

Guralnick

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lot of times there might be an hour preamble, which was always fascinating, in which he kind of mapped out the philosophical territory. But everything was fair game.

Did you ever stop being the reporter or would you call your relationship with Phillips a true friendship?

As Sam said to me more than once, “My son Knox loved you from the time he first met you. But I didn’t.” His view was, don’t let people get too close. Sometimes people portray this as a 24-year friendship, but it wasn’t. Basically I came originally to talk to him about the music, but Sam laid out a vision of freedom and nonconformity and individualism in the extreme—I’m sure he would be saying it even more loudly today. This book is not a record of friendship, though over the years I would say our friendship grew. But it was a wonderful opportunity to observe and portray this person who had not only accomplished so much but was a truly remarkable man in his own right. He might tell you about the eight electroshock treatments he had in 1951, because he thought mental illness was nothing to be ashamed of. And yet he was the most positive person I ever met. I’ve never interviewed anyone with the idea of getting something out of them they didn’t want to tell. And I try never to forget that I’m there for subjects, they’re not there for me.

Do you think Phillips would like the book?

I think he’d love the book. I don’t mean that immodestly. I tried to write a book that was sort of like a great epic novel—intimate, comic, and tragic.

TV

Expanding TV’s Idea of Family

From *Queer as Folk* to *The Fosters*, Peter Paige is making prime time more inclusive | BY JOEL BROWN

WE ARE A SOCIETY OBSESSED with our own reflection, says Peter Paige, “only the mirror we are looking in is the 42-inch plasma in our living rooms. We all want to be reflected there, and when we don’t see ourselves, we feel invisible.”

For much of his Hollywood career, the actor, writer, and director has striven to make gay people more visible on television. He played Emmett Honeycutt on Showtime’s groundbreaking *Queer as Folk* and is now a creator and executive producer of

ABC Family’s *The Fosters*, an award-winning series about an interracial lesbian couple and their blended family.

“As a kid I was so desperate to be a part of something, to feel validated by companionship,” says Paige (CFA’91). “I was an only child and we moved a lot, so I never had that sort of privilege of regional or ethnic identity that a lot of people cling to. Being gay gave me a little bit of that, but it wasn’t something I saw reflected in the world.”

Or on TV. Although gay

people occasionally showed up on talk shows like *Ricki Lake* and *Donahue*, gay characters on scripted series tended to serve as either comic relief with obvious—but unacknowledged—sexuality (Paul Lynde, Dom DeLuise) or as guest stars in “message episodes,” such as Archie Bunker’s linebacker friend Steve on *All in the Family*.

Paige knew he was part of a paradigm shift when, as a young actor in Hollywood, he auditioned for the out, proud, and often sexually



Peter Paige (far left) is the cocreator and executive producer of the ABC Family drama *The Fosters*, which follows an interracial lesbian couple as they raise their family.

Gallery

explicit *Queer as Folk*. Based on a British series, the show followed the lives of a group of gay men in Pittsburgh. It presented a rounded portrait of a gay peer group, dramatizing their romances, disputes, and bedroom behavior as matter-of-factly as if they were the Carringtons or the “Friends.”

Paige’s character, Emmett, was funny, flamboyant, and highly sexual, with a turn as a porn actor and an affair with a closeted pro quarterback among his storylines. *Queer as Folk*, which ran from 2000 to 2005, was part of a TV continuum from *Ellen* to *Will & Grace* to *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* that Paige believes helped shape audiences’ evolving attitudes toward the LGBTQ community.

Paige had change in mind when he and writing partner Brad Bredeweg created *The Fosters*. The show follows police officer Stef Foster (Teri Polo) and school administrator Lena Adams (Sherri Saum) as they raise their brood of biological, adopted, and foster children, mostly teenagers whose romances, identity issues, and acting out provide the drama. While the show doesn’t feature the sex romps that made *Queer as Folk* a sensation, the milder domestic drama may have an even more significant impact on viewers, Paige says.

“When fans of *Queer as Folk* see me, they feel like they know me, like I was at the gay bar with them just last week,” Paige says. “Now, with *The Fosters*, we get stopped by moms saying, ‘Thank you, I never thought I’d see my family on TV,’ and 13-year-old kids saying, ‘I never thought I’d see my parents on TV.’”



NEW WORK FROM PAINTER PERI SCHWARTZ

Peri Schwartz (CFA’73), whose primary subject is the interior of her studio in New Rochelle, N.Y., will show her work in the solo exhibition *Constructing from Life* March 4 to 26, 2016, at the Page Bond Gallery in Richmond, Va. Last fall, she collaborated with Manhattan master printer Gregory Burnet on a color etching that was based on one of Schwartz’s monotypes. Creating the

etching, was “a way for me to get out of my studio and work in techniques that are not as natural and direct as drawing and painting,” says Schwartz, who has a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Boston University and a Master of Fine Arts from Queens College. “The immediacy is substituted with a more analytical process. A print goes through different states, and there is a clear record of how it develops. Color is much different in an etching, and that informs

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Studio XXXVII
52” x 44”
Oil on canvas
2015

how I think of color when I return to painting. I am also keenly aware of the tradition of painters who make prints, and would like to be a part of it.” See more of Schwartz’s art, and watch a video of her collaboration with Burnet on the color etching, at perischwartz.com.