

*Nicola Russell*



Irish Artist

*"Intimacy (front cover) is so beautiful, the instinctual world of the animal comes to life in Nicola's paintings, something so important to the world at the moment."*

Sasha, Duchess of Abercorn, 2009.

*"Your works are not only important historic documents but fine works of art in their own right."*

Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Bertie Ahern commenting on Nicola's 'Best of Ireland' equine exhibition, 2006.

*"I salute you for devoting your time, talents and energy to improving conditions in your community."*

President Clinton commenting on Nicola's Belfast City of Culture campaign, 2001.



Nicola with Senator Mitchell and Baroness May Blood, Queen's University, 2007.

*"My children love the portraits of horses, as I do. It was a pleasure to see you at the unveiling of May's (May Blood, Baroness Blood of Blackwatertown, MBE) portrait; as usual you did great work."* 2008.

Senator George Mitchell, GBE  
Former US Special Envoy for Northern Ireland Currently the  
US Special Envoy to the Middle East



Nicola with Monty's Pass, 2009

Nicola Russell is internationally recognised as one of the world's foremost equine artists. She also excels in portrait, landscape and floral work. Her paintings are admired by a wide range of people that stretch from presidents to royalty to nobility to horse owners, horse trainers and the dedicated punter. Her paintings are in public and private collections all over the world including those of Queen Elizabeth II and former US President Bill Clinton. Her painting of the great steeplechaser Arkle is in the Irish State collection.

Nicola is driven by an artistic mission to represent the horse in all its personality, power and physicality and in its many moods – a quest originally inspired by an image of Princess Haya of Jordan riding a magnificent

grey horse at the Dublin Horse Show in 1996.

Horses are her favourite subject but Nicola's artistry is also influenced by a love of people, of landscape, of flowers, of birds.

Nicola, a professional artist for 20 years, was born in Northern Ireland and has been based in Belfast for most of her career. She found her *métier* after a year's study in the British School at Rome in 1994, an exciting, fulfilling period when coming face to face with the work of the Old Masters whom she loved such as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo she realised she must put her own distinctive stamp on the world about her.

## Horses

In Nicola's equestrian paintings there is an attention to anatomical detail allied to a sense of power and strength that inescapably bring to mind the great 18th century English painter of horses George Stubbs. From her period in Rome she observed Michelangelo's drawings of horses, marvelling at their muscularity and vigour, figuring how she, too, could capture the essence of the animal.

Her first equestrian painting was influenced by a stunning photograph of Princess Haya, daughter of the late King Hussein of Jordan. It was a picture of the Princess - wife of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin



Princess Haya, 1996, 12" x 15"  
– oil on canvas

Rashid Al Maktoum, ruler of Dubai - competing in the Dublin horse show. "She was amazing," Nicola recalls. "The image of this beautiful red-jacketed woman in control of this mighty grey horse really inspired me."

Nicola is conscious that in concentrating on the horse she is paying tribute to free-spirited animals that are part of Ireland's sporting culture and heritage. She is enthused by the fact that horseracing, the Sport of Kings, crosses geographical and class



boundaries, loved the world over by the common punter as much as by the sheikhs, princes and princesses, kings and queens who own the elite animals.

Her commissioned portrait of Ireland's most-loved horse, the great steeplechaser Arkle, winner of three Cheltenham Gold Cups, is displayed at Farmleigh, the official Irish State guest house in Dublin.

Her Wild Irish Colt hangs in the Windsor Castle collection of Queen Elizabeth II.

*"You have caught very well the 'look' in the face, which was such a distinctive part of him. Call it a 'presence', an outlook or whatever, it is there in your painting of him."*

Jim Dreaper, son of Tom Dreaper, trainer of Arkle, commenting on Nicola's portrait of Arkle, 2008.



*Living Legend (Papillon)*, 2007, 63" x 34" – oil on canvas



*Wild Irish Colt*, 1998, 48" x 36" - oil on canvas

Nicola has painted some of the modern great jump horses such as Aintree Grand National winners Papillon (2000), Monty's Pass (2003), Hedgehunter (2005) and Numbersixvalverde (2006). Her portraits of Cheltenham favourites include War of Attrition, winner of the Gold Cup in 2006 and Brave Inca, Champion Hurdle victor the same year.

Nicola has spent many hours studying horses in stable, paddock and pasture, observing their characteristics, habits and idiosyncrasies. Her achievement in representing the movement, the acceleration, the playfulness of the animal has prompted the real experts such as Grand National winning trainer and broadcaster, Ted Walsh, to praise her work.

Ted - father of the great jump jockey, Ruby - points to Nicola's painting of George Washington with Kieron Fallon aboard

accounting for his rivals in the 2006 English 2,000 Guineas;

*"You could immediately see from the painting that this was a horse and jockey in full flight demolishing the opposition and that's what George Washington and Fallon did in the Guineas. Her paintings just come alive."*

Ted Walsh, Broadcaster and Trainer of Papillon,  
(Grand National Winner, 2000).



*The President (George Washington with Kieron Fallon), 2006, 54" x 27" – oil on canvas*



*St Patrick's Triumph* (War of Attrition with Conor O'Dwyer), 2006, 60" x 41" – oil on canvas

*"It looks like a remarkable likeness."*

Michael O'Leary, CEO, Ryanair, on the painting of his horse War of Attrition, 2006.



Horse of the Year (Brave Inca), 2006, 60" x 30" – oil on canvas

*"Top quality horses deserve to be portrayed by a high class artist... in Nicola Russell you have such a person."*

Ted Walsh (RTE and Channel 4 racing correspondent and Grand National Winning Trainer), 2009.



Enigma, 2007, 52" x 36" – oil on canvas

*"Your work is certainly most striking, you capture the majesty of the thoroughbred extremely well."*

Henry Beeby, CEO, Goffs, Ireland, 2008.



Intimacy (Nickname & Numbersixvalverde), 2007, 87" x 40" - oil on canvas

*"Winning the Aintree Grand National in 2006 has enabled me to realise a lifetime dream. Now that Numbersixvalverde has retired along with one of my other stablestars Nickname (the latter having taken up Stud duties in France), I am privileged to have paintings of both by Nicola Russell. They have kept the very special memories of these two great servants alive and vivid for me. Nicola captured their physique and personalities so perfectly. They make me smile each time I look at them. For that I thank you Nicola."*

Martin Brassil, Trainer of Numbersixvalverde and Nickname, 2009.



*Skyrocket*, 2007, 28.5" x 28.5" – oil on canvas



*Animus*, 2004, 65" x 65" – oil on canvas

*"I truly believe artist Nicola Russell possesses an incredibly innate ability to capture the very essence of a horse's being. In Nicola you have an artist of unrivalled capability."*

Brian Polly, Irish Racehorse Owner's Association, 2008.



White Spirit, 2006, 24" x 16" – oil on canvas



Curiosity, 2006, 54" x 27" – oil on canvas



Buckin' n' Fartin' (Numbersixvalverde), 2007,  
23.5" x 16" – oil on canvas

*"I really admire your work, you really put life  
into your subjects...  
those wonderful horses brilliantly depicted in your  
paintings are indeed excellent."*

Lord Rana, MBE, 2006.

*"It's really outstanding - it's just what I wanted - the likeness of the horse is wonderful."*

Noel Murphy, who commissioned the painting and member of the Dee Racing syndicate – owner of Monty's Pass.



*Monty's Pass with Barry Geraghty, 2009, 65" x 55" – oil on canvas*

## Portraiture

Nicola is also an accomplished portrait artist whose subjects range from members of her family, to children, to politicians whom she admires for their positive roles in promoting and helping achieve peace in Ireland. In 1997 Nicola's portrait of President Bill Clinton was unveiled by former US Senator George Mitchell, who helped broker the Good Friday Agreement, a portrait that is now in President Clinton's collection. When President Clinton visited Northern Ireland in 2000 she presented him with a painting of the Fermanagh lakelands - home to his Irish ancestors, the Cassidys.



President Clinton, 1997, 24" x 24"  
- oil on canvas

*"I have decided to give the portrait to President Clinton.  
I am certain that he will be very pleased and I suspect  
that he will be just as impressed with your artistry as I am."*

Senator George Mitchell, GBE, 1997.

Nicola also painted the late Dr Mo Mowlam who was British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland at the time of the historic peace settlement in Belfast on Good Friday 1998. It was a portrait that the popular and unconventional Mo loved, recognising that it reflected her warmth, exuberance and rather anarchic personality. Nicola's portrait of Baroness May Blood of Blackwatertown, MBE, hangs in the Great Hall of Queen's University, Belfast. Nicola's self-portrait is displayed in the Irish National Portrait Collection in the University of Limerick.



*"My grateful thanks for making such a great job of my portrait (how you managed it is beyond me!)"*

Baroness May Blood, MBE, 2007.

May Blood, Baroness of Blackwatern town, MBE, 2007,  
36" x 36" – oil on canvas

*"I wanted to thank you for the absolutely fabulous painting of Baroness May Blood. I could not get over the warmth of the picture and the remarkable resemblance to May. It was fantastic. You are a truly wonderful artist and I commend you."*

Geraldine Tigchelaar, OBE, Chair of Integrated  
Education Fund, 2007.

*"My wife and I spent last weekend with Dr Mowlam and I can assure you that she loved the painting."*

Lord Puttnam of Queensgate, CBE, 1999



Dr Mo Mowlam, 1999, 36" x 36"  
– oil on canvas

## Flowers/Birds

There were two other key periods in Nicola's creative development. This was when she was artist in residence at two of Ireland's great houses and gardens, first at Mount Stewart in Co Down and then at Powerscourt in Co Wicklow. It was in these magnificent settings that Nicola discovered the mystery of creation inherent in a simple flower. "At the time it was a revelation to see just how phenomenal, how beautiful, how physical they are," she says.

She started off with small canvases, slowly, joyfully graduating to wonderful, grand expansive paintings of orchids, peonies, and gladioli.



*Hot Tulip*, 2008, 64" x 64"  
- oil on canvas



*Yellowhammer*, 2009, 36" x 36"  
- oil on canvas

With dashes of reds, pinks, purples and whites these heavily textured oil paintings are beautiful and unique in the way a special vibrant light plays on the flowers and in the sheer energy that pulsates from the canvas. Twenty of these paintings were displayed in the windows of Dublin's premier fashion store, Brown Thomas on Grafton Street in 1999, the first time the store held such an exhibition.

Nicola delights in painting birds and has focussed recently on conveying the life and beauty that is threatened by climate change in such species as yellowhammer, house sparrow, lapwing and curlew.



*Wisteria at Mount Stewart*, 2000, 65" x 65" – oil on canvas



*Ardenode Peach*, 2006, 24' x 26'' - oil on canvas



*Hedgehunter*, 2007, 32'' x 16'' - oil on canvas



*Harmony*, 2007, 26'' x 22'' - oil on canvas

Nicola is highly sought after for large scale commissions and special projects. From original artwork and limited edition prints to wine labels and greeting cards. Nicola's stunning art is uniquely exclusive and greatly coveted.

Nicola is a keen supporter of Integrated Education and enthusiastically encourages young artistic talent.

## *Nicola Russell*

- British School at Rome scholar
- One of the world's foremost equine painters
- Painting of Arkle in the Irish State Guesthouse, Dublin
- 'Wild Irish Colt' in Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's collection
- Portrait of President Bill Clinton in his collection, USA
- Artwork in private and public ownership around the world
- Celebrated for portraiture, flowers and birds
- Specialises in large commissions

***Nicola Russell Studio***

37 Queen Street  
Belfast BT1 6EA  
Northern Ireland  
United Kingdom

t: +44(0) 2890 314444  
m: +44(0) 7877309684  
e: nicolarussell@ireland.com

**[nicolarussell.com](http://nicolarussell.com)**



*National Hero* (Numbersixvalverde), 2006, 36" x 36" – oil on canvas