

ROYAL YACHTING ASSOCIATION PRESS RELEASE QUESTIONNAIRE

Karenza Morton to Brian West

How/when did your involvement with Ball first come about?

I think it was via a contact from Gavia Wilkinson Cox at Event Network late 1995. I cannot remember what prompted the communication, it may have been by a referral as I had been involved in paintings for such as SportsAid and The Lords & Lady Taverners type projects in addition to a few notable famous name commissions.

Have you always had an interest in sailing?

As a landlocked armchair amateur sailor it must be more that I am a cancerian and remember as a child often playing in the small river that ran at the bottom of our garden, ever failing to dam it to create my own peg boat marina. In spite of the soggy wellingtons and extensive harbourmaster apprenticeship - I do however possess a deep respect and fear of water particularly the awesome power and dark might of the large waters and seas. These sailors are brave.

What is the concept behind the Sailing for Gold paintings?

Apart from marking the selection of the particular Olympian sailors representing us by trying to faithfully achieve a degree of action study likeness in each class, I like to encapsulate something of the Games venue itself within the hopefully fluid montage. To pay homage to the sport, I do my best to produce a tonally balanced painting in its own right as well as a semi photo-real documentary record of the event itself.

How long does one of the paintings generally take you?

Due to the selection process I never get the time I need to be content that it's truly finished, for between the last class confirmation and the lead time for the production of limited edition prints, signing & numbering I am left with just a few fast weeks. I can though start thinking of the general composition structure and host city representation much earlier, but much can be aborted due to the eventual sailor/crew selection, then again by elimination of the many great action pics available and their balanced position within the montage jig-saw pieces. For instance a terrific action photo of say the Yngling or Tornado crews may not be used as they don't knit into the overall painting composition. I suppose the direct answer to the question is five months involvement condensed into 5 weeks action.

What message do you have for the sailors going to Beijing?

I thought I would help them by 'ghosting in' an image of a Beijing Gold Medal at centre bottom of the painting so that they know it is floating in the water with them – within reach by right of being there as the best of the best. I wish them strength of self belief and the power of positive thought.

BRIAN WEST ... 13.05.08