

FineArtConnoisseur

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"New Directions in Children's Portraiture"

By Alix Finkelstein

". . .As a dedicated plein-airist who paints the dramatic coastline of Maine's Penobscot Bay, John Schmidtberger is frequently asked to paint portraits of children that combine his rapid execution and spontaneous responses to landscape with his sensitive renderings of the figure. Schmidtberger tends to approach his subjects from a distance, which means that "likeness" resides in the child's posture and body language. "John painted our daughter Tara when she turned 16," recalls Colleen Oberg, who owns a cottage near Schmidtberger in the Victorian village of Bayside, situated along the Penobscot. "Tara posed for him leaning against a group of rocks overlooking the bay, one of her favorite places to play as a child, so the setting is not only beautiful, but also has tremendous emotional significance for our family."