

Gordon Halloran

Gordon Halloran started his career as an award-winning Canadian illustrator (covers for Macleans, Financial Post, Toronto Life, San Francisco, American Airlines magazines, The Globe and Mail). His first show of abstract painting at the Nancy Poole Gallery in Yorkville, Toronto, was followed by other international exhibitions of paintings and drawings. He taught at Ontario College of Art in the Seventies.

In 1982, Halloran's reputation for life-like portraits brought him to the attention of a stock trader in Vancouver, John Woods. At the time, the Vancouver Stock Exchange announced plans to upgrade and modernize their trading floor. Woods commissioned Halloran to create a commemorative painting of the old trading floor, with portraits of traders and officials of the exchange. When the initial drawing was brought to Woods for review, he shared it with other traders, who instantly created a demand for a limited edition of prints from the painting, and The Financial Market Series was born.

At this time, Halloran became fascinated with the characters he encountered in this highly competitive environment where fear, pressure and a roller coaster of emotions was de rigueur in the cauldron of high finance and personal ambition, "a goldfish bowl of human behavior."

In the early eighties, this fascination with individuality and persona was expressed in a series of mixed media paintings called "Hung Jury", 12 life-sized portraits of men and women looking out in judgement.

He also created group portraits of traders in action at exchanges in Chicago, San Francisco, Toronto, Vancouver and New York in mixed media, acrylic and pencil. His track record of over thirty successfully commissioned works in seven major financial markets in North America and England established him as a preeminent artist of large group commissions in financial markets. Halloran's paintings, drawings and prints have grown in value over the years because of the detailed quality of his work, his ability to capture real people in dynamic portraits, his sense of design and color, and the historic nature of the work. His love for sports and competition went hand in hand with his study of this high adrenalin hot spot where fortunes are made and lost in seconds.

Halloran also worked in theatre during this time, (1982 - 2001) as a dramaturge, playwright and director. He co-wrote the comedy *Six Palm Trees* with playwright Caitlin Hicks and directed internationally touring productions of *Six Palm Trees*, *Just A Little Fever*, *Singing the Bones*, *Stories for a Winter Solstice* and *The Life We Lived*, all with Third Coast Theatre.

Halloran directed his own one-man play *Showing Size*, with a variety of actors in Toronto, Vancouver and Edmonton. The play was inspired by his work with the maverick millionaires who won and lost millions in seconds in Chicago's Treasury Bond pit. He adapted the stage play *Singing the Bones* to a screenplay for a film of the same name and

directed the film, which premiered at the Montreal World Film Festival in 2002 and still screens worldwide. Halloran's first feature film credit was Production Designer on the award-winning film CLOUDS, which opened at the Lincoln Centre in New York and in the U.S. in September, 2000. CLOUDS won numerous awards.

Halloran's work in theatre and his own spiritual curiosity brought him into contact with the ideas of Buddhism and feminism and he recognized two complimentary sides of his own persona. The variety and scope of his work as a painter, theatre director, designer, playwright, film director and editor reflect the artist's desire to resolve his own inner conflict on these ideologies.

Meanwhile, his boyhood in rural Ontario and the vastness of the Canadian winter landscape became almost a personality within and inspired the artist to work with large ice surfaces.

In the fall of 1991, while watching a hockey practice, he made a connection which would impact his work for the next decade: that making an ice rink was probably his first artistic experience.

"As a child in Trenton, Ontario, I spent many hours, in sub zero temperatures, laying down sheets of backyard ice with my dad's old garden hose. I loved to watch the roughness of the snow-packed earth become smooth and shiny. Playing hockey seemed to be the rationale for going to all the trouble, but I remember being reluctant to allow anybody to use the rink -- lest they scrape this magical, shiny, newly-flooded creation. Thirty five years later, I began to imagine the entire surface of an ice rink exploding with color; a Zamboni used as an etching device; a flood of water over the surface. "

Out of that experience came his exploration, invention and creation of an art form uniquely Canadian. In the early nineties, Halloran introduced Ice Paintings as public art events. These massive, multicolored abstract paintings recaptured community ice rinks and redefined them from competitive to shared community spaces where everyone could experience the joy of art. Halloran's process for making these huge installations is collaborative and consensus-building; and as such reflects the Canadian international personality as a peacemaker in the world.

"This is a big country," he says, "why not make big paintings?" Halloran's big paintings were unveiled to thousands at Calgary's Olympic Plaza, and Edmonton's World Figure Skating Championships, among others.

In August, 2004, he received the official invitation from the Turin Olympic Committee to create an installation for the Cultural Olympiad of the 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Italy.

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