

On the Cover

Portions of the following are based on interviews with the artist on January 20 and January 22, 2010.

The egg tempera paintings of Canadian artist G. W. Campbell evoke a mood and location—the stillness of time on or near a lake, with hills or mountains hovering in the distance. It might be the Adirondacks of New York, the Lakes Region of New Hampshire, or, as in this case, the Muskoka region of central Ontario. *American Psychologist* readers have previously experienced Campbell's Muskoka—at the end of the summer season, rather than the beginning—in *Closed for Season #3*, the cover art for September 2010. In *Morning Mist on the Peninsula*, the shimmering colors and the sheen of the egg tempera medium synergistically summon all of our senses: The two boathouses, the lake, and the deep, nearly invisible horizon also elicit sound and silence, the sun's rise while the lake gives off its own mist, and the cool temperature of a day that will warm.

Campbell lives in a small town in southwestern Ontario with his wife and two preteen children. He grew up in Montreal “in a household that encouraged the arts.” As an adolescent, he was the drummer in a successful rock band, an activity that he found markedly more interesting than school. Being a musician, however, did not provide financial stability. Recognizing his lack of engagement in academics, Campbell's parents encouraged him to become involved in an apprenticeship program in graphic arts. He left the band; his graphic arts work sustained him financially for nearly 30 years; and 16 years ago he took the leap, now making his living entirely through his painting.

Campbell's work in egg tempera evolved over a number of years. Although he had used oil painting and had tried abstract art, he found that he kept wanting to add more detail, to explore things further. Egg tempera became the medium for that expression. Campbell experiences the long and detailed work involved in painting with egg tempera as something of a meditation. “For me, going that tight, that close, is a form of therapy. It's like washing dishes after a party; I have the sense that it could go on happily forever.” Similarly, Campbell notes, “Much as I love the expressiveness of abstract art, I haven't been able to go down that path. I view abstract art as sort of like poetry, where all the unnecessary words have been taken out. Instead of a poem, I prefer writing a short story. I want to get more detail in. I prefer more meat on the bones.”

Bevil Conway, an artist and neuroscience professor at Wellesley College whose observations on the physiology

of art were detailed in APA's *Monitor on Psychology* (Dingfelder, 2010), made the following comments with regard to Campbell's painting (B. Conway, personal communication, May 3 and May 24, 2010):

Campbell achieves visual interest [through the] two parallel tracts of the visual system, the fovea and the periphery. We use our fovea to see lines and edges, to read; we use our periphery to see global scene structure and emotion. The fine marks in Campbell's work are visible only to the fovea, just like the dots in a pointillist painting, yet these marks by themselves are somewhat independent of the global scene structure, which is instead communicated by the broad sweeps of color. In *Morning Mist on the Peninsula*, Campbell masterfully employs *chiaroscuro* [marked contrasts between light and dark] in the gradual transition from bright sun to dark shadows, juxtaposed with the stark contrasts of the dark roof edge and window panes against the bright sky behind. The artist takes further advantage of the influence of color on brightness in the handling of the water. The higher saturation of the paint has the effect of raising the brightness of the water, which captures something of the “feeling” of luminous water experienced in real life.

Campbell's interest in painting the experience and atmosphere of the Muskoka region grew out of time he spent there during various seasons of the year. “Living at the tip of a peninsula and without a car, I had to canoe two hours to get to the nearest large town for supplies,” he says.

In this painting, Campbell juxtaposes two different versions of the summer retreat: Some people search for quiet and serenity, the remembrance of times past; others seek a getaway that is flashy and exudes conspicuous consumption. In actuality, the two boathouses depicted here, each with its own character, were on different parts of the lake. The simple, new boathouse on the right was used by a young man who paddled the lake quietly in his canoe. On the left, an older boathouse was owned by a loud and restless older man who would “go screaming down the lake” in his powerboat. One wonders how he used the Adirondack chair at the end of the dock: Was it placed there for show, or did he sometimes pause, of a morning, for contemplation?

REFERENCE

Dingfelder, S. F. (2010, February). The scientist at the easel. *Monitor on Psychology*, 41(2), 34–38.

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