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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

Painted Portraits Make Unique Gifts

When it's not enough to honor loved ones with a simple photo, consider a painted portrait instead. It's more expensive, but many people are surprised and delighted by its uniqueness and value as a family heirloom.

Where do I start?

Finding an experienced, professional artist whose style you love is step one. Searching online is a good way to find portraitists or their representatives. Be sure to use keyword searches that narrow down what you're looking for, such as "portrait painting" with your desired subject like "family" or "pet", as well as your region to consider local talent. Note that artists who work directly with clients will often cost less than one found through a gallery or representative.

What's the work process like?

Many artists like to work in different ways, but consider painter Joanne Mehl as an example. Joanne gives a free consultation and submits a detailed written quote for the portrait. Cost is generally determined by the painting's size, number of subjects, paint media (oil, acrylic, watercolor), and whether a custom frame is desired. Additional costs may include travel expenses or insured shipping of the finished painting.

Once the client approves the written quote and makes a down payment, Joanne and her client typically arrange a photo shoot to collect photographic source material, and meet and interact with the subject. This helps Joanne to pick up important impressions of the subject's personality. Many portraitists also offer traditional "live sittings" where the subject is painted over the course of days or weeks, but that is typically less popular with clients. Portraits inspired by old family photos may also be possible, depending on their quality.

After going over hundreds of photos and sketching compositional ideas, Joanne does a rough but evocative color "comp" that approximates her idea for the painting. If

the client agrees, work proceeds. If not, Joanne revises the color comp with the client's input.

Once the color comp is approved, Joanne will start on the real, full size painting. Most portraits take 6-12 weeks, depending on complexity, size, and scheduling. As the painting nears completion, Joanne will often send the client a high-resolution photo to be approved. Once the artwork is finished, it's either custom framed under Joanne's supervision to the client's taste, or sent unframed to the client – whichever they prefer. Paintings are shipped in very sturdy containers, and should be insured.

I've got the portrait, now what?

Typically, the portraitist and client will have decided at the outset where the painting should hang, which often determines the size and framing of the art, so there shouldn't be any surprises in that regard. A framed oil painting, with a protective varnish coat is very durable, especially when painted on special wood panels. But watercolors often demand a frame, matte and glass for protection, especially in a high UV environment, which is why direct sunlight should be avoided. Acrylic paintings are created with a popular polymer medium, but opinions are mixed as to how best to clean them. Framing acrylic paintings under glass will help keep them pristine.

Unless it's a simple light, dry dusting, cleaning of artwork should only be undertaken by trained, reputable art conservators, of which there are many. Under no circumstance should household cleaners be used on the artwork or frame, as serious damage may occur. But should damage occur (and with children, it often does), a good art conservator can do an amazing job at repair, and help preserve the artwork's value and enjoyment for generations to come.

For further info:

History of Portrait Painting by Dr. Raichel Le Goff: <http://vimeo.com/98529863>

www.JoanneMehl.com

Portraiture (Oxford History of Art) by Shearer West, 2004

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