

# Rare Ted Harrison works missing

## Six paintings depicting athletes created for 1994 Commonwealth Games

**GRANIA LITWIN**  
Times Colonist

A Victoria writer is on a mission to find six missing artworks that were painted by Ted Harrison for the 1994 Commonwealth Games and could be worth \$70,000 today, depending on their condition.

Katherine Gibson learned of their existence — and mysterious disappearance — while researching a new biography about the famous local artist, who is noted for his bold, bright canvases and rarely paints large figurative works.

The paintings depict divers, synchronized swimmers, butterfly swim racers, cyclists, gymnasts and runners. They measure approximately 60 by 90 centimetres.

"Ted did a series of swimming and athletic figures for the 1994 Commonwealth Games," she said, adding she

believes the six paintings were donated to a provincial swim foundation, and copies were made into posters and sold to raise funds for amateur sport.

None of them were signed — although that could be easily remedied by the 82-year-old artist — which means someone might not recognize them, or know how valuable they are.

"I've talked to local, provincial and national folks involved in swimming and they know nothing of them," said a frustrated Gibson.

"I really want to track them down as they're seminal to his work during the 1990s and because he didn't do a lot of figurative works. Their legacy value is also significant as they remind us of the summer the world came to Victoria."

Gibson is appealing to the public and hoping for some speedy information — "Perhaps people could look under

the beds or in their attics" — because her book, *Ted Harrison: Painting Paradise*, is due out this summer.

It's in the final editing phase and is being produced by Crown Publications.

Gibson embarked on the quest after uncovering a letter Harrison wrote in March 1994 to his sister, in which he mentions the canvases.

She then found some photos of them taken by Harrison's late wife, Nicky, on their back deck.

An internationally recognized artist, the British-born Harrison moved to the Victoria area in 1993, after living in the Yukon for more than 25 years.

He has been awarded the Order of Canada, the Order of B.C. and several honorary degrees.

He is philosophical about the works. "You don't like losing anything, so I hope they aren't really lost. They may just be mislaid. I did them a long time ago, but remember them because they were a wee bit



ADRIAN LAM, TIMES COLONIST  
Ted Harrison: "You don't like losing anything, so I hope they aren't really lost."

out of the ordinary, of what I usually do.

"I also remember somebody stabbing one with a knife, or accidentally pushing a knife through one. I don't remember why. It was while they were on display in the Commonwealth Place lobby."

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