



Wit & Wisdom

a decade of painting by jerry david cornelia
september 14, 2006 - february 11, 2007

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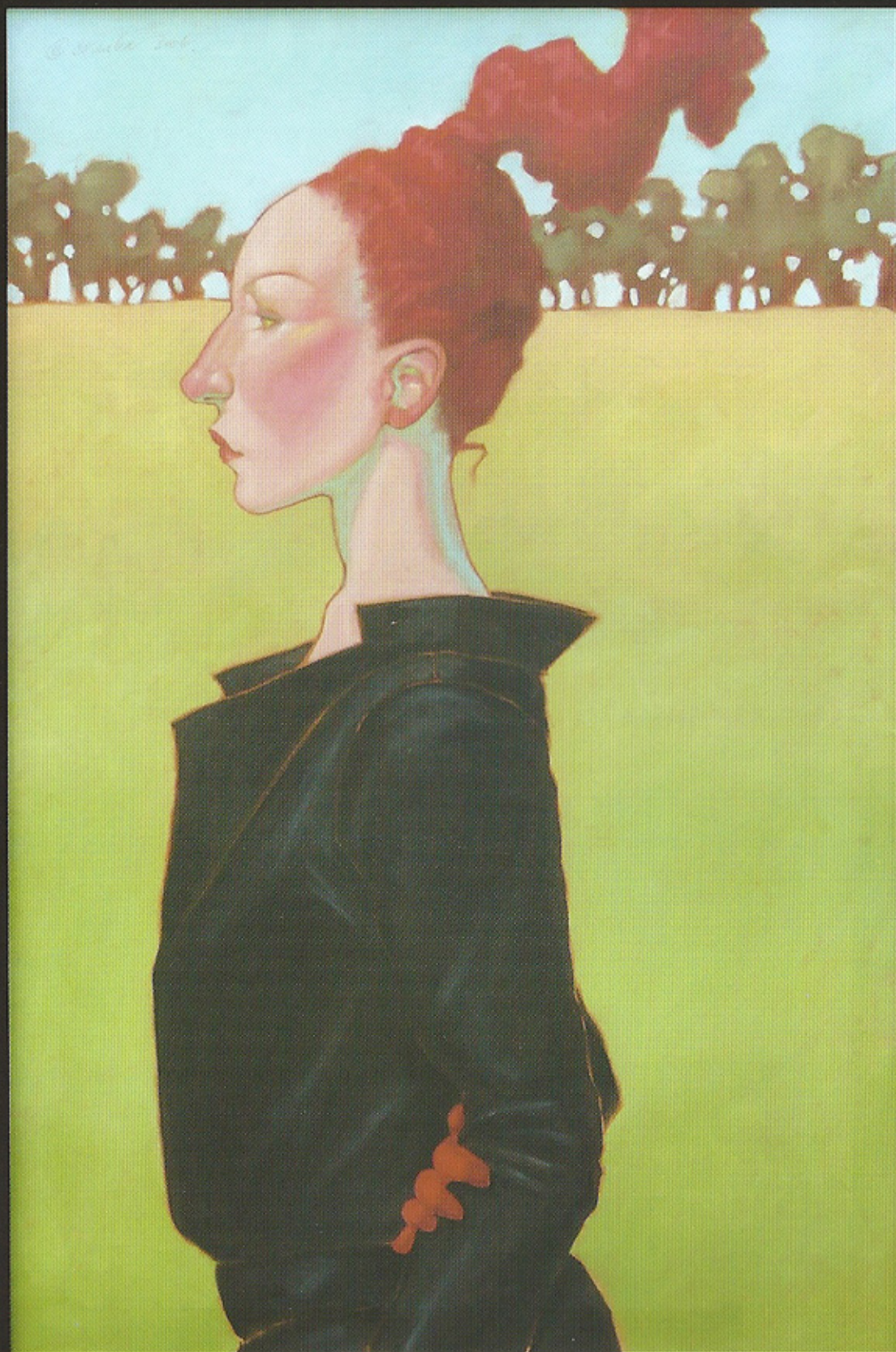
Viewing Jerry Cornelia's deadpan, luminous, and oft times ironic paintings, we get a sense of the inside and outside of an unusual western landscape. Surrounded by awkwardly glamorous farm animals and deceptively prim, pale-skinned women, we have the sense of stepping into unknown territories. Notions of an archetypal West consisting of dusty boots and cowboy hats are quickly thrown out in favor of bold, bright landscapes of green scalloped hills and fluffy sheep with flowers on their heads. The viewer is instantly allowed a glimpse into the heads and hearts of these inhabitants, with titles for guides, such as "Everyone wondered why Edna had to be so damn fancy all the time." We suddenly find ourselves empathizing with this fancy sheep.

Jerry manages to create an exaggerated landscape without alienating the viewer. Instead, we are drawn into this world by both the titles and a candy-like quality achieved by a design-fueled painting style. We want more and more. These are not the anonymous, quiet figures of most paintings. Jerry gives us just enough insight to identify with his figures, but not enough to take away a lingering mysterious quality. We yearn to know more! The abbreviated allegorical quality given to the works, primarily through his use of titles, works well with these green-eyed characters. There are stories bursting out of these paintings. Something of a pictorial poet, Jerry is adept at unfolding disturbing yet funny truths in his paintings.

If it seems that the characters in Jerry's paintings aren't disciplined, the painting itself surely is. Primarily self-taught, and a self-proclaimed thief, Cornelia says, "I steal like crazy from other artists." His sumptuous palette and ability to describe the environment of his world in a way that invites the viewer in are exceptional. Suspended pink clouds, shadows cast against a wall, a certain afternoon light against a window sill, the long-necked pale-skinned women—these things may recall Modigliani, Hopper, and Maxfield Parish, among others, but the paintings, like all good paintings, reveal to us a very original painter.

After graduating from design school in Atlanta and a long stint in New York painting mannequins and designing storefront windows, Jerry returned to his hometown of Sidney, Montana, in 1994. Jerry says "I can make my own world here. There's a bigger void to fill. I live in a creative vacuum, where one painting inspires the next one and so on." Welcome to Jerry's world.

Nicole R. Todd, Visions West Gallery

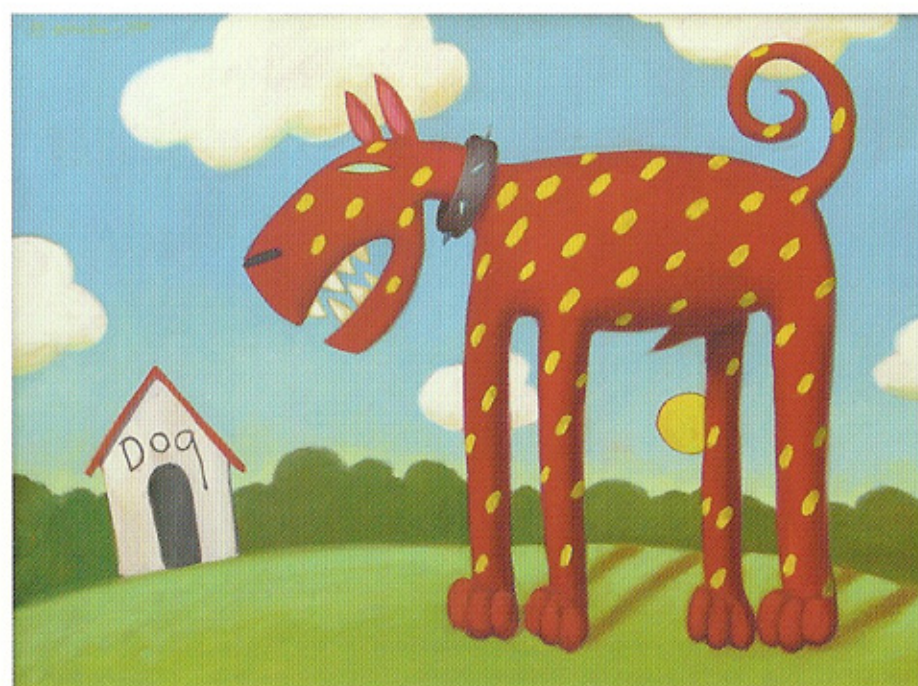


Above: *She would always wonder if he knew*, 2006, oil on canvas, 24" x 36"
 Right: *Nobody's Bitch*, 1998, oil on canvas, 30" x 40"

Biography and Artist's Statement

I was born and raised in eastern Montana, where I began drawing and sculpting from a very young age. I'm primarily self-taught, and I confess to not just borrowing, but blatantly stealing from the masters, my thinking being that if you're going to learn from someone, it might as well be the best. From 1985 to 1995, I lived and worked in New York. During my stay there, I worked at two different mannequin companies where I painted the faces of over 17,000 mannequins. Although it seems like an odd job, it was there that I learned a lot about color and developed some very good work habits. From my contacts there I was able to work on the famous Saks Fifth Avenue Christmas windows for four years, as well as other special projects for Thierry Mugler and Calvin Klein. Also while in New York I began to work on a lot of different projects, from birdhouses to clocks, chairs, tables, and other functional works. At the same time, I began sculpting classical forms and began to create a diverse portfolio of paintings, including surrealistic, neo-expressionistic, and neo-primitive. I am presently working exclusively in oil and my current work goes in several diverse directions, although usually sharing a common thread of autobiography. Whether surreal figurative paintings filled with symbolism, or illustrative animals and people with titles sometimes bordering on short stories, there is usually some reflection of what is or has been going on in my life. Every day seems to bring fresh fodder for a new painting, and often I find myself jotting down titles on scraps of paper and tucking them away for a future work.

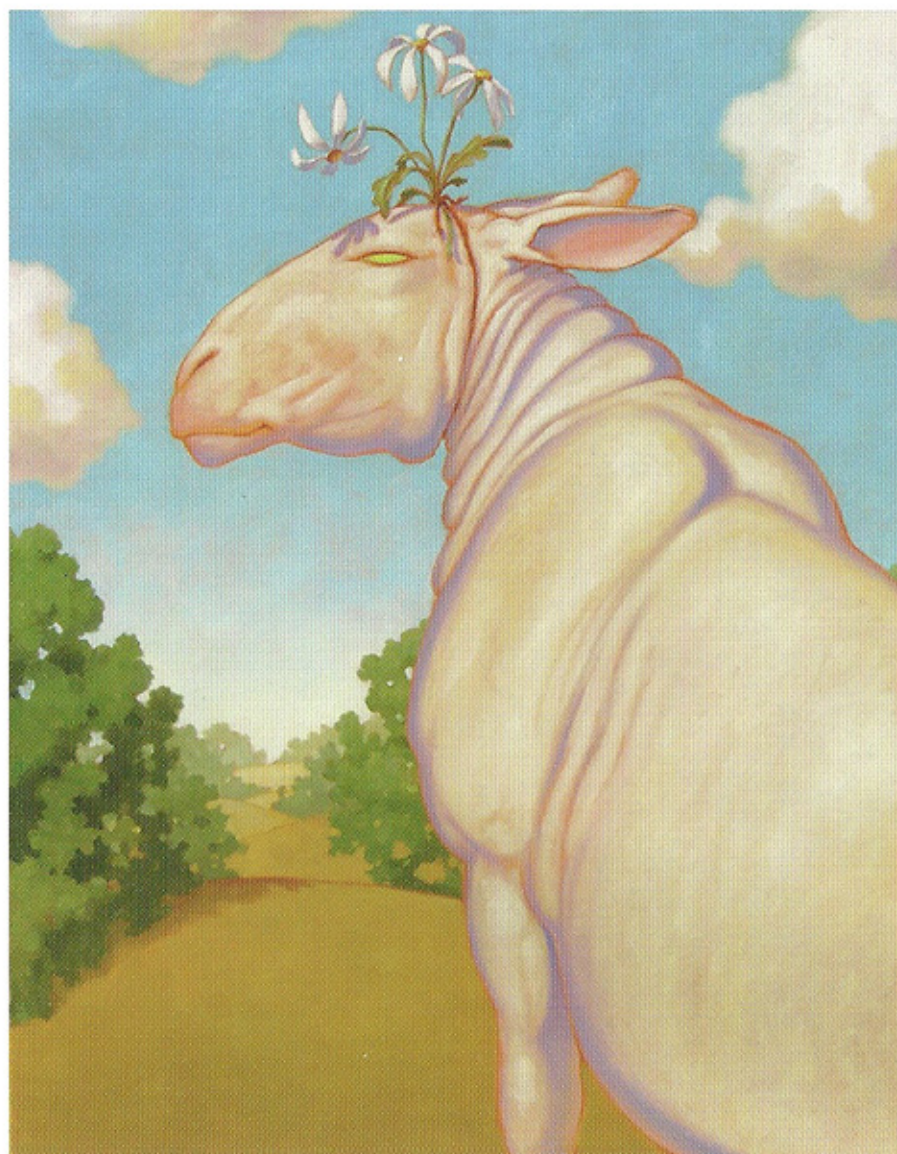
Jerry David Cornelia



Right: *Carmen couldn't help it, she was just a la-te-da kinda gal*, 2006, oil on canvas, 22" x 28"

Below: *Stella and Leonard were understandably nervous; it was, after all, their first luau*, 2006, oil on canvas, 24" x 36"

Front Cover: *It would be the last time Charlotte would let her half-wit husband trim her bangs*, 2006, oil on board, 24" x 36"



YELLOWSTONE ART MUSEUM

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