

RALPH GOINGS



FOUR DECADES *of* REALISM



Still Life Pee Wee's Diner, 1977
48 x 48 inches
Oil on canvas
Collection of Barry & Susan Paley
White Plains, NY



The Butler Institute of American Art (left), founded 1919, McKim, Mead and White, architects. Butler West Wing/Beecher Center additions, 1987-2003 (above), Gary Balog, Paul Ricciuti and C. Robert Buchanan, architects.

RALPH GOINGS

FOUR DECADES *of* REALISM



Donut, 1995
30 x 43.5 inches
Oil on canvas
Collection of Ann & Donovan Moore
Brooklyn, NY

March 28 through June 6, 2004

The Butler Institute of American Art • Youngstown, Ohio

Catalogue Essay by Edward Lucie-Smith
Artist Interview & Afterword by Louis A. Zona



Steak Sauce, 1989
40 x 40 inches
Oil on canvas
Courtesy Sydney & Walda Besthoff Foundation
New Orleans, LA



McDonald's Pick Up, 1970
41 x 41 inches
Oil on canvas
Collection of Marilyn & Ivan Karp
New York, NY

“...Goings, a native Californian, reflects aspects of America that are familiar to most Americans but not usually celebrated in art. His pickup trucks and diners reflect the mobile, freewheeling quality of the American life-style.”



Still Life with Creamer, 1982
38 x 52 inches
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of O.K. Harris Works of Art
New York, NY

*“...embracing banality is very much the point of what Goings does. He wants to tell us that the most ordinary things are well worth looking at—provided that we have the discipline to look at that property, on their own terms and for their own sake. . .this is precisely what Vermeer does in the *View of Delft*.”*

RALPH GOINGS: America's Vermeer

It does a painter both good and harm to be indissolubly connected with a particular art movement. This is particularly true of the movement that succeeded Pop Art—the Super Realism of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Pop was an artistic philosophy, almost a complete way of life, bonded to a consumer culture that was in no hurry to disappear. Varieties of Pop Art are still being made today, more than forty years after the movement first launched itself. Super Realism seemed to occupy a much more restricted piece of territory. The general consensus was that it bloomed and faded within a very brief period.

The truth is, of course, that a good painter tends to remain a good painter, whatever style the critics choose to link him with. Ralph Goings, one of the leading practitioners of Super Realism, is still going strong. Indeed, if you look on the Internet, he seems to be going stronger than ever, such as the demand for posters and prints of his work. The theoreticians have chosen to forget about him, but a huge American public still keeps him in its heart.

When you look more closely, you soon find excellent reasons for this continuing enthusiasm. In the first place Goings, a native Californian, reflects aspects of America that are familiar to most Americans but not usually celebrated in art. His pickup trucks and diners reflect the mobile, freewheeling quality of the American life-style. In the United States, if you don't like the place you are in, then there's always a highway that beckons you to go somewhere else. In this sense Goings' paintings are full of American optimism, but also of melancholy—will the perfect place to stop and settle ever in fact be found?

At a time when painterly technique is less and less understood, Goings' work has suffered from a contempt it doesn't deserve. His paintings may look photographic, but they are not in fact photographs. They are painstakingly made with the brush—in exactly the way that Vermeer made his light-filled interiors and his famous *View of Delft*. This comparison is not made at random. One thing that Goings' work does have in common with photographs is its examination of light. Photography records, not objects as things in themselves, but the fall of light on objects—in other words, the way in which light is shaped by anything that interrupts its trajectory from the source.

This characteristic is not perhaps so obvious in the earlier paintings, where the setting is outdoors. It is very noticeable in the interiors and still lifes that come later. These make it obvious that the artist is fascinated by the way in which light magically sanctifies what would otherwise be banal visual events.

Indeed, embracing banality is very much the point of what Goings does. He wants to tell us that the most ordinary things are well worth looking at—provided that we have the discipline to look at that property, on their own terms and for their own sake. After all, this is precisely what Vermeer does in the *View of Delft*. Why should Goings be ashamed to follow his example?

—Edward Lucie-Smith



Salt Spill, 1995
10.25x15.25
Watercolor on paper
Collection of Alan Litchman and Laura B. Trust
Brookline, MA

“Seeing just a fraction of two or three objects has fascinated me for a number of years. In the late 1990s through the last year or two, I became fascinated with just a single object, and the sort of illusions that can be created in a very neutral environment.”



Pepper Detail 3A, 1983
10 x 13 inches
Watercolor on paper
Courtesy of Stephen & Helen Macechak
Princeton, NJ

“. . . I have the objects, ketchup bottles, salt and pepper shakers and napkin holders all over my studio, so I can refer to them as I get involved in the painting process. I like working from a two dimensional image and translating it into a painting that has the illusion of three dimensions.”

RALPH GOINGS: An Interview with Louis Zona

LZ

Let’s talk about some of the work you’ve done over the last ten or fifteen years. Do you see a change in the approach? Is the newer work unique, or have you stayed with the formula that has been so successful in the earlier work?

RG

The changes over the last few years have been mostly with the still lifes. I moved slowly from the “existing in reality” situations, where I would go to diners and find the various images that I wanted to use, gradually switching to making set ups in my studio. There, I could control every aspect of the situation — the light and the arrangement of objects, as well as their proximity.

LZ

Do you actually have a counter top in the studio?

RG

I have a variety of simulations. Many of the close-up paintings, the detail paintings, are arrangements. In most cases you don’t even see the counter tops. Seeing just a fraction of two or three objects has fascinated me for a number of years. In the late 1990s through the last year or two, I became fascinated with just a single object, and the sort of illusions that can be created in a very neutral environment. A solid background color allows the object to define not only its own traits, but also the base in which it sits, creating a little cast shadow on a nebulous surface. I think that most of the changes have been in this area, but the change has been very gradual over the years.

LZ

Ralph, once you’ve set up the still life and have begun to paint, do you alter it in any way in the process? Or, once you have created the set up, do you stay with the original concept? Are adjustments made?

RG

The answer to that is yes *and* no! The studio setup paintings are pretty flexible. The mechanics are the same; I photograph the arrangement and work from those photographs rather than directly from the objects. But I have the objects, ketchup bottles, salt and pepper shakers and napkin holders all over my studio, so I can refer to them as I get involved in the painting process. I like working from a two dimensional image and translating it into a painting that has the illusion of three dimensions. After a time I refer to the photos less and less and allow the painting to develop in terms of itself.

LZ

So the photographs are like working drawings for you?

RG

Yes. They are a way of trying things out to see roughly how the objects look in a two dimensional format. I photograph each set up many times from several different angles, and in several different lighting situations. Looking at the slides I take is where the selective process begins. I look at the pictures over and over again and finally one seems to say, “Do me.”



Golden Dodge, 1971
60 x 72 inches
Oil on canvas
Courtesy Louis K. Meisel Gallery
New York, NY

"I want the image to speak for itself, and for my personality not to intrude on the subject any more than necessary to produce the picture. But at the same time, it takes a long time to make these pictures. Just to keep myself going, I find myself going back to the paint. I put it on and wipe it on and fool around with it—it's all a wet in wet process."



Ford Overdrive, 1970
45 x 63 inches
Oil on canvas
Collection of Dr. Howard Berk
Lake Success, NY

LZ

In looking at your technique twenty-five or thirty years ago, comparing past work to more recent paintings, is there a discernible difference?

RG

My feeling is that it has evolved, I know there have been changes. I hope I have refined it over the years.

LZ

I don't know if we'd ever call your work painterly, but do you find the recent work more expressive in terms of color choices, etc., or have you held true to your aesthetic?

RG

I really like oil paint—I like the substance of it. At first glance my paintings seem very smooth and slick and polished, but they're not. If you look up close you can see brush strokes, little drips of paint and touches here and there. I never wanted that to be an overt part of the picture. I want the image to speak for itself, and for my personality not to intrude on the subject any more than necessary to produce the picture. But at the same time, it takes a long time to make these pictures. Just to keep myself going, I find myself going back to the paint. I put it on and wipe it on and fool around with it—it's all a wet in wet process. I like to encourage accidents. Things happen and change sometimes, even the direction of a little part of the painting might change. Hopefully, over the years, I have refined that whole process. I haven't been aware of becoming more expressive. But who knows.

LZ

You really try to remove yourself so that the technique does not draw attention away from the subject.

RG

Right. That's been my goal. But then age and health intervene so that could change too I suppose.

LZ

That has happened to the best of us over the years, to some of the greatest artists in the world. And I include you among the greatest artists. As we age we sometimes have to deal with issues like that.

RG

Rather than saying, "Well I just can't do it anymore," my best avenue of approach may be to say, "I'll do what I can do." But this has to do with the future, not the past. That is what we are concerned with here.

LZ

Labels are used to pigeon hole artists. For example, when Photo Realism came on the scene back in the 1970s, you were thought to be the leader of that group. How do you feel about labels such as Photo Realism or Hyper Realism?



Tri-Color Chevy, 1996
12.5 x 20 inches
Watercolor on paper
Courtesy of Louis K. Meisel Gallery
New York, NY



Airstream Winter, 1987
12 x 16 inches
Watercolor on paper
Collection of Mr. & Mrs. Wade F.B. Thompson New York, NY



Blue Ford Pick-Up, 1973
8.5 x 11 inches
Watercolor on paper
Collection of Jesse Karp
New York, NY

RG

I have no objections to the use of Photo Realism or Hyper Realism to identify a style or kind of painting. I've heard there are some artists who object to that title and the idea of a "movement", especially since it has been used as a derisive term by some art writers. I was associated with the style in the 1970s and 1980s, I won't distance myself from that, but I wouldn't care to be pigeon holed as 'just' a Photo Realist. People who write about painting seem to need those terms more than painters do. It never made much difference to me one way or the other, as long as people spell my name correctly!

LZ

I personally believe that labels might be a negative. Since we have the tendency to look at art history in a linear way, there might be a danger of placing you as an artist that belongs to the 1970s—but that is not the case.

RG

You're right—I agree. I prefer to think of myself as a "painter" who worked through the 1970s. Recently I discovered a site on the Internet listing artists associated with Photo Realism and they were placed in chronological order. I had the dubious distinction of being the oldest living Photo Realist.

LZ

They do say that any publicity is good publicity, but we'll certainly try not to use those pigeon hole type labels.

RG

One of the curious things I have found is the way things evolved from the late sixties and early seventies with realist painters—and I think this happened almost exclusively in the group—artists became identified with specific signature subject matter. John Salt paints cars, John Kaceri paints "bottoms" . . .

LZ

. . . McLean paints horses.

RG

Right. And Goings paints pickup trucks. Everybody got categorized like that, even to the point of gallery people saying to me, "You can't change your subject matter—collectors won't stand for it."

LZ

I think dealers have been talking to artists that way for generations. Are there any outside forces that dictate what you do in the studio?

RG

Indirectly I'm sure there are. I like to get feedback from people—not just Ivan (Karp) and gallery people, but I'll show my pictures to anyone who will look at them, and I like to get feedback whether it is positive or negative. I can't say that it has much of a direct effect on what I do but I'm sure it gets sifted into the mix. But generally, no.



Marble Counter, 1985-89
32 x 47 inches
Oil on canvas
Private collection
Woodbridge, CT

... rather than destroying the works, I put them in my painting rack and leave them—sometimes up to ten years. I look at these works from time to time. I might pull one out and still think that they are terrible—but every once in a while I'll pull one of those paintings out and think, "Oh, I see where that can go." And then I finish it. You may notice that there are some pictures that I have done that are dated with a span of years, indicating that that was exactly what happened. That work got stuck in the rack because I couldn't find a solution to problems that I had developed. Four or five, even six or seven years later, I did.



Tux, 2002-03
32 x 46.25 inches
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of O.K. Harris Works of Art
New York, NY

LZ

Is there a work of art that is semi-finished in your studio including a direction that you thought you would try, but then decided to forego? Does that happen to you—you decide to experiment with something, carve a new path and then you discover that, "This has nothing to do with me."

RG

I've done that but ultimately have not let it go. On occasion, I have started something and gotten into it and thought, "This just is not working. This is not going anywhere." And rather than destroying the works, I put them in my painting rack and leave them—sometimes up to ten years. I look at these works from time to time. I might pull one out and still think that they are terrible—but every once in a while I'll pull one of those paintings out and think, "Oh, I see where that can go." And then I finish it. You may notice that there are some pictures that I have done that are dated with a span of years, indicating that that was exactly what happened. That work got stuck in the rack because I couldn't find a solution to problems that I had developed. Four or five, even six or seven years later, I did.

LZ

We have a John Steuart Curry in the Butler collection that is dated 1939-1945. Historically, artists have done that. What has drawn you to the particular subjects that you have painted over the years? Is it the surface quality of your subjects?

RG

It's not just the surfaces. I'm fond of the objects, the places and the people I paint. They are the ordinary inhabitants of my world and they're loaded with visual excitement for me. I'm fascinated by surfaces, obviously. But it's a combination of a number of things. I am interested in the light and the effect it has on surfaces, and the spaces where these objects exist. Also, the objects themselves, and how their form is defined by their surface and the light...and that ultimately creates the illusion of the three dimensional object even though it is on a flat surface. That whole package of mechanical art is a concern and part of my interest. The surfaces of objects really fascinate me. I think what drew me to the diners in the first place was all the metal and glass, the vinyl and so forth.

LZ

Your compositions to me are classical. I've used your compositions when teaching art history, relating them to the Greek Classicism. You don't miss. I believe you have an extraordinary sense of composition. Everything seems to be so well thought out. Is that the case, or is it mostly intuitive?

RG

I'm afraid it's entirely intuitive. I describe my general technique as taking lots of photographs, and then sitting down and looking at them over and over again until one seems to be "the one." As I look at the slides and try to make a selection, I'm not thinking about whether or not the composition is a little lopsided, or not as active a composition as I would like. It's all visceral. I just respond to things I see and go with that without trying to analyze why I like them. I'm afraid if I think about it too much I might mess it up!



Iced Tea, 1976
17 x 21.5 inches
Watercolor on paper
Collection of Barry & Susan Paley
White Plains, NY



Glass, 1999
7.75 x 11.5 inches
Watercolor on paper
Collection of Robert and Margot Herzog
New York, NY

“...those who have paid any attention to me have done well by me. My only complaint about critics is that not enough of them have paid attention to me.”



Coffee Machine, 1991
10.75 x 14.5 inches
Watercolor on paper
Collection of Barbara & Lowell Shindler
North Hills, NY

LZ

That's why certain baseball players are great, They say if you have to think about it too much, you'll probably strike out. You see the ball and you hit, versus anticipating a certain pitch. Tell us a little bit about your relationship with Ivan Karp over these many, many years. I am prejudiced because I think that Ivan Karp is a cultural icon.

RG

Oh, yes, no doubt about it..

LZ

The fact is that you have been loyal to him and he has been loyal to you. It seems like a pretty special relationship.

RG

He's not only my dealer, he's also a good friend. We have had a lot of years of what my wife describes as "good eating." With Ivan that is a very important aspect of life. I have never had any regrets. Ivan has done wonderful things for me and for my career, and I can't say enough good things about him. He is "a unique personality." As in all great friendships there are conflicts. So we occasionally cross swords but it's never serious. And his sword is always mightier and faster than mine. I don't mind....

LZ

Do you think Ivan wishes that your method enabled you to create more paintings. Does he offer related suggestions.

RG

Well that is always the case. I wish I could make more paintings! He will ask about the progress of a painting I'm working on, but there's no pressure to "hurry up". When I was first associated with him, he would make suggestions about subjects, venues and so on. I didn't know quite how to take that, never having had a New York dealer before. Actually, I had never dealt with any professional art dealer. I didn't know if it was my place to take those suggestions to be successful, or whether I should ignore them. I said something to Ivan one time about one of his comments. I said, "I just can't do that." He said, "Oh, I just express these things. You listen, and then you do what you have to do." That has been our operating slogan over the years. If there is something he wants to say about something I'm doing, he says it, and then he always ends up saying "...but you do what you have to do." I welcome and value his opinions and appreciate his sensitivity to painters needs.

LZ

Do you have feelings about the role of critics? Overall, critics have been very, very good to you. What are your feeling about critics generally?

RG

I agree that those who have paid any attention to me have done well by me. My only complaint about critics is that not enough of them have paid attention to me.



Two Waitresses—Afternoon Break, 1986
44 x 62 inches
Oil on canvas
Collection of Donna & Neil Weisman
New York, NY



Waitress Unadilla Diner, 1984
48 x 68 inches
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of Sydney & Walda
Besthoff Foundation
New Orleans, LA

LZ

Will you comment on the current situation as far as painting goes. One goes into exhibitions of the so-called “new art” and you seldom see a painting. What is your feeling about the current direction of the visual arts?

RG

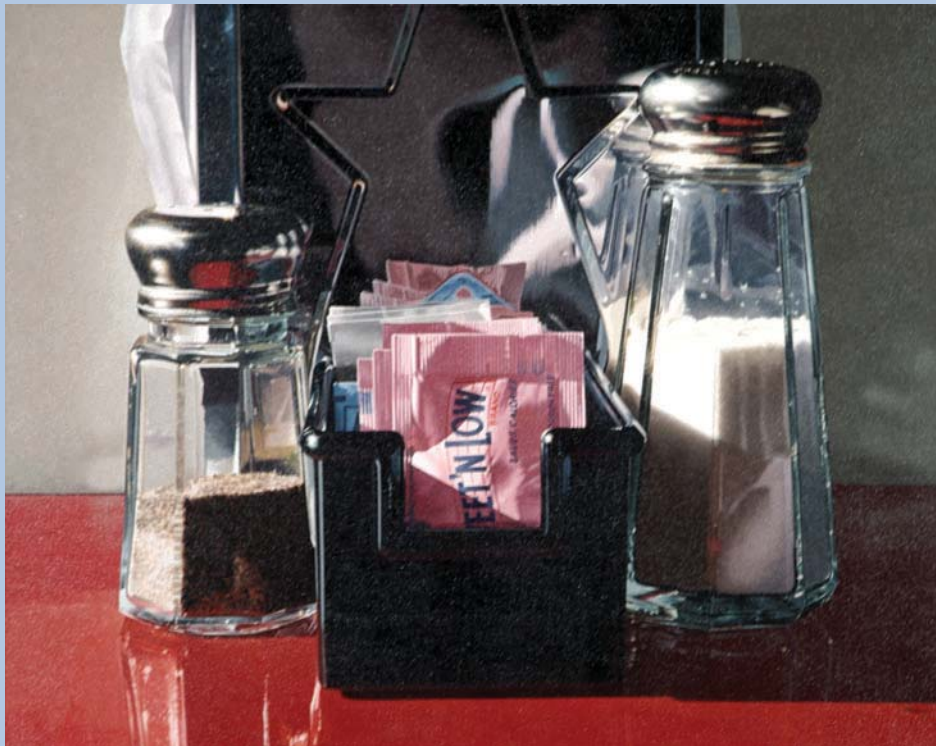
I don’t want to reject anything on the face of it. There is a lot going on that I find confusing or not interesting, or even outside of what I consider the scope of art, because it is basically not visual. I’m a little put off by overly cerebral pieces. It’s probably perfectly legitimate, but I don’t understand it. I don’t have time to figure out every aspect of every twist and turn that modern art takes. I’m too busy with my own work. I try to keep an eye on various trends, but I don’t pursue them and I very seldom go to shows anymore. I used to avoid going to shows even when painting was the prevalent mode simply because it messed me up in terms of my own studio work. I’d go to what I thought was a really good painting show and I’d have to wait until I got over it before I could go back to my own work. I would get so involved with the painting problems that another artist was dealing with that I would forget my own.

LZ

I think that is a pretty healthy attitude. In terms of the future, are you going to stay the course? Do you see any major shifts ahead or can’t you predict at this point.

RG

I just want to keep doing what I’m able to do, health permitting, as long as I can. I don’t plan any specific changes but as I’ve gotten older I’m taking more and more chances. That could lead to some change. My biggest plan is just to keep going.



Sweet N Low, 1992
34 x 43 inches
Oil on canvas
Collection of Paul and Celine O'Neil
Sewickley, PA



Relish, 1994
44 x 64.5 inches
Oil on linen
Collection of Rick & Monica Segal
Hollywood, FL

LZ

When you were growing up, who were the artists that influenced you?

RG

Vermeer, Homer...a long list of historic painters. It's hard to pinpoint more recent artists. I like all painting.

LZ

I was pleased to read your commentary about Abstract Expressionism. I think you had a real fondness for that painting.

RG

I did. That was the mode as I was growing up. At the art school I attended most of the teachers were pretty traditional, but what was going on in the world outside was pretty wild stuff. As students, we were as much aware of the current art scene as what was going on in the classroom. So everyone would go home at night and switch to their big brushes and their big canvases and make enormous messes.

LZ

Did that include you?

RG

Oh, yes. It took me a number of years after I got out of college to work my way out of Abstract Expressionism. I went through my de Kooning phase, my Gorky phase.

LZ

I was talking to an older Ohio artist who was a traditionalist in every sense of the word. He had taken several classes from Hans Hoffman, and that surprised me. He said, "I wanted to gain the information he could give to me and I found, as a result of those classes, my whole sense of color changed, particularly in the way I painted still lifes." I guess there is something to be said for experiencing things that are not part of your personality.

RG

Absolutely. I like all painting. It's all a source.



"I just want to keep doing what I'm able to do, health permitting, as long as I can. I don't plan any specific changes but as I've gotten older I'm taking more and more chances. That could lead to some change. My biggest plan is just to keep going."

-Ralph Goings

*Ralph's Diner, 1982
44.5 x 66.5 inches
Oil on canvas
Collection of Stephen Alpert
Waltham, MA*

Exhibition Listing



McDonald's Pick Up, 1970
41 x 41 inches
Oil on canvas
Collection of Marilyn & Ivan Karp
New York, NY



Ford Overdrive, 1970
45 x 63 inches
Oil on canvas
Collection of Dr. Howard Berk
Lake Success, NY



Golden Dodge, 1971
60 x 72 inches
Oil on canvas
Courtesy Louis K. Meisel Gallery
New York, NY



Blue Ford Pick-Up, 1973
8.5 x 11 inches
Watercolor on paper
Collection of Jesse Karp
New York, NY



Mayfair, 1973
10 x 14.5 inches
Watercolor on paper
Courtesy of O.K. Harris Works of Art
New York, NY



Talley Ho Diner, 1973
13 x 18 inches
Watercolor on paper
Collection of Jesse Karp
New York, NY



General Store Ford, 1975
10.5 x 15 inches
Watercolor on paper
Courtesy of O.K. Harris Works of Art
New York, NY



River Valley Still Life, 1976
24 x 34 inches
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of Louis K. Meisel Gallery
New York, NY



Iced Tea, 1976
17 x 21.5 inches
Watercolor on paper
Collection of Barry & Susan Paley
White Plains, NY



Still Life Pee Wee's Diner, 1977
24 x 34 inches
Oil on canvas
Collection of Barry & Susan Paley
White Plains, NY



Coffee Shop, 1978
10 x 11 inches
Watercolor on paper
Courtesy of The Manney Collection
Hastings on Hudson, NY



Schoharie Diner, 1979
48 x 64 inches
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of The Manney Collection
Hastings on Hudson, NY



Pee Wee's—Wamersville, NY, 1979
48 x 48 inches
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of the Pollock Family Collection
Santa Fe, NM



Still Life with Mirror, 1981
10 x 11 inches
Watercolor on paper
Courtesy of The Manney Collection
Hastings on Hudson, NY



Pepper Detail 3A, 1983
10 x 13 inches
Watercolor on paper
Courtesy of Stephen & Helen Macechak
Princeton, NJ



Two Waitresses—Afternoon Break, 1986
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44.5 x 66.5 inches
Oil on canvas
Collection of Stephen Alpert
Waltham, MA



Waitress Unadilla Diner, 1984
48 x 68 inches
Oil on canvas
Courtesy Sydney & Walda Besthoff Foundation
New Orleans, LA



Pie and Iced Tea, 1987
15 x 21.75 inches
Oil on canvas
Collection of Michael Rakosi
New York, NY



Hot Sauce, 1980
28 x 30 inches
Oil on canvas
Collection of Vivian & William Jaeger
Boca Raton, FL



Still Life with Creamer, 1982
38 x 52 inches
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of O.K. Harris Works of Art
New York, NY



Marble Counter, 1985-89
32 x 47 inches
Oil on canvas
Private collection
Woodbridge, CT



Airstream Winter, 1987
12 x 16 inches
Watercolor on paper
Collection of Mr. & Mrs. Wade F.B. Thompson
New York, NY



Still Life with Red Mat, 1988
44 x 62 inches
Oil on canvas
Private Collection
New York, NY



Sweet N Low, 1992
34 x 43 inches
Oil on canvas
Collection of Paul and Celine O'Neil
Sewickley, PA



A1 Sauce, 1995
28 x 38 inches
Oil on canvas
Collection of Dr. & Mrs. S. A. Levit
Tulsa, OK



Glass, 1999
7.75 x 11.5 inches
Watercolor on paper
Collection of Robert and Margot Herzog
New York, NY



Steak Sauce, 1989
40 x 40 inches
Oil on canvas
Courtesy Sydney & Walda Besthoff Foundation
New Orleans, LA



Relish, 1994
44 x 64.5 inches
Oil on linen
Collection of Rick & Monica Segal
Hollywood, FL



Donut, 1995
30 x 43.5 inches
Oil on canvas
Collection of Ann & Donovan Moore
Brooklyn, NY



Duke Diner, 1999
40 x 54 inches
Oil on canvas
Collection of Mr. & Mrs. Norman S. Lattman
New York, NY



Coffee Machine, 1991
10.75 x 14.5 inches
Watercolor on paper
Collection of Barbara & Lowell Shindler
North Hills, NY



Salt Spill, 1995
10.25 x 15.25
Watercolor on paper
Collection of Alan Litchman and Laura B. Trust
Brookline, MA



Tri-Color Chevy, 1996
12.5 x 20 inches
Watercolor on paper
Courtesy of Louis K. Meisel Gallery
New York, NY



Tux, 2002-03
32 x 46.25 inches
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of O.K. Harris Works of Art
New York, NY

“To view the still life paintings of Goings is to recall why it is that painting once held the premier position in gauging the worthiness of cultures since the Renaissance. His paintings have for decades established the standard for Postwar classical artistic excellence.”



*Pee Wee's—Wamersville, NY, 1979
48x48 inches
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of the Pollock Family Collection
Santa Fe, NM*

“... no artist since Hopper and Marsh has been as devoted to the American scene, nor has any since Sargent possessed such pure talent.”



*Schoharie Diner, 1979
48x64 inches
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of The Manney Collection
Hastings on Hudson, NY*

AFTERWORD

Ralph Goings is, according to Edward Lucie-Smith, America's Vermeer. What an extraordinary observation! Perhaps no American artist has dealt with reflected light as brilliantly as Goings, and certainly none have approached his ability to deal with interior details. And I believe that no artist since Hopper and Marsh has been as devoted to the American scene, nor has any since Sargent possessed such pure talent. I recognize that the use of the term “talent” has gone the way of the academies, but one has to recognize that rarely does one witness such virtuosity as that displayed in the paintings of Ralph Goings. Clearly, his is a gift of such monumental proportion as to cause us to wonder why we have come to accept what so often passes for art today.

To view the still life paintings of Goings is to recall why it is that painting once held the premier position in gauging the worthiness of cultures since the Renaissance. His paintings have for decades established the standard for Postwar classical artistic excellence. To examine his work is to engage in a virtual clinic on how to apply paint to canvas, on how to construct a painting with the mathematical precision once displayed by the master of Delft. And like Vermeer, whose splendid interiors were achieved in part via experimentation with the camera obscura, Ralph Goings utilizes the captured nuance of photography to assist in bringing about the magic we find within his restaurant interiors.

The diner, through the eye, mind and hand of Ralph Goings, has become an American counterpart to Jan Vermeer's genre masterworks. They are icons of America's visual culture. Time will look favorably upon Ralph Goings' contribution, and Edward Lucie-Smith's observation will most certainly be found to be right on target.

—Louis A. Zona
Director



Hot Sauce, 1980
20 x 30 inches
Oil on canvas
Collection of Vivian & William Jaeger
Boca Raton, FL

RALPH GOINGS

Born: May 9, 1928; Corning, CA

Resides: Charlotteville, NY and Santa Cruz, CA

Education: Sacramento State College, Sacramento, CA; M.F.A.
California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, CA; B.F.A.

Recent Solo Exhibitions

- 2004 Ralph Goings: Four Decades of Realism,
Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, OH
- 2003 Ralph Goings: Paintings & Watercolors, Vintage & Current Works,
Bernarducci Meisel Gallery, New York, NY
- 1997 Ralph Goings: Photorealism, Solomon Dubnick Gallery,
Sacramento, CA
- 1996 O.K. Harris Works of Art, New York, NY
- 1994 Ralph Goings, A Retrospective View of Watercolors:
1972-1994, Jason McCoy Inc., New York, NY
- 1991 O.K. Harris Works of Art, New York, NY

Recent Group Exhibitions

- 2004 Get Real: Photorealist Prints From The James W. Hyams
Collection, University of Richmond Museums, Richmond, VA
- 2003 Everything's O.K. at O.K. Harris, Brevard Museum of Art and
Science, Melbourne, FL
- 2003 Hyperrealismes Americains, Musee d,Art Moderne et
Contemporain, Strasbourg, France
- 2003 Fifth Annual Realism Invitational, Jenkins Johnson Gallery,
San Francisco, CA
- 2003 Just Desserts, Jerald Melberg Gallery, Charlotte, NC
- 2003 Subject: Object, O.K. Harris Works of Art, New York, NY
- 2003 Iperrealisti, Chiostro del Bramante, Rome, Italy
- 2002 Vintage Photorealists, Bernarducci Meisel Gallery, New York, NY
- 2002 As Real As It Gets: Super Realism and Photo-Realism from the
Tucson Museum of Art and Private Collections, Tucson, AZ
- 2002 Fourth Annual Realism Invitational, Jenkins Johnson Gallery,
San Francisco, CA
- 2002 Photorealism: The Liff Collection, Naples Museum of Art, Naples, FL
- 2001 Subject Matters: An Exhibition of Subject-Driven Art,
Kravets/Wehby Gallery, New York, NY
- 2001 This Is America: American Photorealists, Aarhus Kunstmuseum,
Arhus, Denmark
- 2001 Contemporary American Realism III, M.A. Doran Gallery, Tulsa, OK
- 2001 Illusion and Reality: Hyperrealism Paintings in Korea and America,
Samsung Museum of Modern
Art, Seoul, Korea
- 2001 Interiors Observed, Bernarducci Meisel Gallery, New York, NY
- 2000-01 A Century of the American Dream, Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art,
Nagoya; Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, Kobe, Japan
- 2000 The Photorealists, Holmes Gallery, Center for the Arts,
Vero Beach, FL
- 2000 O.K. Harris Works of Art, New York, NY



photos of Ralph Goings courtesy of Ralph Goings

Ralph Goings in his California Studio

Selected Collections

Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL
Flint Institute of Arts, Flint, MI
Portland Museum of Art, Portland, OR
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA
Tampa Museum of Art, Tampa, FL
Sheldon Art Museum, Lincoln, NE
Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA
Lucasfilm, San Anselmo, CA
H.J. Heinz Company, Pittsburgh, PA
Southland Corporation, Dallas, TX
Caravan Products, Totowa, NJ
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT
Dr. Peter Ludwig, Aachen, West Germany
Sydney and Frances Lewis, Richmond, VA
Martin Margulies, Coconut Grove, FL
Daniel Filipacchi, New York, NY
Alice Zimmerman, Nashville, IN
Max Palevsky, Los Angeles, CA
Stephen Alpert, Wayland, MA
Bernard Orenstein, Los Angeles, CA
Minskoff Family Collection, New York, NY
Raymond Zimmerman, Nashville, TN
Ivan and Marilyn Karp, New York, NY
Joseph and Sandra Rotman, Toronto, Canada
Marc B. Nathanson, Los Angeles, CA
Fukuoka Sogo Bank, Japan
Dunkin Donuts, Randolph, MA
Richard and Gloria Manney, New York, NY
Pollock Family Collection, Lexington, MA
Virlane Foundation, New Orleans, LA
Glenn C. Janss, Sun Valley, ID
E. Jean Belloni, Geneva, Switzerland
Pierre Lescure, Paris, France

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Front cover:
Duke Diner, 1999
40 x 54 inches
Oil on canvas
Collection of Mr. & Mrs. Norman S. Lattman
New York, NY

Back cover:
A1 Sauce, 1995
28 x 38 inches
Oil on canvas
Collection of Dr. & Mrs. S. A. Levit
Tulsa, OK



