

## **Viva Hoffmann Statement**

Since I began drawing the moment I could hold a pencil both my parents and the nuns who educated me from kindergarten through college insisted I had a duty to practice my "God-given gift," so I've been trying to make Him happy ever since.

## **Biography**

At five I was a courtroom artist because my criminal lawyer father made me draw everyone's portraits. Then he sent me to the Everson Museum School in Syracuse, N.Y. because, since I finished everyone else's art projects in kindergarten, the nuns decided I had talent. Then off to Marymount College in Tarrytown because I could spend Junior Year in Paris studying with various artists the nuns deemed acceptable until led by me, we art students absconded to the Grand Chaumiere and the Academie Julian — bastions of Impressionist bohemia — where we drew nude models day after day while simultaneously attending the Sorbonne.

Back in Tarrytown the nuns were upset that we had no paintings of the Eiffel Tower or Notre Dame to hang on the corridor walls and we spent a semester re-tacking up the nudes the nuns kept removing. After graduation I spent some time at the Art Students' League worked as a model and acted in a couple of Warhol movies before being told by Paul Morrissey that painting was dead and anyway, I was a "performing genius" — the irony that Andy himself was painting up a storm apparently not occurring to me.

At a Tim Leary book signing party the Vice President of Putnam Brothers asked me to write a book because he'd read an obscene satire I'd written on the Berrigan Brothers (who were from my hometown) and the draft files, (based on *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes) and published in "The Realist," so, in Gore Vidal's spare bedroom in Rome I wrote the first couple of chapters of "Superstar."

Meanwhile I'd acted in a few European films, gotten married, gave birth to Alexandra, and met Christopher Isherwood who told me anybody can write a first book, the trick is to write a second. Accordingly, I wrote "The Baby," published by Knopf.

I acted in a few more movies, obtained a divorce and had another baby, in that order. I put my children to work as actresses while I practiced journalism and then one day I saw someone coming out of Central Park with a beautiful painting of grass strapped to the Julien easel on his back. The following day I bought some canvases and headed for the Park, propping the stretcher against Gaby's stroller. I was unable to use her as a ballast because she insisted on getting down on the grass and painting on the spare canvas so I had to buy an easel. For awhile we worked side by side but her paintings were better. Nevertheless when in 1998 I moved back up to the St. Lawrence River, Steve Taylor, an architect I knew began buying mine. When his wife Nellie advised that I quit writing and paint full time, always eager to drop one thing and pick up another on the merest suggestion, I plunged ahead.

During my second winter of frozen pipes and hauling water from holes in the ice I moved back to California, painting mainly poppy fields in the Antelope Valley, flame trees in Santa Monica, coreopsis at Point Dume and some beaches in Mexico. Meanwhile I was being kept alive by the scores of paintings being bought by the Taylors and by Darlene DeSedle, a jewelry designer in Santa Monica, as well as by Vicki Berkofsky, owner of Hemisphere in Santa Monica who still hangs the paintings alongside some gorgeous Eastern rugs. Those rugs and a 2001 Calendar of Tibetan Thangkas someone sent me gave me the idea to base a painting on a seventeenth century rendition of Palden Lhamo as autobiography. Then I remembered Christopher Isherwood's maxim that the trick is to do another one.

## **Viva Hoffmann Exhibitions**

### Solo Exhibitions

2014

Retrospective, Thousand Islands Arts Center, Clayton, New York

2013

NeoLithic, Los Angeles, CA

2009

Bert Green Fine Art, Los Angeles, CA

2007

M Modern Gallery, Palm Springs

2002

Zorya Gallery, Santa Barbara

2000

Hemisphere, Santa Monica

1999

Winged Bull Gallery, Clayton, New York

1993

Susan Cooper Gallery, Woodstock, New York

### Group Exhibitions

2015

Heath Gallery, Palm Springs, CA

2014

Bert Green Fine Art, Chicago II

2002

Rose Gallery, Santa Monica, CA