

## Paul Cormack @ CASA Magazine

# In Retrospect: Bits of Color Thrown on Paper

By ERIN J. SMITH / CASA

**I**N SEARCH OF THE ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME, artist Paul Cormack headed from his native Australia to New York City at the age of 27. He found it. His personal journey is documented in a selection of twelve paintings spanning four decades of his creative work, currently on view at CASA Magazine for the month of June.

"My art is like my diary. It is an illustration of my story," said Cormack. "Painting



Paul Cormack

has been a way of healing and understanding for me and has been a life long joy and a continuous surprise."

Cormack grew up in a little country town in Australia, the middle of three boys. Although always interested in art, Cormack was largely left to his own devices in terms of study. "When someone put up a few paintings in a building downtown and called it a museum,

I became fascinated with the idea that you could put paint on a canvas and hang it on a wall," said Cormack. But it was a pocketbook of Rembrandt paintings that further sparked his interest as a teenager, prompting him to dedicate his life to art. Cormack attended the Australian National Art School in Sydney, studying for three years within the historic stone walls of a prison-turned-conservatory.

With not more than \$1,000 in his pocket and the names of a couple of friends, Cormack soon headed to New York City. "When I look back, I would never have had the nerve to do it today, but I was young and adventurous then," he said. After seeing some dresses in a storefront window, Cormack blew his last \$30 on pink chiffon, beginning what

would become a lucrative career in the fashion industry as a specialty designer. He landed jobs designing for high-end department stores like Saks Fifth Avenue and Bloomingdales, as well as specialty boutiques across the country.

"Fashion was really about making an income," said Cormack. "It was about selling things and making a living. But I always approached it from the technical side of figuring out how it all comes together. And I love color."

It wasn't long after arriving in New York that Cormack found his way back to painting. "My favorite piece in the show is one I recently titled *Clarity I*. I hadn't painted in about a decade and I did this pastel drawing I just loved, so I turned it into a painting. At that time, I felt I had found my own clarity and sense of what I do and who I am," said Cormack. "When I did that painting, it reinforced that I am an artist."



*Clarity I* by Paul Cormack. o/c 24" x 30"

Cormack moved to Santa Barbara two years ago in search of a new adventure and a new take on his artistic career. In addition to continuing to develop his own body of work, Cormack hopes to take on private students or teach in a classroom setting. "I've learned a lot over the years," he said. "It's time now to impart some of the knowledge I've acquired and help young people to develop their own creative process."

CASA Magazine is located at 23 E. Canon Perdido. For more information, call 965-6448 or visit [www.Cormackart.com](http://www.Cormackart.com).



*Last Sunday in July* by Paul Cormack. o/c 75" x 70"