

BURRIDGE



“Roadside Attraction”
C I R C U S S E R I E S

These paintings are from real childhood memories from the back seat of my dad's car while he drove me to see the circus. As we got nearer, I read the huge, hand-painted sign - Roadside Attraction up ahead! This was my earliest memory of elation, excitement and anticipation.

My dad rescued me from school one day and took me to my first circus. I remember every second of that day inside the Clyde Beatty - Cole Brothers Circus. The sight of enormous canvas tents in an open field mesmerized me. The aroma of circus tigers, elephants and popcorn mixed in with fresh sawdust stirred me. The aerial performers, costumed clowns and the sound of the live circus band pretty much did it for my impressionable self - I was hooked!

At ten years old, I was a one-man circus act. I loved climbing, swinging and hanging from ropes tied in our backyard trees. In our yard, my dad built a trapeze and a high bar for me. I bought a book on "How to be a Clown." I listened to circus music and practiced magic tricks which included the family rabbit and dog. During the summers, I performed an entire one-man backyard circus act for our neighbors. And, I swear to God this is true - for the Grand Finale performance I hung upside down on a burning suspended bicycle ten feet in the air!

When the circus came to town, I was there early to watch them erect the tents and talk to the "Trapeze Family." Before their rigging was hoisted to the top, I got to practice briefly with them. It was brief, but I did it. I flew in the circus!

I have always loved the excitement - the danger of the circus and the thrill it gave me.

Today, now in my artist studio, painting everyday is very much like performing and flying high above the center ring. It's exciting and dangerous. This time, however, there's no net.

R. Sumidge
July 2010



Light as a Feather



Juggler



Queen of the Big Top



Circus Bird



Elephant's Bow



Red Clown Green Light



Cirque