A painting of a person from behind, wearing a patterned garment, sitting on a chair. The person has dark hair and is wearing a dark blue or purple garment with large, reddish-brown, abstract patterns. They are sitting on a dark wooden chair. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the garment and the contours of the person's back and hair.

This California artist's refined figure paintings possess a notable maturity that belies his relatively recent arrival on the contemporary art scene.

BY MOLLY SIPLE

The Promise of
**JEREMY
LIPKING**

At just 27 years old, Jeremy Lipking is in high demand. Since he made his entry into the contemporary art world three years ago, dealers, collectors, and journalists have been clamoring to connect with this gifted painter. In 2001, he won the Artists Choice Gold Medal Award at the California Art Club's 91st Annual Gold Medal Juried Exhibition. The following year, his painting *Antique Chair* received the Leslie and Robert Zasa Museum Acquisition Award at the 92nd Annual Gold Medal Juried Exhibition.

Lipking's path to acclaim began at the California Art Institute in Westlake Village, a school that offers classes in traditional painting techniques. While there, the artist dedicated himself to long hours of study, and after only a year, he was invited to become a drawing instructor. In 1999, during a stroll around the gallery-rich area of West Hollywood, he and his wife, Danielle, walked into the elegant Edenhurst Gallery, where they met Tom Gianetto, the co-owner and director. With one look at photos of the artist's work, Gianetto immediately asked him to participate in the upcoming California Spring Salon exhibition. At that event, Lipking met Jeffrey Morseburg, the owner and director of Morseburg Galleries, who offered to represent and mentor the artist, giving him his first solo exhibition at his West Hollywood gallery in January 2001. Now, Lipking is also represented by Waterhouse Gallery in Santa Barbara, California; Legacy Gallery in Scottsdale, Arizona; and Arcadia Gallery in New York City, where his show this winter was a sellout.

Although Lipking paints landscapes and still lifes, his refined figure paintings—usually of women, often posed outdoors in dappled lighting—attract the most attention. He prefers to work on one painting at a time, taking about two weeks to complete a canvas, and he chooses his content carefully. “When I am



Above: *At the Door*, 2002, oil on linen, 50 x 30.



Opposite page: *Antique Chair*, 2002, oil on linen, 40 x 30. All artwork this article private collection.



doing a painting, I don't think of anything else," he remarks. "If I am going to work this long on a piece, I pretty much like to know where I'm going before I begin."

When he decides to paint a figure, first the artist photographs the model in various poses. He also paints an oil sketch, because he considers it a better record of color and value than a photo. If his subject is a nude en plein air, planning is especially important, since lighting changes quickly and the logistics of painting a nude outdoors are challenging. Lipking tends to do those pieces in the secluded area around his family's mountain cabin, and his wife is usually the

obliging model. The result of one such session is *Plein Air Nude*.

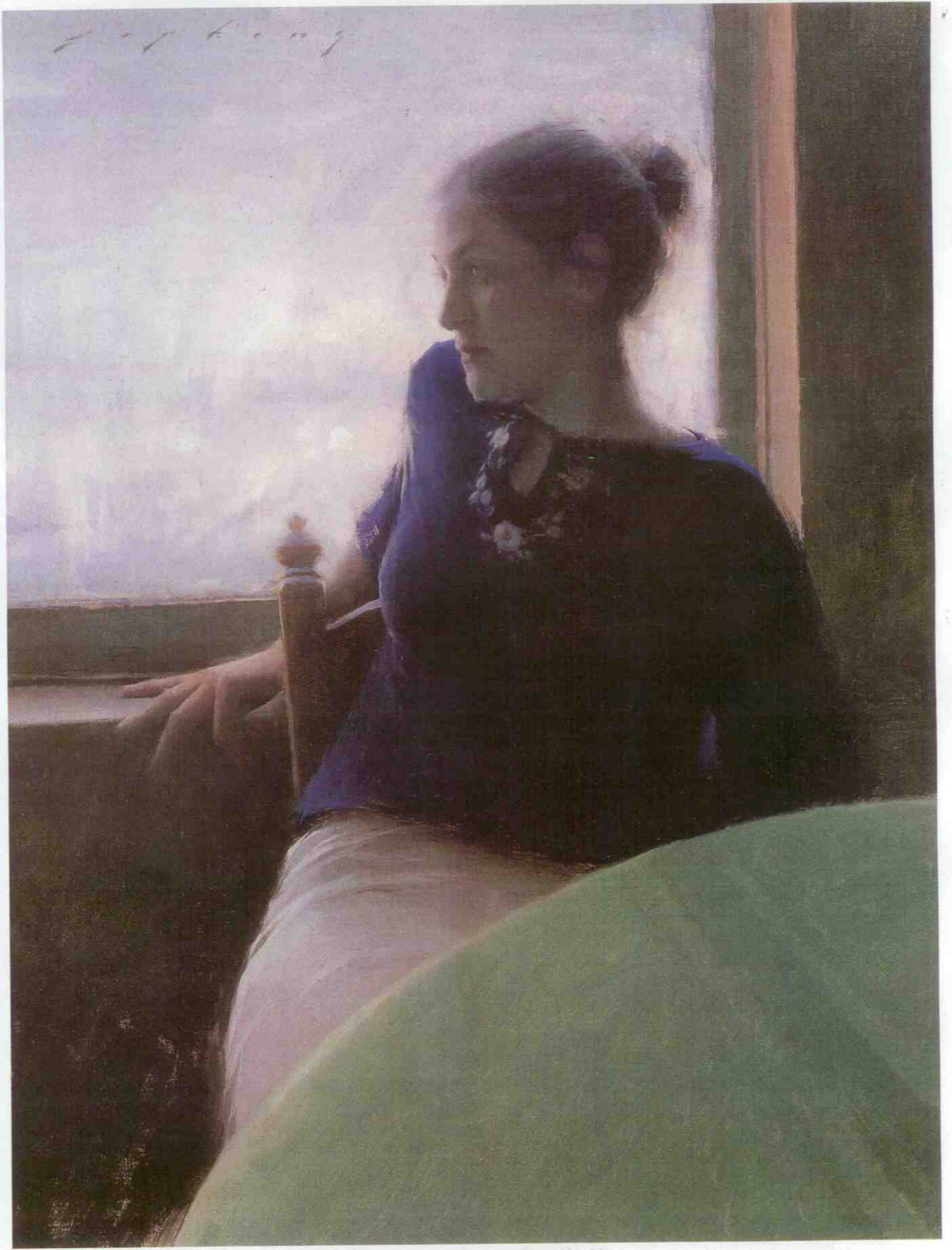
The visual richness and muted tones Lipking achieves in his paintings are a testament to his admiration of the elegant virtuosity of John Singer Sargent and the luminosity of Joaquín Sorolla. Lipking favors Winsor & Newton and Utrecht paints. His extended color selection, which he arranges clockwise on the glass-topped end table that serves as his palette, includes titanium white, cadmium yellow light, yellow ochre, cadmium orange, cadmium red, alizarin crimson, transparent iron oxide red, burnt sienna, ultramarine blue, cobalt blue, viridian, and ivory black. For works such as *Seated Model*,

Above, left: *Winter Contemplation*, 2002, oil on linen, 40 x 24.

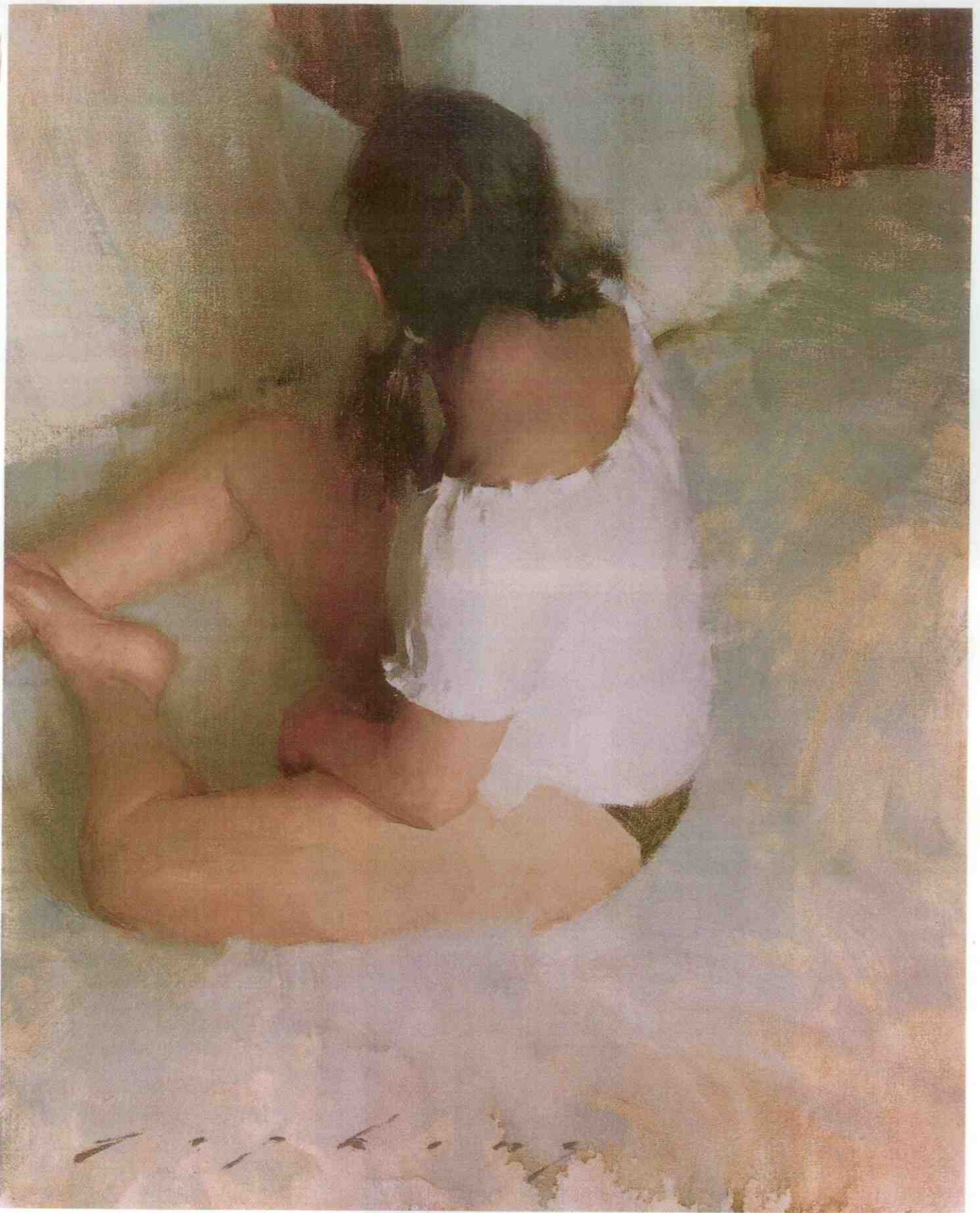
Above, right: *Ashley*, 2001, oil on linen, 36 x 24.

Opposite page: *October Sky*, 2001, oil on linen, 30 x 20.

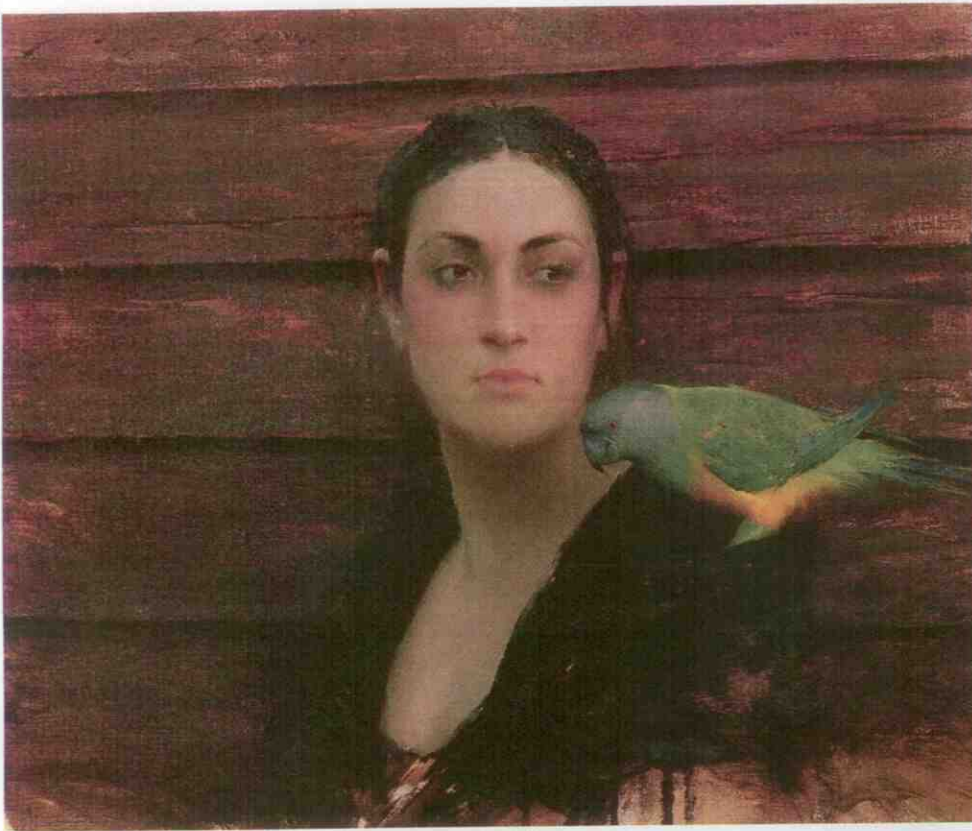




Day Dreaming, 2002, oil on linen, 32 x 24.



Seated Model, 2002, oil on linen, 20 x 16.



Above: *Spanish Girl*, 2002, oil on linen, 20½ x 24½.

Right: *Straw Hat*, 2002, oil on linen, 30 x 20.

Opposite page: *Plein Air Nude*, 2002, oil on linen, 20 x 11.



however, the artist employs a limited palette of only titanium white, cadmium yellow, ochre, cadmium red, and viridian. "You can do a lot more than you think as you limit your colors," he advises.

Lipking starts each painting by blocking in the composition, keeping his layers thin so that he can rework areas as needed. He avoids using paint directly from the tube at the early stages, preferring to mix his colors with a medium of 1 part damar varnish, 1 part stand oil, and 5 parts turpentine. The artist holds back the darks to "leave room to go a little darker if I have to later on," he explains. To achieve the rich color harmonies that he aims for, he grays most of his colors to foil one or two areas of intense color. An excellent example of this approach is *At the Door*, in which the dulled blues and purples make the turquoise and orange sing.

Design, for Lipking, is paramount. In his teaching days, he directed his students with the mantra "Shape. Edge. Value." A follower of his own advice, in *Antique Chair*, the artist crafted a slightly irregular edge for the kimono, thereby creating a more interesting background shape. Then he orchestrated the light pattern of the kimono so that the value both blends and separates the figure from the chair.

For all the well-handled formal elements, as well as the confident brushwork, the sheer presence of Lipking's figures is most captivating. For example, in *Winter Contemplation*, a young woman standing in snowy woods is wearing a none-too-warm winter coat and weather-worn boots. The viewer is enthralled with a narrative half-told, just as the artist's own story is only partially written. However, if past performance is any predictor of future results, even more exceptional paintings are to come. ■

Molly Siple is a regular contributor to the California Art Club's newsletter. She is an artist member of that organization.

