

OUR 100TH ISSUE! DISCOVER NEW ARTISTS, NEW PRODUCTS, NEW IDEAS

# Pastel JOURNAL

your ultimate creative resource

## INNOVATION PAST & PRESENT

PASTEL PAINTINGS THAT  
SPARK THE IMAGINATION

Set the Stage for Better,  
More Expressive Painting

A Plein Air Pioneer in the  
American West

Pastel Pencils: A Fresh Look  
at a Valuable Tool



OCTOBER 2015  
pasteljournal.com





The objects in *Silk, Knitted Swatch and Moire* (2014; pastel on granular board, 30x30) have been carefully arranged to create compelling contrast between vertical and horizontal, dark and light. "The moire fabrics with their pronounced patterns lend themselves to manipulation," Greene says.

# a life in pictures

In a career spanning seven decades, **Daniel E. Greene** has spent his time exactly where he has always wanted to be—at the easel.

BY ANNE HEVENER

HAVING WORKED AS A PROFESSIONAL PAINTER FOR 65 YEARS, IT'S NO SURPRISE that artist Daniel E. Greene has accumulated a great stockpile of interesting stories. It seemed especially appropriate—as we mark our 100th issue of the magazine—to visit with a painter who has been committed to the pastel medium since first cutting his teeth in portraiture as a street artist in 1950s Miami. Although Greene has worked heavily in oil as well (most of his commissioned portraiture is done in that medium), in his personal work he has always moved back and forth between the two. And his pastels—large, formal, conceptually and technically dazzling—proved years ago that the medium is just as suitable as oils for creating accomplished, serious work.

I talked to the artist last April, just after his latest one-man show at Gallery Hensch in New York City. I asked him about the experiences, choices, achievements and specific paintings that have shaped his life in art.





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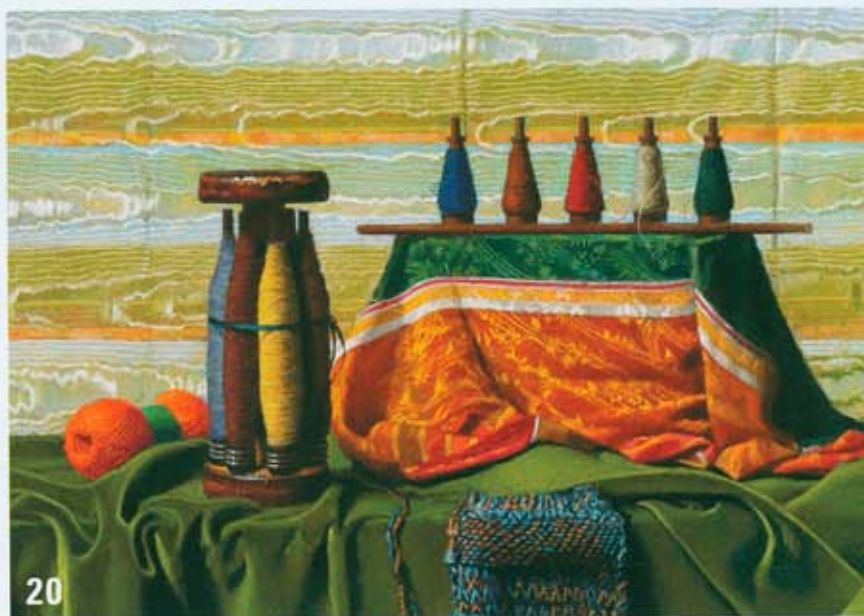
British artist **Andrew Horrod** takes a loose and lively approach to his pastel depictions of this enthralling city.

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## ON THE COVER



*Paris Rooftops* (23½x17½) by Daniel E. Greene depicts the view outside his hotel window.

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1934

Born in Cincinnati

1944-1946

Studies at the  
Art Academy of  
Cincinnati

1953

Begins studies in  
New York at Art  
Students League

1955

Receives Helen  
Herzberger  
Scholarship, Art  
Students League

1963

Portrait of  
Eleanor  
Roosevelt  
appears on the  
cover of *McCall's*  
magazine

Awarded John F.  
and Anna  
Lee Stacey  
Foundation Grant

1964

Receives  
Elizabeth  
Greenshields  
Foundation Grant

1969

Starts teaching  
at the National  
Academy of  
Design in New  
York City

1972

Wrote the  
book, *The Art  
of Pastel* (Rosin  
Associates)

1974

Wrote the  
book, *Pastel*  
(Watson Guptill)

Ranger Fund pur-  
chase, National  
Academy of  
Design

Best in Show,  
Pastel Society  
of America

1974-1982

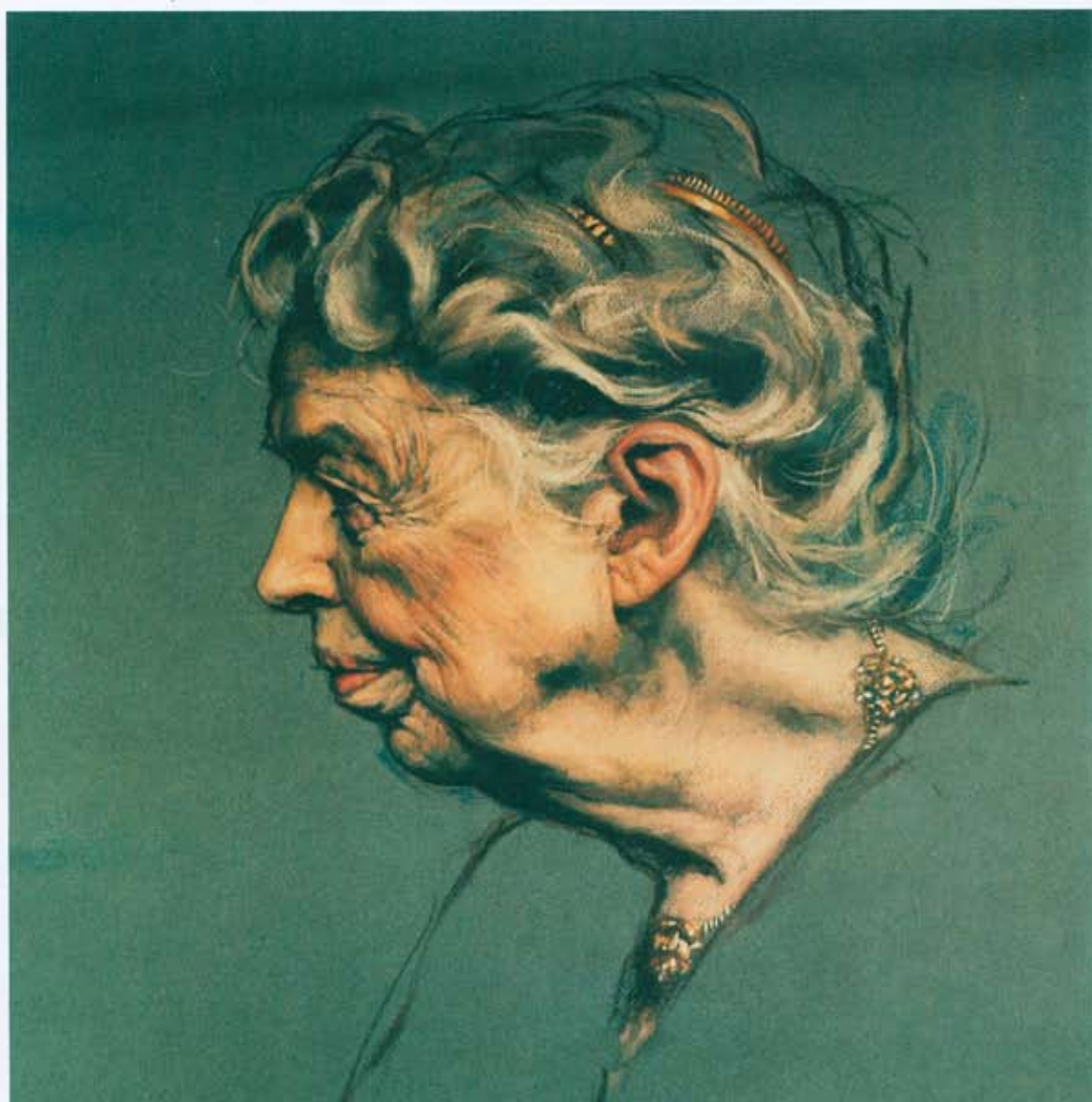
Instructor, Art  
Students League

1983

Elected to the  
Pastel Society  
of America's  
Hall of Fame

1987

Hammond  
Museum:  
Retrospective,  
North Salem, N.Y.



### 1950s-1960s: A Dream Imagined

Confident from an early age that he wanted to be a professional artist, Greene left his hometown of Cincinnati in 1952, at the age of 18. He went to Miami, where his mother was living at the time, and where he hoped to get a job and save enough money to go to art school. "I got various lousy jobs there," he says, "installing seat covers in cars, for one." When he discovered the artists creating pastel portraits around the resort hotels and open-front stores of the busy, tourist-centered Collins Avenue, he knew that was what he wanted to do. "I was intrigued watching them," Greene says. "And it occurred to me that if I could get a job doing that, it would be a great way to learn and to be involved with painting."

Although they turned him down several times, Greene's perseverance paid off. When one of the artists left (to join Fidel Castro in the

Cuban Revolution, incidentally), the 18-year-old rookie was hired to fill his spot. Before long, Greene was cranking out, on average, seven 20x16-inch portraits per day. "I started to get busy, and I started to improve," he says.

Soon the artist had saved enough money to move to New York City, where he enrolled at the Art Students League and began studying with artist Robert Brackman. "That's where I learned about the importance of value, color and drawing—how to construct a painting. It was a revelation," Greene says.

While it was an exciting time, it was also challenging. Not able to afford to take classes on a regular basis, the young artist applied for scholarships and worked odd jobs—in shoe sales and factory work—and continued to go to school whenever he could. Eventually, he started to exhibit and began to win prizes.





Clockwise from opposite page:

Greene painted **Anna Eleanor Roosevelt** (20½x28½) during a lecture given by Mrs. Roosevelt at Brandeis University in 1958.



This 1954 portrait of a young boy is an example of student work that Greene did under the tutelage of Robert Brackman while at the Art Students League of New York.

Greene began his career as a street artist, painting portraits in pastel.

In ***Girl With Blue Glasses*** (1970; pastel on paper, 29x19), Greene presents a portrait of youth subculture.

In the 1960s, Greene was selected to paint Wally Schirra, one of seven astronauts chosen for Project Mercury, NASA's first effort to put humans in space.



Then, in 1963 and 1964, Greene won significant grants for emerging artists from the John F. and Anna Lee Stacey Foundation and the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation. "I no longer had to work odd jobs to earn a living," he says. "I could support myself as a painter."

The artist moved to a studio in Greenwich Village, where his neighborhood bar, the Cedar Tavern, was a favorite hangout for artists Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Mark Rothko and others. These abstract expressionists were putting New York City on the art world map. In the midst of this thrilling environment, Greene realized he faced a choice. "My dilemma was whether or not to capitulate and do what I believed to be less challenging but more timely work—in abstract—or to continue to try to learn classical painting." Ultimately, he decided to follow his instincts and continue on his own path.

The series of paintings that grew out of this time period—portraits of people he met in his neighborhood—demonstrated this interesting dichotomy: a nontraditional hippie subculture (See *Girl With Blue Glasses*, above) portrayed in the venerable tradition of classical realism.

### 1970s–1980s: Forging a Personal Vision

In 1969, Greene began teaching at the National Academy of Design and continued there for five years. In 1974, he started as an instructor at the Art Students League, eventually taking over Brackman's classes. "I sometimes had as many as 75 students in a class and only two models," Greene says. "It was an impossible situation, but it began a long career of teaching."

The artist began to paint a great many of his students during this time. Some of them were models for a new series of work he'd begun of



1987

"Daniel Greene at the Hammond Museum" by Harold Zimmer, *New York Times*

1988

Gold Medal, Pastel Society of America

1989

Represents U.S.A. at the first International Biennial of Pastel in San Quentin, France

1994

Presents portrait of Eleanor Roosevelt to First Lady Hillary Clinton at the White House

1995

Receives John Singer Sargent Award from the American Society of Portrait Artists

1999

Honoree: Benjamin West-Clinedinst Medal-The Artists Fellowship

"New Realism for a New Millennium," Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester

2001

"Daniel Greene, An Artist's Journey," at the Katonah Museum of Art, Katonah, N.Y.

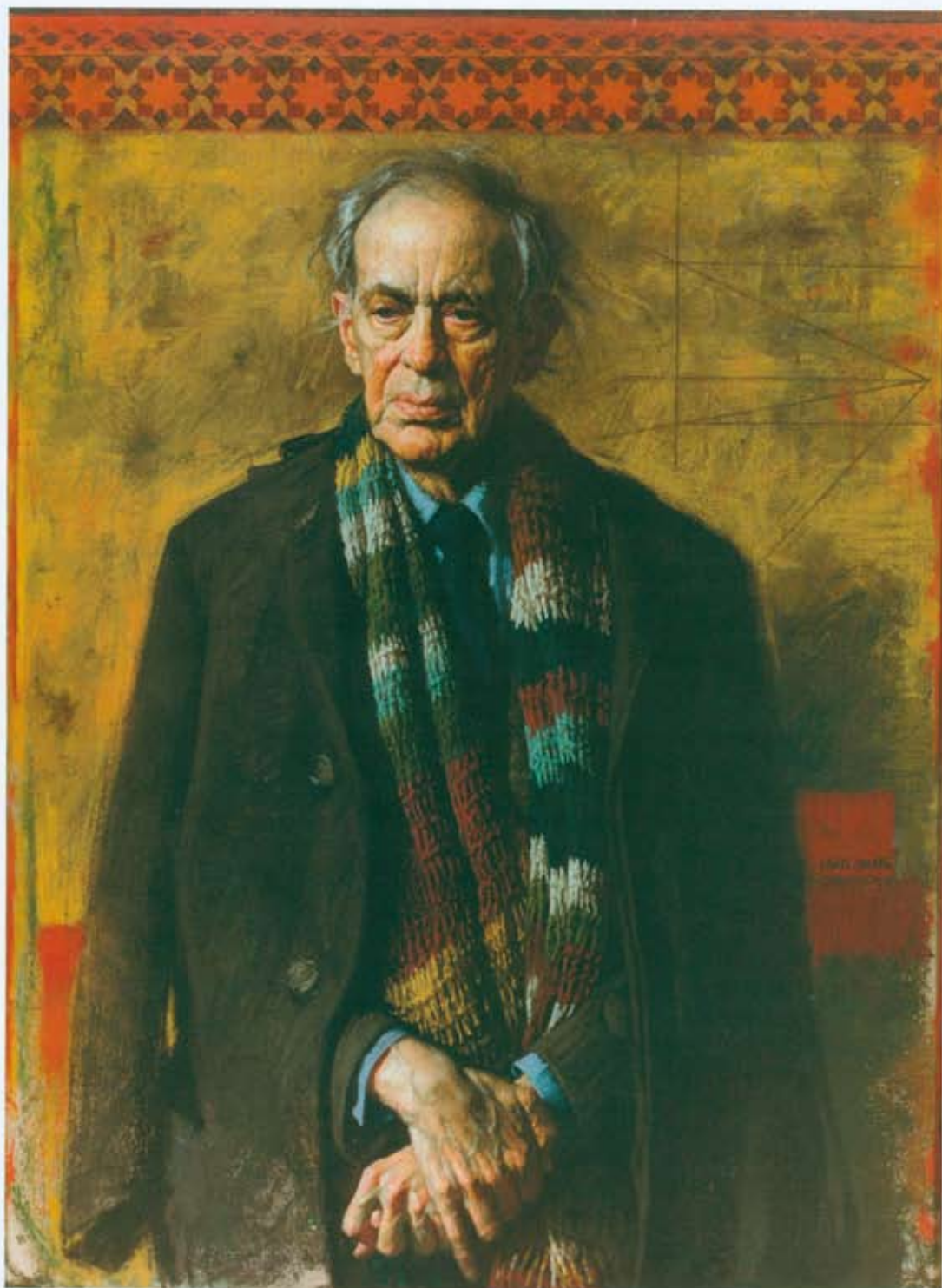
Receives the Gold Medal from the Portrait Society of America

2003

Wins the Gold Medal from the Salmagundi Club

Named Pastel Laureate by the Pastel Society of the West Coast

"They Made Their Mark" Cincinnati Artists 1800-2003, Cincinnati Art Museum



people flying kites. The artist had moved to a studio on 67th Street, only about a half-block from Central Park—a favorite spot for kite flyers. "It was an opportunity to combine figures with these very colorful, decorative items," Greene explains.

It was also a series in which the artist first introduced a decorative border within the picture. *Bill With Kite* (opposite) incorporates a crepe paper border, picking up on a material

that's often used as a kite tail. "The idea of borders was something I liked in 14th- and 15th-century Flemish painting," Greene says. "These were attempts to forge my own personal identity in my paintings, utilizing elements I liked from art history."

The pastels were large, painted on Masonite, which the artist prepared with a special ground containing quartz crystals. "I began to work





Clockwise from opposite page:

The subject of Greene's pastel portrait, **Robert Beverly Hale** (1976; pastel, 50x36), was a longtime teacher of anatomy and drawing at the Art Students League and the first curator of American painting at The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

In **Bill With Kite** (1985; pastel on board, 60x40), the model sat on a stool, which Greene chose not to paint, creating the suggestion of levitation "in keeping with the idea of kite-flying," he says.

A student at the Art Students League, where Greene taught classes, served as the model for **Diane With Kite** (1976; pastel, 50x36).

A fascination with the beautiful mosaics of New York City's subway stations, as seen in **96th Street Tunnel** (1992; pastel, 40x60), launched what has become Greene's most prolific and enduring series.



larger," Greene says, "when I figured out how to make my own surfaces. I experimented with different ways to make an abrasive, gritty material adhere to a rigid backing."

Greene painted a great many commissioned portraits during these years as well, through an affiliation with Portraits, Inc. His clients over the years included highly accomplished individuals: senators and governors, CEOs, composers,

conductors, authors and artists. Because he painted from life, the artist did a lot of traveling. "This kind of work was an extraordinary way of learning and practicing," he says. "And I was being paid for it. It enlarged my opportunity to travel and to meet interesting people—and to practice painting. I was able to try out new things as I was working, while doing what artists have been doing for centuries—painting portraits."



2004

"Daniel E. Greene—Subway Paintings," New York Transit Museum

"An Artist's Journey: Fifty Years of Painting," Cincinnati Art Museum

2005

"Eleanor Roosevelt and Jackie Kennedy, First Ladies of New York and the Nation," New York Historical Society

2006

"52 Years of Painting: An Artist's Journey," Seven Bridges Foundation

2009

Star Wars Visions—Portrait of Queen Amidala & Princess Leia

2011

The Butler Institute of American Art, acquisition of pastel diptych *Man Flying Kite*

2012

Distinguished Artist Award, Oil Painters of America

Documentary, "Ayn Rand and the Prophecy of *Atlas Shrugged*"

Lifetime Achievement Award, Connecticut Society of Portrait Artists

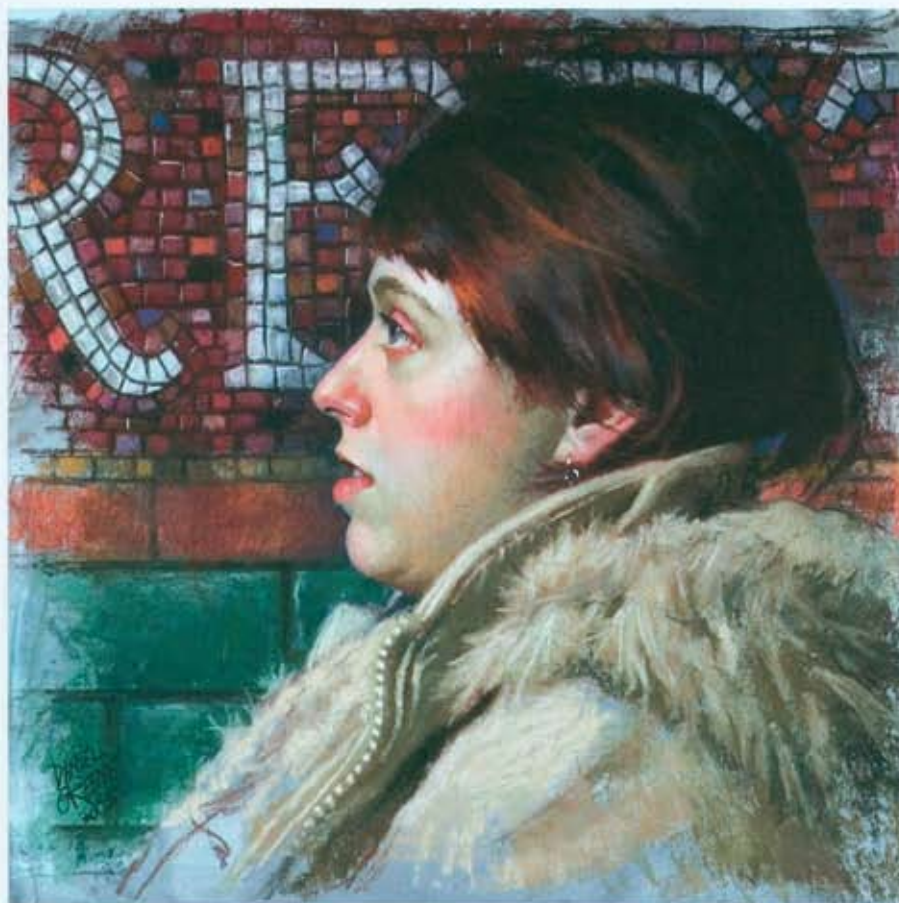
2013

Gold Medal, *Elin—Waiting*, Allied Artists of America

2015

Master Class, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art

One-Man Exhibition, "At the Auction," Gallery Henoch, New York City



Most of these commissions were requested in oil, but Greene continued to do portraiture in pastel as well, including a portrait of Robert Beverly Hale (on page 24), a seminal painting for the artist, considered by many to be his greatest work.

### 1990s–Today: Endless Possibilities

Over the years, Greene has found some subjects persistently captivating and worthy of ongoing exploration. He has been enamored with everything from the striking patterns of carnival games (see *Green Checkerboard With Balloons and Darts*, opposite) to the high drama of fine art auctions. But his series inspired by New York City's subway stations has been his most prolific; to date, it includes 117 paintings.

His initial inspiration for the series originated in his student days when he regularly rode the subway to get to and from school. "I remember seeing a group of people sitting on a bench under one of the mosaics, and thinking that it would make a good painting," he says. Years later, he decided to act on that earlier impulse and began to produce paintings—in pastel and oil—of a beautiful, subterranean world. Though he began with an almost still-life focus on the

subway stations' mosaics, ultimately, the artist touched on just about every genre of painting there is—from figural compositions and portraits, such as those above, to landscape work, like *96th Street Tunnel* (on page 25).

Greene doesn't always know that he's embarking on a major series at the onset of a painting. "It's either while painting or as I'm getting started that I realize there are numerous ways I could approach the subject." In setting up a still life, for example, he may take hours on the arrangement, and then begin to look at it from different angles. "Certain subjects are so inherently interesting and susceptible to changes in lighting and composition that the possibilities seem almost endless," he says.

Although Greene's technical virtuosity has been evident from his earliest days, one perceives a steady movement toward ever more enticing, more inventive work. Greene attributes this to a deliberate effort to continue making progress. "When I started out, a lot of my work was classical—comparable to things that have been done before," he says. "At a certain point, in trying to divest myself of deficiencies in my work so I could continue to improve and get better, I concluded that I did





Clockwise from opposite page:

Finding many ways to approach a subject, Greene often works in series. Paintings such as *Fur Collar Subway* (2005; pastel on wood, 16x16), *86th Street, No. 1* (1991; pastel, 40x30) and *Jean, Grand Central* (2005; pastel on paper, 24x18) demonstrate the diversity of work even within the same series.

In *Green Checkerboard With Balloons and Darts* (2008; pastel on wood, 40x40), Greene chose a classic carnival game as a subject in which to explore contrasts: light and dark, rough and smooth, square and round.

know, technically, how to paint. The weakness I perceived was in conception. So, I began to develop ideas that were more original. I tried out combinations and ideas that I knew were singular." Consequently, Greene advises artists to stay open to exploration. "If you do, your painting becomes and stays more interesting. And hopefully the work will be more interesting for people to look at as well."

### Doing Your Life's Work

19th-century philosopher Henry David Thoreau famously said, "Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined." Greene is someone who has been able to do that. He realized early his life's purpose, set goals and never doubted. "I just work all the time," he says. "I've been extraordinarily fortunate to make my living doing what I know I'm supposed to be doing."

Although he has been cutting back on the amount of teaching he's doing, Greene says there will be no retiring. "I can't abide not painting." ■



ANNE HEVENER is editor-in-chief of *Pastel Journal*. She lives in Daniel Greene's hometown of Cincinnati, Ohio, where his work can be seen at Miller Gallery.

VIEW MORE OF DANIEL E. GREENE'S WORK IN PASTEL AT [ARTISTSNETWORK.COM/MEDIUM/PASTEL/DANIEL-E-GREENE-2015](http://ARTISTSNETWORK.COM/MEDIUM/PASTEL/DANIEL-E-GREENE-2015).