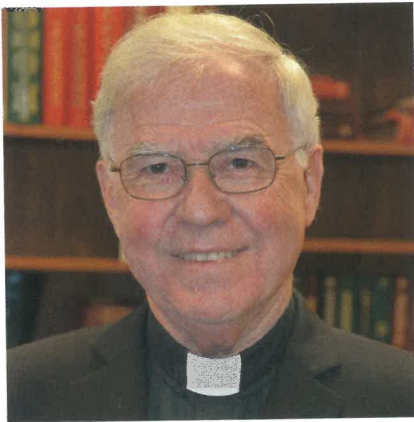


Paul Plante

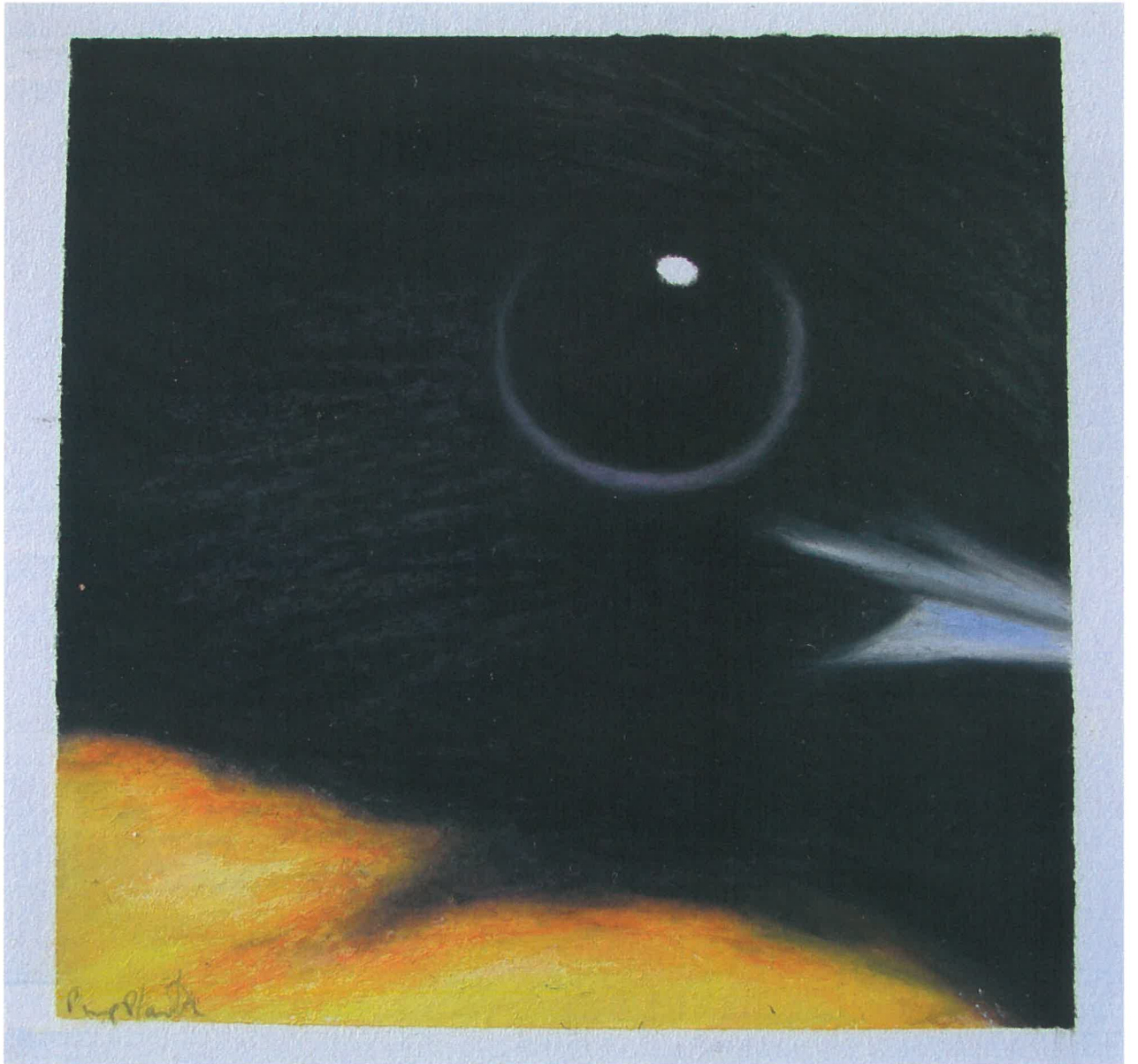


Father Plante is pastor at Our Lady of the Lakes parish in Oquossoc. He earned his BA in philosophy from University of Montreal in 1964, and a BA in theology in 1966 and licentiate in sacred theology in 1968 from St. Paul University in Ottawa, Canada. In 1987 he earned a BFA in painting at Portland School of Art (now Maine College of Art). Plante's artwork has appeared in solo exhibitions at such venues as Caldbeck Gallery in Rockland, Mixed Greens Gallery in New York City, Colby College Museum of Art in Waterville, Maine Audubon Society in Falmouth, and Farnsworth Art Museum in Rockland. He has also participated in group exhibitions at venues including Everhart Museum of Natural History, Science, and Art in Scranton, Pennsylvania, the Mississippi Museum of Natural History, and Gleason Fine Art in Portland. Plante's work can be seen at Caldbeck Gallery, Gleason Fine Art, and Brunswick's Bayview Gallery.

Plante has a deep appreciation of art. "I think it's something in my genes," he says. "I've always been creative, expressing myself in one way or another." Although his inspiration has "almost always been nature," Plante has experimented with different styles, from abstract to landscape, as well as different subjects, such as fruit, fish, and other animals. But birds have always held a certain charm for Plante, who recalls being enchanted by them from a very young age. If he saw a bird, he was compelled to identify it and study its characteristics, always striving to see new species. As birds are elusive creatures that we are rarely able to come into close contact with, Plante's aim is to bring birds closer to himself and, in turn, allow viewers the same joy of discovery through his art. Using oil pastels, Plante focuses on the vibrancy of the birds' coloring and the enticing mystery of their eyes.

"The eye is a tremendous focus in terms of our own human communication," Plante says. "I think there is something very real

in eye contact." Even sharing a moment of eye contact with an animal can give a profound feeling of connection, and it is that which Plante captures in his work. "Through this special eye contact I bring the bird into one's awareness," he says. As the point of focus, Plante always begins with the eye and then incorporates the bird's coloring and patterns around that. *Baltimore Oriole* is particularly striking in its contrast—the deep sheen of the black feathers and the flaming brilliance of the orange streak. A point of light gives depth to the eye, which lends verisimilitude: the viewer feels as though he or she has made true eye contact with the bird. It is utterly mesmerizing. "I find it very mysterious that something convex invites us inward, as if it were concave," says Plante.



Baltimore Oriole, oil pastel on paper, 4.5" x 4.5"