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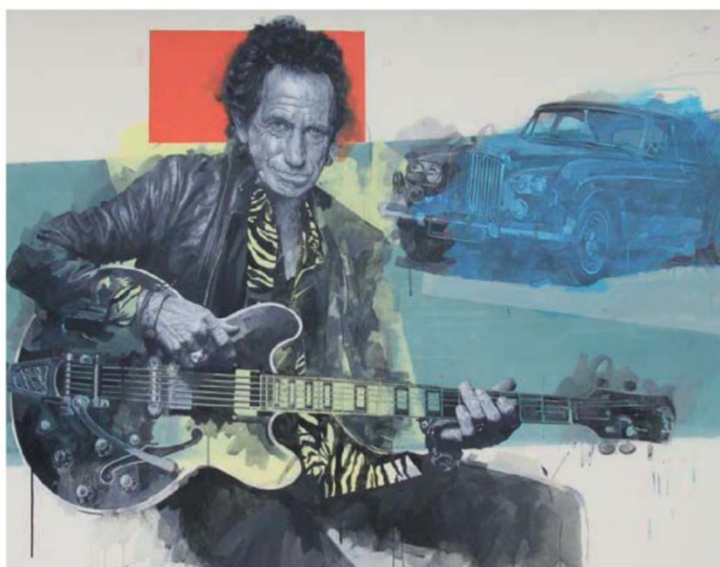


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From top: depiction of BB King and '53 Cadillac was the first piece in Rose's superb new collection, and scooped him the Peter Helck award at the AFAS show in California; fantastic study of Keith Richards with his much-loved Bentley S3 Continental 'Blue Lena' in the background (see C&SC, October 2015)

Stanley Rose

Painter's homage to musicians and classics

The death of blues guitar legend BB King in May 2015 prompted a new direction for Stanley Rose, and his collection featuring musicians and cars has become a fast-selling series over the past year. "I'd just moved to a new studio in Burgundy, and wanted fresh inspiration," says Rose. "As a music fan, the death of King really moved me and I wanted to do a tribute painting."

Rose worked up the base sketch using acrylics on a huge 5ft canvas, the image depicting a seated King, his favourite Gibson 'Lucille' and a '53 Cadillac. Once happy with the likeness and composition, he then started the final study in oils.

Working in a converted mill with his favourite blues radio station playing, Rose finished the dramatic piece in early summer. It was then sent to California for its debut at the Automotive Fine Art Society show

at Pebble Beach, where it won the Peter Helck award: "That means a great deal because it's voted for by the other exhibiting artists."

The success of the composition kicked off a bold series of portraits, which has so far included such greats as Muddy Waters and John Lee Hooker: "It's a real challenge to capture the likeness of famous people, particularly deceased, because you're dependent on reference photos. Previously, I've used friends to sit for my portraits. I still borrow accessories – both guitars and vintage clothes – because I like my compositions to be original. I'm continually looking for great hands to model for the new paintings."

The blues series has expanded to include the Rolling Stones – a study of Keith Richards with his Bentley Continental 'Blue Lena', plus a double portrait of Richards and



Buick is a popular theme in the blues legend portrait series, including this great likeness of John Lee Hooker with '52 Roadmaster. Below: fine rendition of Muddy Waters with 1939 model

Mick Jagger with his Morgan Plus 8. "I've done portraits of Bruce Springsteen in the past," says Rose, "but this series could run and run." From Robert Johnson with a Hudson to Eric Clapton with any number of Ferraris, it will be fascinating to see who inspires him next.

Although born in England, Rose has lived in France since 1984, and his studios have ranged from Dutch barges to a 14th-century château: "The latest is wonderful because the mill wheel is still working."

Besides beaver away in his idyllic retreat, he is heavily involved with promoting other painters as president of Artist Auto International. The group's main focus is at Rétromobile in Paris, where Rose has exhibited since 1991. **MW**

Prices start at €8000. For further details, see www.stanley-rose.com

