

## Bob Byerley

Bob Byerley is a realist oil painter of nostalgic Americana. Born in Kansas City, Missouri in 1941, he now lives with his wife in a large Victorian home in the Harry S. Truman historic district of Independence, Missouri. The quiet, shady, tree lined streets and old brick sidewalks where children still ride homemade scooters are backdrops and ever inspiring theatrical sets on which Byerley creates the themes for his paintings. Educated in the Old Masters Tradition of painting, receiving his B.A. and M.A. degrees in art from the University of Missouri, he rigidly defends the concepts of strong compositional design and content in his paintings. "Content," Byerley explains, "has to do with the truths of life that we find around us. Truths can not be artificially staged, effected, conjured up, created, or invented to be sympathetic or trendy in a painting. They occur simply, spontaneously and without effort in the moments on canvas." "Many of the ideas I express in my paintings," Byerley goes on to say, "came from my childhood before television. I grew up in the middle of the city in a house that was, strangely enough, surrounded by twenty blocks of dense woods; each season, those woods were the magic place where our childhood imaginations ran totally free. We dug swimming pools that we ambitiously planned to open for next summer, we built the highest tree houses kids had ever built, we felled trees and filled rabbit holes in order to create five cent a turn bicycle obstacle courses, and we collected. We collected marvelous things. We collected castaway items from the dump that became elaborate scooters and push cars, forts, lemonade stands, airplanes, rafts, spook houses and miniature golf courses. I remember and love those times and that is what I choose to paint." Byerley continues: "In order for an artist to get his idea across or communicate with the viewer he must use universally recognized symbols in his paintings, symbols that all viewers can relate to and understand. Problems occur with some art, when the painter makes up symbols that he may understand but the viewer does not. This often occurs when the artist is working in an abstract or non-representational mode. It's much like a person trying to read a great novel, written in a foreign language that he does not understand. The material is there, but it is incomprehensible to the reader. My symbols are the realistic interpretations of children's faces, which are universal." Therein lie the reasons that Byerley's paintings have enjoyed worldwide acceptance and popularity. The smile of a child is understood around the world.

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