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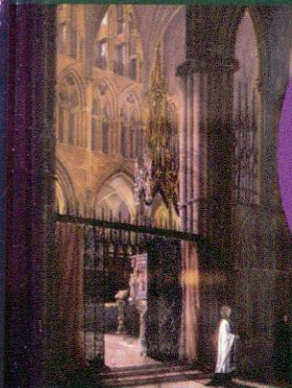
Artists & ILLUSTRATORS

For everyone inspired by art

CERI DAVIES
Timeless tempera

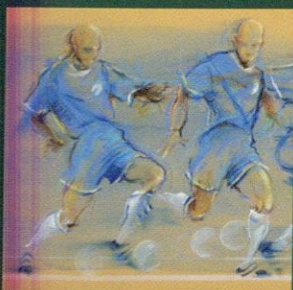


WILLIAM LOGSDAIL
Lost treasure



PLUS

- Xmas gift ideas
- How to paint trees and light
- Sports illustration contest winners



Enter our
Artist of
the Year
Competition

See page 41

PICASSO, THE MASTER

by top TV critic
Matthew Collings

ROLF

“Painting is my
first love”



WELCOME



There's something about art: no matter how many new approaches appear, artists will always cling to – or even reinvent – old, tried and trusted techniques.

Take Ceri Auckland Davies in this issue, for example. He could paint his wild Welsh seascapes in oils or watercolours. But no; he chooses to use egg tempera. Just think about that for a moment: think about how big an egg yolk is, and how much paint that will actually make when mixed with pigment – about enough to paint one small rock or crab on one of his seashores. And he doesn't just paint something once and call it finished: he puts layer over layer to achieve a luminosity not found using other methods. He doesn't have to do it this time-consuming, labour-intensive way; he just wants to.

Likewise, Kari de Koenigswarter isn't content to use common or garden paints from a tube: she has to use beeswax and gold leaf – neither of which can be bought by the bucket at the local discount art suppliers. Again, she doesn't have to do it this way, but she does.

At the other end of the techniques scale, the ultra-modern Photorealists deserve a look. Whether you agree with their aims or not, there's no doubting their commitment to method. And sculptor Angela Conner has made a career out of creating moving sculptural forms from materials that couldn't be more solid and immovable.

All these artists share one quality that defines their work and who they are: dedication. They are prepared to go that extra mile. And this is the theme of this issue. The young curators Ty and Vito have it in spades as they build a successful business empire; William Logsdail had it, even though his work was not as appreciated as he had hoped; our three techniques artists have it as they make art full time, despite the insecurities of the profession.

Then there's Rolf. His larger-than-life persona and unique painting style may not be to everyone's taste, but he has shown a huge amount of commitment to his artistic calling through six amazing decades. In the face of adversity, he has managed to make art popular among the TV-watching masses. Now there's dedication for you.

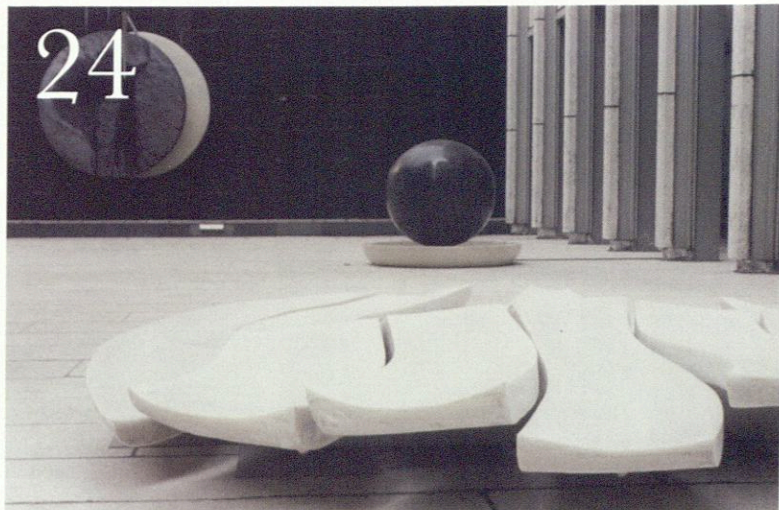
Lynn Parr
EDITOR

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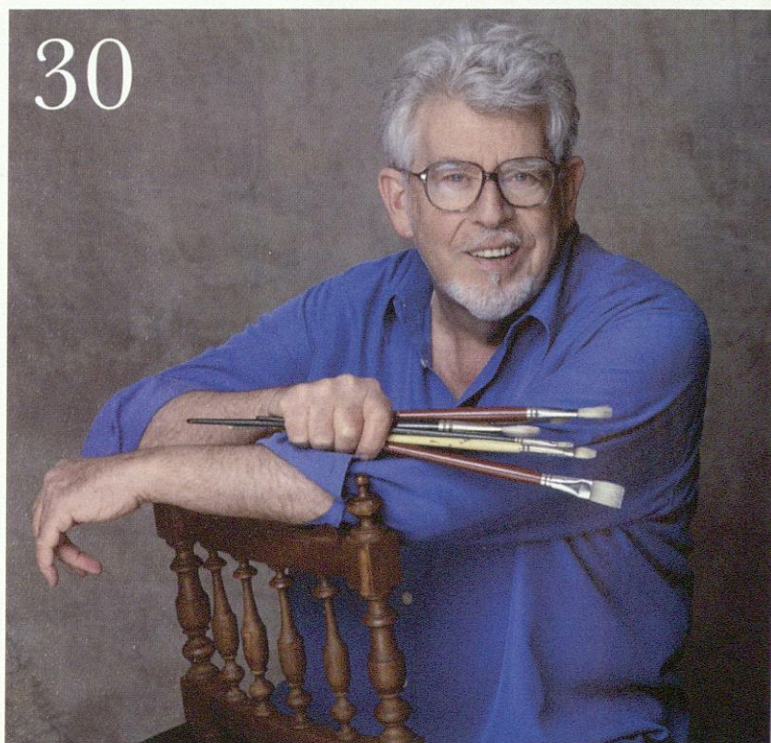
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Don't miss HALF-PRICE

EASEL BOX with paints p90



Rolf Harris

Renaissance man

He's been a familiar face in popular culture for decades, but has always struggled to be taken seriously as an artist. Now, with his forthcoming exhibition, Rolf Harris challenges critics who say he doesn't do 'proper' art. Words: Lynn Parr

ASK ANYONE on the street if they can name an artist, and most will probably say Van Gogh, Picasso... and Rolf Harris. In recent years, the Australian entertainer with the larger-than-life personality has become the face of art in popular culture, rousing a nation to paint in the style of different artists, and even recreate a masterpiece on a grand scale.

Indeed, a poll by the Encyclopaedia Britannica found that a large chunk of the population believes Rolf painted Monet's water lily pictures.

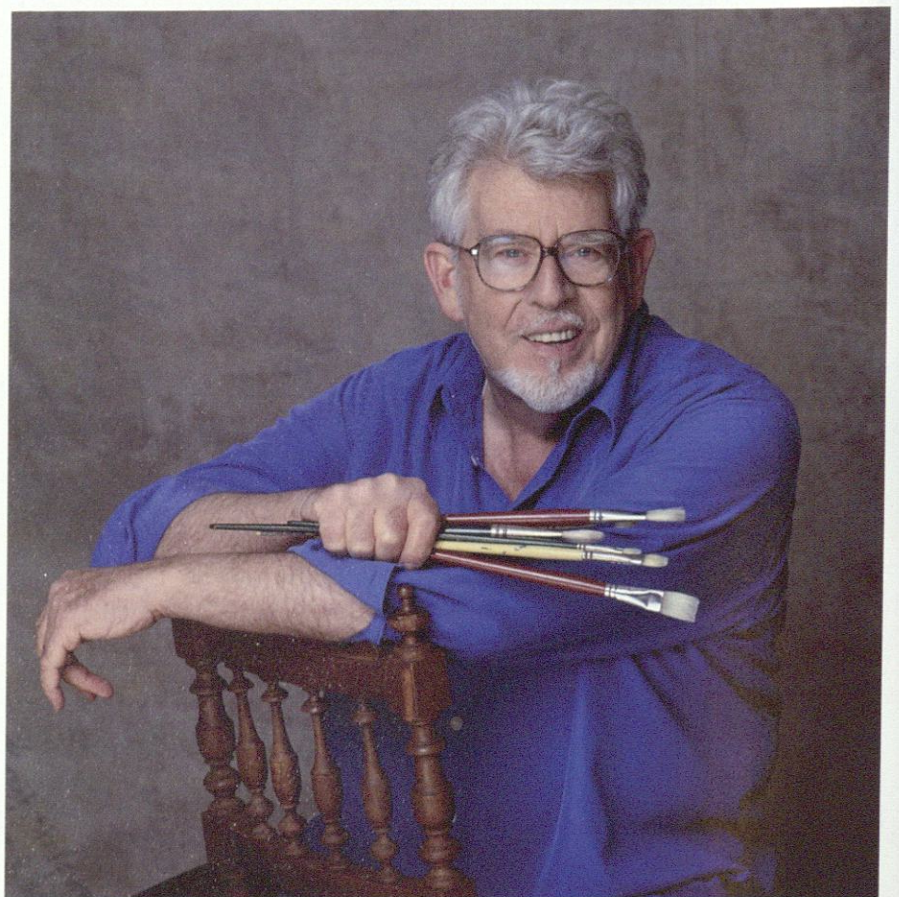
The art establishment sometimes scoffs, but with years of training and experience behind him, Rolf now feels he's doing the kind of painting he was born for. And with another run of sold-out limited-edition prints, plus another one-man show at London's Portland Gallery this month, it seems his adoring public thinks so, too.

"I feel I'm progressing all the time," he says of his new collection. "I'm getting better all the time, getting more variety and more interest in the paintings. I'm really loving what I'm doing."

New Lowrys

In the spirit of experimentation for which he is famed, Rolf has recently been painting in the style of LS Lowry.

"I've done a bunch of pictures based on my enthusiasm for Lowry's paintings. He would put on a background like an undercoat that was all spiky, like an artex ceiling. I've adopted that style and I'm absolutely fascinated by it. It's lovely because it gives you a strangely different background to start with, and you've already got excitement happening before



you even start painting.

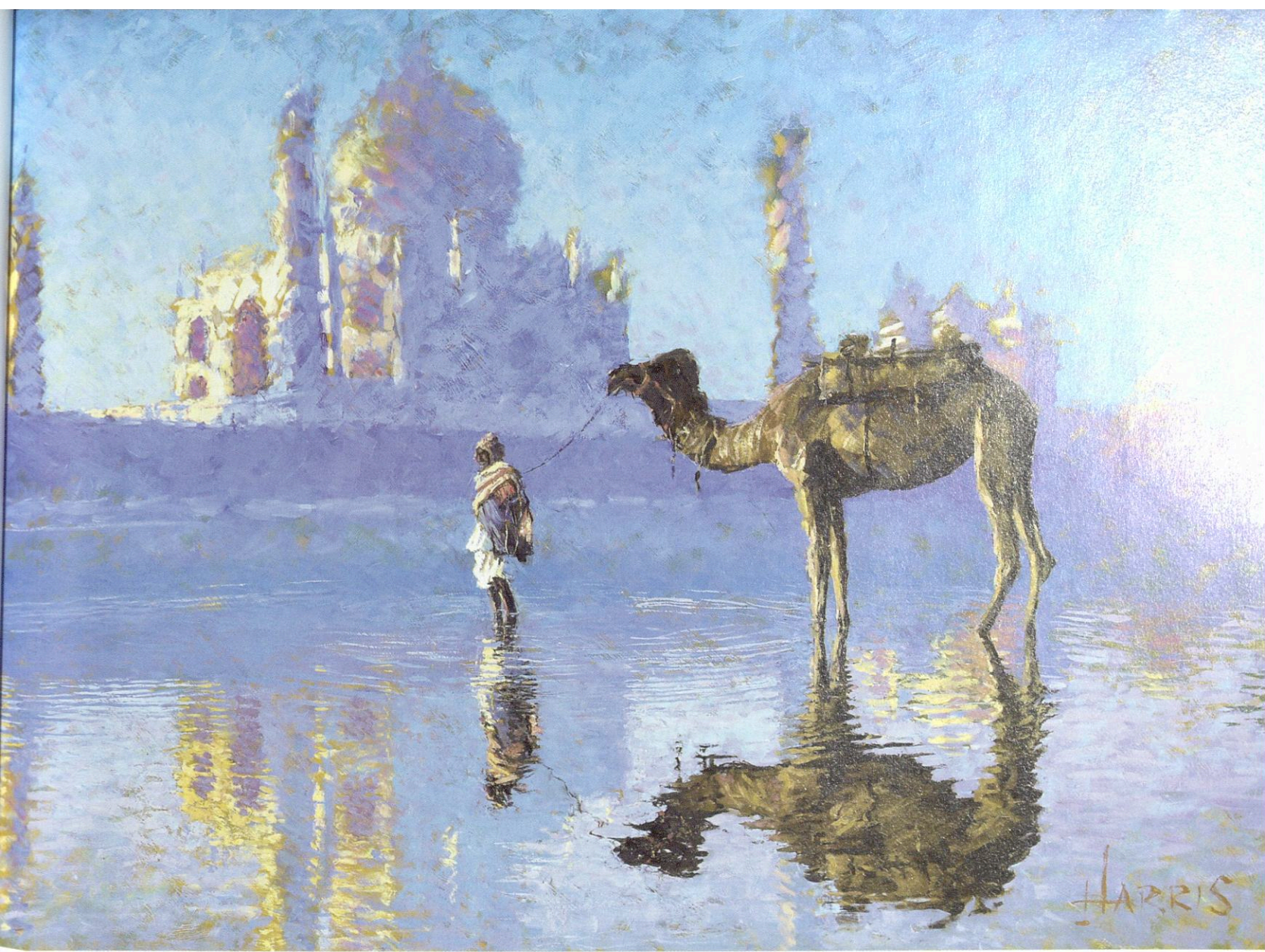
"The way I usually paint is to rough in the whole picture first of all, then gradually refine that rough impression. But with the Lowry-type ones I put on those backgrounds, and then I did really intricate and accurate drawings with a very fine brush on that spiky background. It was just wonderful."

After years of painting in Australia while training to be a teacher, Rolf financed a trip to England at the age of 22 from the proceeds of four exhibitions of his work. He enrolled at the City and Guilds Art School in London for a year, intending to become a portrait painter

like his grandfather. However, at Earl's Court Underground station he met the Australian impressionist painter Hayward Veal, who invited him to go along to his summer school — even though Rolf couldn't afford it.

"I'd admired his work as a teenager in Perth in the art gallery, and then to come over here and meet him — wow, I couldn't believe it. He took me under his wing and became my mentor, and was wonderful in giving me an impressionist approach, which I'd always wanted to have but didn't know how to do."

During the 1950s, Rolf exhibited his paintings in the Summer Exhibition ▷



"It's certainly not Rolf the celebrity in the paintings. It's the child of a much more considered, gentle, away-from-the-camera type of person"





at the Royal Academy for two consecutive years. He became an entertainer, singing and dancing his way onto television variety shows, which then began to include huge paintings done with a 4in decorating brush — sparking his legendary catchphrase “Can you guess what it is, yet?”

“Even those paintings were based on artistic fact and background, and with a knowledge of tone and colour and form,” he says. “They were very regimented and rehearsed, almost like a shorthand version of painting, because you were hamstrung by the amount of time you had to get it done in — eight minutes maximum, flat out. But I’ve done paintings for this new exhibition in which the original oil background has taken a month to dry. I’m just thrilled with them.”

“I don’t know how anybody who’s seen it can say it’s not proper art”

It was while he was presenting *Animal Hospital* in the 1990s that the producer asked Rolf whether he would like to paint onscreen again.

“‘Would I!’ I said. In a funny way, *Rolf on Art* was the making of me. When we got going on them, I suddenly realised how much I loved doing it, and thought, ‘Why am I not doing this all the time?’”

So I got stuck into it and had my first exhibition, and from there it’s just gone crazy.”

Rolf on Art received the highest-ever ratings for a TV arts programme, and is now in its fifth year. Spin-offs have included *The Big Event*, in which Rolf and the public recreate a masterpiece on a huge scale — the live programme in 2004, in which they reproduced Constable’s *The Hay Wain* in Trafalgar Square was TV’s biggest arts event. Since then, Rolf has presented a number of TV

ROLF’S TIPS

- Try and find someone whose work you admire, and see if you can get them to advise you. And perhaps go out painting with them and watch them, and get advice as you go along, as I did.
- Work up a rough impression first, then gradually refine it.
- I only use acrylics if I’m going to do the painting in one sitting, because unless you’re working with them all the time and know them intimately, it’s very difficult to mix up a colour on your palette from a previous sitting.
- If I wake up in the middle of the night and can’t get back to sleep, I get up and go up to the studio. I’ve got daylight tubes there so I’m never painting in the wrong light.

Profile

Rolf Harris, CBE, MBE, OBE, was born in 1930 in Perth, Australia. He always wanted to be an artist, and came to England in the 1950s. He became a presenter on children’s television, first in Australia, then in Britain. He also had a string of hit records. In 1967, he starred in *The Rolf Harris Show*, which ran for seven years. In the decades since then he has had various TV series and awards. His exhibition of new works will be held at the Portland Gallery, London, 30 November — 22 December. Call (020) 7493 1888 or email art@portlandgallery.com.

Also see Rolf’s website, www.rolfharris.com

programmes about art, and painted the Christmas card for Children In Need for the past three years. He has also famously painted the Queen.

It's a long way from portraying Jake the Peg with the extra leg, or recording the iconic *Stairway to Heaven* with a bit of wobbly board — although this famous bit of Harris kit did have an art connection: it started out as a painting he was trying to fan dry. So how can the jokey Aussie playing Moon River on a stylophone be the same person as a serious painter?

"It certainly isn't Rolf the celebrity in the paintings," he says. "It's the child of a much more considered, gentle, away-from-the-camera type of person. Somebody who's got plenty of silence around him, and a canvas and a studio. Where you can think what you're doing, and you're trying to create a certain atmosphere and get a certain edge to it. You're trying hard to achieve the building blocks of what that final painting is going to be, and you're very conscious of the building-up process from the blank canvas."

Landscapes with figures

Using oils on canvas, Rolf likes to paint landscapes, but they usually have a figure in them somewhere.


"I find without figures, the landscapes are a little bit drab. I also need the paintings to be a likeness of something, even if it's very rough and ready. I like them to conjure up an image, something which the public recognize in the same way that I hoped it would look. I want them to know that it's an elephant coming through the jungle, or that it's a chap sitting on a plane on a long haul, going through stuff on his computer while everyone around him fast asleep. I want that image to come across to people, and I want them to say, 'Wow, I know what that is'."

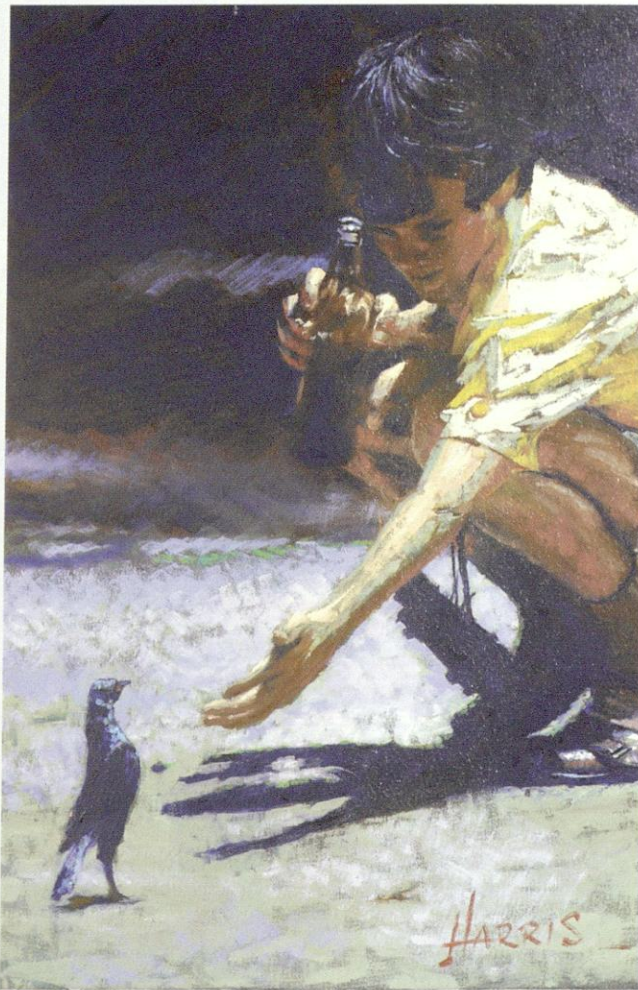
He also prefers impressionist oils, but doesn't rule out other styles of painting — one of his claims to fame with *Rolf on Art* is that he can turn his hand to the style of a range of artists.

"When I first started out as a youngster I did what all kids do — you draw a map of something and fill it in. I used to do a lot of pencil first then paint over what I'd drawn. It was like doing a map of the world and filling in the pink bits and the orange bits and purple bits. Now I'm able to work in an impressionist way: but I don't feel it's the be-all and end-all."

So, will he focus only on art from now on?

"It's not the only thing I love. I get a terrific buzz out of doing all the other things I do as well — you know, the television performances and the singing. But painting was my first love.

"People come up to me and say, 'If it hadn't been for you doing *Rolf's Cartoon Club*, I would never be in animation, and I'd like to thank you for pointing me in the right direction'. As you can imagine, that gives me an absolutely marvellous feeling." 



PAGE 31 TOP
Sunrise, Taj Mahal
PAGE 31 BOTTOM
Early Morning, Earls Court
OPPOSITE
Autumn Sunlight, Westminster
THIS PAGE TOP
Trust
BELOW
Mending the Nets
All paintings oil on canvas.
Images of Rolf by Brian Aris. © Rolf Harris Enterprises

"I need the paintings to be a likeness of something, even if it's very rough and ready. I want that image to come across to people, and I want them to say 'Wow, I know what that is'"

