



*Woman with Pearls*  
20" x 16", oil

## Mary Minifie

By Luana Luconi Winner

Mary Minifie's greatest lessons came not from Wellesley during her undergraduate studio art degree, nor her advanced work in art at Boston University. They came from nearly ten years of study in Boston with Paul Ingbretson who attended the atelier of R. H. Ives Gammell... who studied with Paxton... who studied with Gerome... leading to David, as the pedigree goes.

Living modestly as the wife of a secondary school teacher, she had sought out instruction during her 10 years in Europe. But sales of her fine art and illustrations became their sole income when she and her husband moved from

Cairo to Oxford to pursue an additional advanced degree.

The next move took her to Vienna. Though looking forward to the art, museums, and new experiences, she felt disconnected with the place, the nasty weather, and the people. Two years after returning to Massachusetts, and now with two sons, 5-1/2 and 2-1/2, she found Paul Ingbretson, the mentor who would change her life; however, this meant expensive daycare and an hour and a half drive each way from Boston for her "visual training" three times a week for nine years.

With Mr. Ingbretson standing over her shoulder encouraging her to see with precision every nuance of shape, color, and lighting characteristic of the rigorous and exacting Boston School tradition, Mary developed the keen skills for which she is known today.

During those same years, she endured several personal tragedies including the loss of her husband at a very young age. Mary then began to depend on her newly gathered knowledge to solely support her family.

Today she says, "Finally, I feel like I know what I am doing. I used to paint thinking... Can I pull this off? Can I do it? But the more you do it, the more you can do. The more you recognize what needs to be done and find a way to do it more efficiently."

"But now I ask... What do I really want to do? It is no longer just getting to know the subject and their looks and making a good painting. But instead now... How do I want to show this form? Do I want the light to break this way or emphasize that? In other words, what do I really want to say through all of this?"

Mary's philosophy is that every portrait is designed to meet the needs and purpose of the sitter. She believes the best portraits are done from life.



*Mary Hampton*  
32" x 26", oil

“It is the whole philosophy of portrait painting. I am much more interested now in how the people see themselves. How do we as an artist get to that so when they look at it they can say, I love it. It is really me.”

She is beginning to teach workshops wedged into her busy family and corporate portrait schedule. Recent week-long workshops and demonstrations were held at the Vermeer Academy in St. Louis, at Mona Lisa in central North Carolina, and at the Connecticut Society of Portrait Artists.

Mary’s newest projects include her first full length, standing, life size portrait of a woman created on location, a group portrait of two grandparents and their seven grandchildren, the retired chairman of the board of Montefiore Hospital in the Bronx, and the recent head of Joslin Clinic in Boston.