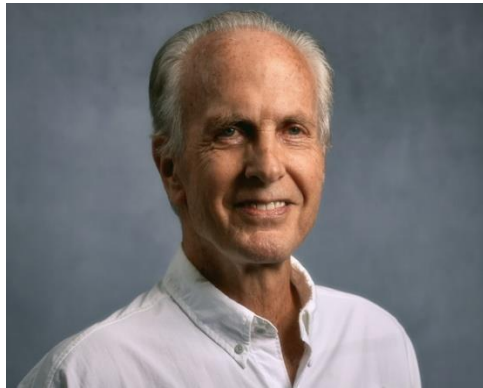


## Bob Gilbert: From Architect to Professional Artist

By Mike Potashnik

Bob Gilbert is one of Loudoun Sketch Club's finest artists. It is no surprise that Bob's talent as a professional artist is due in large measure to his training as an architect. I think Bob would agree that his undergraduate and graduate studies in architecture at the University of Washington contributed considerably to his development as an artist. In his architectural studies he learned how to draw and acquired a command of perspective, a skill we all wish we had. He also



learned the principles of composition. He was fortunate during his MA studies to be able to earn his tuition by painting watercolor and ink renderings for local architects. However, he had to postpone further development as an artist until after military service.

Following graduation from the University of Washington, Bob joined the Air Force and after 23 years of service, retired as a Colonel. While in the Air Force he acquired valuable international experience in Hong Kong and in Vietnam, where he worked as a property manager for US Air Force bases. He later managed his own consulting business, worked as a real estate executive for several major corporations, and today he has the good fortune of being able to devote full time to working as a professional artist.

Bob developed his interest in painting more than 20 years ago, although his interests in art and architecture go back to his youth. When he was 7 years old he already exhibited a love of drawing, painting and math, and was encouraged by his father to become an architect. Bob started his training in art at the Art League's Torpedo Factory where he took classes in painting (watercolor and oil) of portraits, and landscapes from Danni Dawson and Mike Fleming. And he painted on and off with them for 15 years. He furthered his training at the Capitol Hill Art Workshop and the Del Ray Artisans, and today continues his art studies in workshops with the talented plein air artists Raj (KC Rajendra) in Great Falls and Falls Church and Gary Tucker via Zoom.

Bob is enthusiastic about plein air painting. He joined the Loudoun Sketch Club some 10 years ago and has been an active member. One of his many paintings as an LSC member—a scene from the town of Clinton—is shown here. He feels plein painting gives him an



attachment to the area he paints, remembering the smell the light, and the scene. It also gives him the opportunity to paint the same scene in the summer, fall and winter light (not unlike Monet). He also thinks there are good health benefits to plein air painting as the artist gets exercise carrying paints, easel, and other equipment outside to paint. Bob stands while painting outside to have the freedom of movement away from his easel which helps him observe his work as someone else would see it. He does plein air painting with both watercolors and oil.

As an architect, Bob has been attracted to the monumentality of New York City's buildings and "the power they project." Painting more than fifty paintings of the city during his career, some 8 years ago he held a solo show at the Torpedo Factory consisting of 15 oil paintings of his New York City. Those paintings are strong in color and exhibit movement. Bob wants viewers of his paintings to feel the excitement and confusion of New York. He even deliberately paints buildings as if they are collapsing, as revealed in this sample of his painting of Broadway. He wants to get away from detail to provoke feelings.

Bob also works as an art teacher in Great Falls and Falls Church and works on commission. He teaches classes in perspective and also still life, He has been teaching acrylics to the elderly at the Kensington Assisted Living in Falls Church and to Brightview Assisted living as a volunteer, His commissions have included painting dogs, cats, the Great Falls and other topics. In view of his architectural skills, he often receives commissions to paint houses such as the one pictured here he recently painted for a real estate agent. Bob maintains a large and lovely studio at his home in Great Falls from which he sells his paintings. He sends out a newsletter regularly to customers and has a website: [www.robortgilbertart.com](http://www.robortgilbertart.com)

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