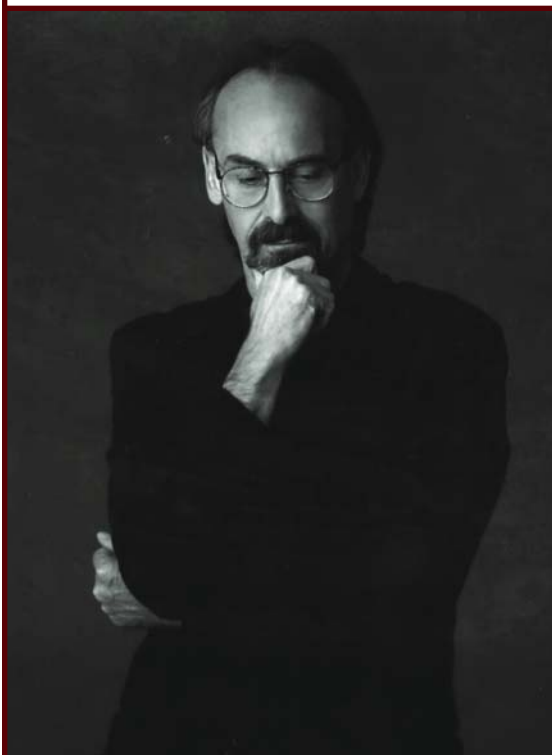




# Steve Hanks



*My paintings speak to the vulnerability that we all feel from time to time. All art is an escape to somewhere you want to be or a feeling you want to have. People see different things in my paintings because we all have different backgrounds and feelings.*

—SH

Although teachers often cited his artistic ability, Steve Hanks' main interest while growing up around San Francisco was sports: surfing and tennis. He eventually tired of a steady diet of competitive tennis, but continued to surf. "The ocean often appears in my work, because I have such strong feelings for it," Hanks says.

After high school Hanks enrolled in summer session commercial art courses at the Academy of Art in San Francisco. "The only way I could convince my parents to let me go was to say I was going into commercial art," he says. "I didn't even know what that was!" He did well, but it was a life drawing class that captured his interest. He transferred into the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland, California, graduating in the 1960s with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree.

Initially drawing in pencil and painting in oils, his paintings were impressionistic, drawings more realistic. An allergic reaction to oils forced him to experiment with watercolors. He found he could create watercolors as "finished" as oils. Deeply affected by the emotions, shifting attitudes and music of the 1960s, the music of 60s icon Bob Dylan often accompanies Hanks as he paints in his studio today.

Steve Hanks' paintings are much more than endearing images of women and children. Rather than conveying a specific message through his paintings, Hanks prefers to explore memories and emotions.

Steve's award list is extensive: the Arts for the Parks Marine Art Award of Excellence (1990 and 1994); one of the Arts for the Parks top 100 artists since 1989; the National Watercolor Society Merit Award (1991); the National Academy of Western Art Gold Medal (1992); he has been one of *U.S. Art* magazine's top ten American artists since 1993; Pacific Rim Artist of the Year (1999); 2000, *U.S. Art* Hall of Fame (2000); top 25 selling artists of *Decor* magazine (2002); The 7th Annual Andre Agassi Grand Slam for Children (2002).

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