Tofino.

Special Exhibition at Coast Collective Gallery: 3221 Heatherbell Road, Colwood, BC (www.coastcollective.ca). Opening Reception, Saturday, May 21, 2:00–4:00 pm. Viewing Sunday, May 22 at noon–5:00 pm. May 24 through June 4 at Mercurio Gallery, 602 Courtney St. 250-388-5158 (www.mercurio.ca)



Albert Head oil

Havenwood – A few minutes from Metchosin, on a most picturesque site, a delightful treasure lies nestled above the Esquimalt Lagoon. Now headquarters for the Coast Collective artists' co-operative, the Pendray family's one time estate Havenwood is always well worth a visit. Just take Metchosin Road to Lagoon Road. Travel down Lagoon Road towards the water and turn left onto Heatherbell Road, the second turn on left. Proceed to the end – 3221 Heatherbell Road, and you are there. Enjoy!! You will find several Metchosin artists displaying their work at the Coast Collective Gallery so keep an eye out for them as well.



Ken Faulks