



Smithsonian  
*National Portrait Gallery*

**PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST  
BENJAMIN ANDERSON**

“It wasn’t until I graduated from college, that I found the need to paint, as well as sculpt,” says Benjamin Anderson, the seventh in a series of contemporary artists to be featured on the National Portrait Gallery’s innovative “Portrait of an Artist” Web site, as part of the Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition 2006. “Painting has allowed me to satisfy a niche in my creativity that I couldn’t achieve through sculpture.”

Anderson’s competition entry, “Ms. Leigh-Anne Tucker,” is an intriguing portrait of a young woman in water. “I had wanted to paint Leigh-Anne for a while but not in the traditional sense,” says Anderson. “I found that water allowed me to abstract her figure, to interpret her depth of presence and convey a less physical representation. I chose to enter this painting into the contest because it embodies what I am searching for in my artistic endeavors: a different take on things, a new and fresh perspective on portraiture and people’s views of themselves and others.”

Born in Clearwater, Fl., and proud of his part-Sioux heritage, Anderson was raised in Santa Barbara, Calif. He learned the basics of painting and sculpture under his father, a professional artist, and spent some time in Florence, Italy. “In Florence, I was heavily influenced by the Renaissance masters, and that was a major turning point for me. When I returned to the States, I enrolled in the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, because AAU gives a rigorous training grounded in the classics, that puts major emphasis on the figure.”

“I graduated with my BFA in Sculpture, but realized soon after that it was portraiture and figurative painting that captivated my interest outside of the academic realm. While I was in school, portraiture was challenging, to say the least. It’s one of the most difficult, frustrating, time-consuming, satisfying, and simply hardest endeavors I’ve taken on in my life—yet the most fulfilling. Dealing with vanity, egos, modesty and a general need to make somebody not necessarily pretty, but just interesting, can be a trying journey in creativity. Everyone in this world has a story etched into his or her face. I try to find a small part of their stories in a portrait.”

Anderson has also spent time in Haines, AK, living and working with the native Tlingit tribe, learning the basics of woodcarving. He now lives in Laguna Beach, Calif. and currently shares a studio in Costa Mesa, Calif. with other fellow contemporary artists.

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