



What's in the Box?

From the curator's desk — Ron de Boer

Artists' paint boxes are as unique and individual as their work. Tom Thomson's box was similar to the one A.Y. Jackson used and was probably copied from it.

It was made to hold three of the 8½ x 10½ inch panels in slots in the lid. This size of panel is generally referred to as the "French Size."

The lid is actually deeper than the box itself—the lower part being used as the palette.

Paints, brushes and media would have been carried in another container such as a fishing creel.

The use of a single and hard-to-clean palette such as this accounts for some of the stiffness of paint that appears in much of Thomson's work. Half-dry paint sucks oil-medium from the freshly-squeezed paint above it.

Oil Paint is made by mixing pigment with medium. It can be quite toxic.

Pigment is what gives paint its colour. Today most pigments are man-made, using synthetic materials. Historically, pigments were made from minerals, animals, or vegetable elements.



Tom Thomson's — paint box

Medium is the liquid, often oil, mixed with pigment for painting on a surface.

Poppy seed oil is one kind of medium used in oil painting. Oil can speed up drying, and create a shiny or transparent surface.

Solvents are used to dissolve or thin paint and to clean brushes. Solvents are very toxic and flammable.

Turpentine is the most common solvent used in oil painting. Turpen-

tine is made by collecting resin from pine trees and distilling it. **Rags and newspaper** are used to wipe brushes after they have been cleaned in solvent.

A Palette is a flat board used by the artist to set out and mix paints.

A Palette cup is a small metal container used to hold small amounts of mediums and solvents. It can clip on the edge of a palette.

Palette knives come in many shapes. They are used for painting and for mixing paint.

Round tip brushes are used to make soft, round strokes. They hold a lot of paint and can make thick or thin strokes.

Filberts tipped brushes are round and flat. The paint flows towards the centre of the brush, giving a straight, hard edged shape.

Flat tipped brushes are used for making broad, sweeping strokes.

Canvas is a heavy-weight cotton that artists paint on.

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"Thanks to art, instead of seeing a single world, our own, we see it multiply until we have before us as many worlds as there are original artists."

Marcel Proust

It's a totally different painting!

—How Gallery de Boer restored a treasured family heirloom

"It's an art and a craft," says Alenka. "There aren't very many people who can do this."



The Duchess after the restoration is complete.

Five years ago Alenka Keevill received a treasured family heirloom from Europe – a painting of her great great grandmother that is believed to be over 200 years old. The painting has been passed on to the eldest child of each generation and just recently came into Alenka's possession. "I grew up with this painting," says Alenka. "It hung in my parents' house."

The woman in the painting is thought to have been a duchess living in or near Vienna. Family legend tells it that she had seven children by the duke. Later, she fell in love with a servant who was fourteen years her junior. She went to Poland with him, leaving behind all but this painting and her jewelry. She had five children with this man. After her death, he remarried. His new wife sent the painting and jewelry back to the duke's eldest child in Austria. This was Alenka's father's grandmother.

While in Europe it had been hung in rooms heated by coal fires. The painting and frame were coated with coal dust, smoke and insect droppings. The painting itself had some holes and was very dirty. However,

Alenka doesn't remember seeing it any other way.

She decided it was time to have this family treasure restored. She collected a couple of addresses from people she knew, trying to find someone she trusted with this



A close-up of the portrait mid-way through the restoration.

treasured painting. Then her husband's aunt sent her an article about Michael Anderson's restoration work at Gallery de Boer.

"After reading the article, something about it just sounded right," says Alenka. A trip to Owen Sound was in order. They brought the painting and had a tour of Gallery de Boer. "We liked the gallery and really liked Ron. And Michael really knew what he was talking about." After viewing some restoration work in progress,

Alenka and her husband knew Gallery de Boer was where the painting should be restored. "We wouldn't have left it with someone we didn't trust."

Restoring a painting is painstaking work. "It's an art and a craft," says Alenka. "There aren't very many people who can do this." Michael Anderson at Gallery de Boer is one of the few people in Canada trained for restoration work. This particular painting took Michael over a year and a half to restore. But the wait was worth it.

"It's a totally different painting," says Alenka. "I grew up with this painting. And suddenly there were colours I didn't know existed – the lace, the skin tones. It came alive. It looks as it was when it was first painted. We are very happy. It was a very professional job. And now it is a museum quality painting."

Now that the painting is restored, it hangs in their bedroom where it can be enjoyed every day. And one day it will be passed on to one of Alenka's sons. And hopefully it will continue to be passed along to future generations.

Who is Roman Zuzuk?

If you have not yet seen Roman's Zuzuk's work, you are missing something. The vibrant colours, patterns and easy surrealism are joyous and humorous. I suspect it would be impossible to be unhappy while looking at a Zuzuk painting.

Roman Zuzuk was born in Selec, Ukraine in 1961. His upbringing in this small Ukrainian village has a strong influence on Zuzuk's work. He started drawing at a young age and later graduated from the Kiev Academy of Fine Arts.

Zuzuk moved to Canada in 2000. He now makes his home in Toronto with his wife and two children. His work has been exhibited in Holland, Germany, Italy, Eastern Europe as well as New York, Montreal, Quebec City and Toronto.

From oil on canvas, Zuzuk has expanded his technique to include watercolour on paper and encaustic and pigments mixed with hot wax. His choice of technique and subject matter creates a truly unique body of work.

Zuzuk says that his subjects are life experiences, focused on people and animals, with whom we share the planet, all felt with a sense of music or musicality. Although he

does not play an instrument, Zuzuk loves music and the sense of motion and fun. This is evident in many of his works where music is a central theme - you can almost hear the folk melodies coming from the canvas.

As Veselin Vackov has said in his essay in a monograph on Roman Zuzuk: "Roman Zuzuk's pictures please people. But not with beauty. His



paintings are like old friends: we do not care whether their looks are perfect, but we love listening to them talking... His pictures tell stories. Some are comic, others eccentric or lyrical, but they always come from our own lives and listening to them makes us [feel] better."

Vackov notes: "Yet, the rural life style of his community endowed him with sensitivity and sense of humour that cannot be raised in other conditions. At a young age, he started drawing from nature: his first models were cows at pasture, hens in the backyard, and flocks of geese

flying overhead. But like most modern masters, Zuzuk arrived at primitivist abstraction only through rigorous classical training."

Influenced by Van Gogh and Chagall, Zuzuk is concerned with time and place in a palpable, directly embodied way. Look closely at what is inside and what is outside his subjects and his canvases. Vackov comments; "Perhaps it is the mixture of religious symbolism with pagan interest in animals and monsters. Through his mirroring of human and bestial forms Zuzuk satirizes human pretensions to refinement and draws attention to the topsy-turvy of destiny."

Gallery de Boer - Fine Art & Jazz welcomes Roman Zuzuk to our community. Zuzuk's work is currently on display in the main gallery.



Roman Zuzuk

"His paintings are like old friends: we do not care whether their looks are perfect, but we love listening to them talking."





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Coming Attractions: what's happening at Gallery de Boer—*Fine Art & Jazz*

Minds in the Landscapes & Landscapes in the Mind

This unique show features the contrasting work of **Siggi Blum** and **Roman Zuzuk**.



Based in Priceville, Ontario, Siggi Blum has fast become one of the best selling artists in Grey/

Bruce (and beyond). It is his unique, hyper-detailed pastels that have attracted such a following. The unheard of details in Blum's work creates stunning images that transport you to another place.

Toronto-based Roman Zuzuk takes you on a tour of the mental land-

scape. There is no one better than Zuzuk with humour, wit, colour and vitality. His lively and whimsical characters evoke a sense of movement and fun.

Show runs until September 22nd.



Interpretations of Place: Energy + Forms

Jean Francis and Patric Ryan are artists who are pushing the exploration



of energy and form in their landscape paintings. Enjoy their creations in form and interpretation as fresh directions in the great Canadian traditions in landscape art.

Preview September 28th. **Grand Opening and Reception October 12th**. Show runs until November 25th.