

Portrait of Two Artists Cedric and Joannette Engeli

"Portraiture was presented to me as the highest form of art...It was the art that required the most of one's character, the most talent, the most artistic training...A portrait must be an exciting work of art," Cedric Egeli is quoted in his promotional literature. And he should know. Portraits by Egeli hang in hospitals, universities, and the Pentagon. He



also painted the Governor and First Lady of his home state, Maryland.

Cedric Egeli is nationally renowned for his portraits of (mostly) men in powerful positions, and he paints landscapes for fun. His wife, Joannette Egeli is known for her portraits of children. Both painters link the background of their paintings to their subjects' lives. For example, Cedric painted the president of the Teamster's Union against the background of the Capitol in Washington, DC. And Joannette paints many of the children outdoors. Before beginning to paint, she spends time in the home to learn about the child. That enables her to capture the essence of the child on paper or canvas. "Now, lots of dignitaries are beginning to think that an outside portrait might be good," says Joannette.

As one of eleven family members who are notable painters, Cedric has strong opinions about the training of artists. "Kids go to college or to art school and they spend up to \$80,000 of their parents' money. And they come *here* to learn how to be artists and they frankly don't know any more than they knew in elementary school."

Joannette feels that it takes about eight years before a young painter can be trained to make a really good living. So the couple takes on a number of students as apprentices. "We have adopted the contemporaries of our children as students because they didn't learn anything in art school. Art school now is very bad. We bring several students

up here each summer, and take them back to Maryland for the winter," she says. "The apprenticeship program is very successful."

And that is where their connection to Provincetown comes in to play. Both artists trained with Henry Hensche to learn about light and color. And they pass on his teachings to students at the Cape Cod School of Art. They focus on figure painting and portrait painting. "When you go outside and paint outside, you have the sun with infinite variations of color and light," Cedric says. "The person is almost like a reflector of everything that's around

him. So even though you're just painting the person, you're painting everything that's around him. He might be greenish underneath because the grass is green. He might be a sea color on one side because the ocean's there."

Any portrait of these artists is incomplete without bringing their progeny into the picture. Of their four children, three are artists--including one who is shooting a film at the School. There are advantages to having a family full of painters. Joannette says, "When you have a family of artists and you have worked lined up and can't get it done, you start to work on each other's pictures!"

Portraits by Cedric and Joannette Egeli will hang in "The Portrait Tradition," an exhibit of portrait artists who studied with Henry Hensche. Portraits by Henry Hensche, Marcus Smith, Rob Longley, Lois Griffel, Berta Walker and others will be among them. The show will open at the Wohlfarth Galleries, 234 Commercial Street on September 24 and run through October 7.

