

RIVERARTS

Classes and portraits in the tradition of the Great Masters

BY GLENN GARSON

One of the great gems of the River Arts District is hard to find but worth the search.

The Art Atelier is located at 375 Depot St., on the left side of the building, and up the stairs, in an intimate

studio that glows in natural light. There, students learn to see and capture beauty in the tradition of the Great Masters at The Art Atelier.

When Jim Ostlund and Michele Mitchel came back from Europe, after teaching and studying there, they entered two national portrait contests. In one, they tied for First place, and in the other, one of them came in First and the other Second. Since then they have done commissioned portraits for Federal Judges, actresses, Deans and Presidents of Colleges.

When they were going to have their first child they chose Asheville and then opened The Art Atelier to teach students through



The photograph is one of their paintings.

a system handed down over the centuries from the old Masters.

Each student is individually taught in small classes that last 6 weeks. They will also offer evening classes, if they have at

least 7 students. Watch their web site for the start date of their next class (www.theartatelier.com) or call them at (828) 645-5101.

Each student is given their own space and progresses from charcoal to oil paint in a nurturing environment. At an opening for some of their younger students one of the mothers began to cry, explaining how their teaching environment made her feel like she was in a special place.

Jim and Michele are treasures from an era when artists spent thousands of hours drawing and painting from live models and learning how to articulate the music of color and light onto the canvas. They draw on the tools of the Great Masters to paint the beauty of today.