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"A Man (Dave MacDonald) and His Son," oil, 54 by 60 inches. Gary Trento, 1980.

A Sense of the Heroic

Gary Trento

Gary Trento was born in Syracuse in 1941. He earned the B.F.A. from the University of Virginia and the M.F.A. from Pratt Institute. His work has been exhibited in a number of national and regional shows. The recipient of several grants and awards, Mr. Trento is now an Associate Professor in the College of Visual and Performing Arts of Syracuse University, where he teaches painting and drawing.

Historically the purpose of much figurative painting has been the representation of a significant action. The human figure depicted in motion has been the surrogate for social, moral, and psychological involvement.

Recent art history, beginning with cubism, has witnessed the progressive loss of the object quality inherent in representation. Pictorial conventions have increasingly become the dominant purpose for painting, while the quality issue has become more and more identified with the materials of painting itself. Recent American painting in particular has abandoned the pictorial possibilities of significant action and representation as qualitative conditions for important painting.

As a representational painter, I wish to restore through the act of painting an existential dignity to the human image. I reject the assumption that paint is a more important subject than people. The human image is, and must be, the vehicle for my convictions about life as well as about painting.

Time has always been a significant aspect of expression in figurative painting. The Old Masters constructed a kind of generalized action with a beginning, middle, and end within the pictorial space. Poses carefully related to one another within the sequence, and movement was ideated rather than rendered from the perception of an instant of specific activity. My hope is to reconcile past compositional conventions with empirical observations to preserve a sense of the heroic and to embody it in an imagery that is truthful and unembellished. Serious painting, I believe, must be a self-conscious dialogue that the artist carries on with art history.

The images that I create are usually larger than life. Important stylistic considerations for me are the determination of what is capable of being known, how it is known through perception alone, and how it is transformed into convincing images in paint. That I choose to paint precisely what I see is my attempt to invest meaning in an object or situation.



"Ludwig Stein, Painter," oil, 60 by 56 inches. Gary Trento, 1980.



"Model Seated before a Mirror," oil, 54 by 60 inches. Gary Trento, 1979.



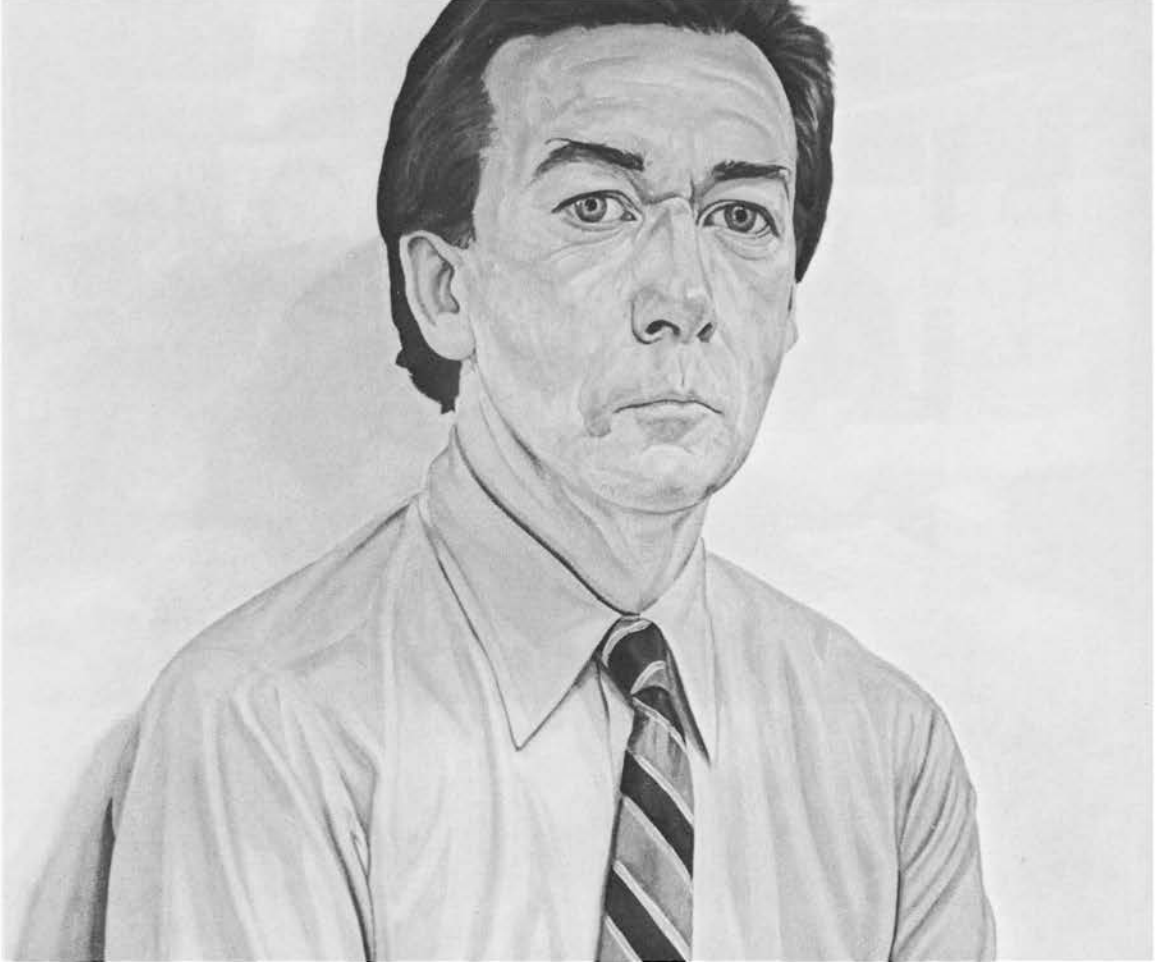
"August Freundlich: Dean, College of Visual and Performing Arts," oil, 60 by 72 inches. Gary Trento, 1980.



Gary Trento in his studio, 1980.



'Ron Kuchta: Director, Everson Museum,' oil, 38 by 42 inches. Gary Trento, 1980.'



"Woman in a Black Kimono," oil, 36 by 42 inches. Gary Trento, 1980.

