

**Nicole Farhi** writes: *On our way to a literary festival in Paraty, Brazil, David and I stopped in São Paulo where he was giving a lecture to young aspiring playwrights.*



# Drinkstone Park

**W**e used our free time to go and see the Museum of Art.

In one room dedicated to British landscapes, I was drawn to a very early painting by Thomas Gainsborough *Drinkstone Park the Woods of Cornard*. The Suffolk rural countryside surrounding his hometown Sudbury was going to be his main subject and painting landscapes would remain his first love, even though he made his living as a portrait painter.

Gainsborough was just 20 years old when he painted this landscape, but this very early work is significant as it encompasses all the qualities to be found later in most of his landscape paintings: Subject, composition and content are all coming together in a new way.

Open space, varied woodland, huge sky, picturesque waterway, road and tracks have fired his imagination. In this particular painting, he has used dark pigment in the foreground to accentuate the main section of rutted tracks and foliage as it emerges from a forested area behind. Following the tracks, your eyes are drawn to a rustic figure probably a traveller resting under a tree while on the other side of the road the cattle are drinking from the pond. The painting



**OPPOSITE:** Anne Purkiss, NICOLE FARHI, DESIGNER, SCULPTOR

**LEFT:** Thomas Gainsborough, DRINKSTONE PARK, oil on canvas

emanates peace and serenity. As the distance grows, the colours in the painting get paler, in parts almost faded. The subtle delicate tonality in which Gainsborough has drawn the fully rounded cumulus which are appearing from behind the trees enhances their volume and demonstrates Gainsborough's exploration of perspective and his extraordinary skill.

By simply modifying the tone, he leads the eye of the viewer to the distant view.

One of the reasons I chose this painting is because of my encounter with Gainsborough's birthplace and home. I was invited to his house last Spring and travelled to Sudbury by train which gave me time to admire the beautiful scenic Suffolk landscape. During this visit I was asked to sculpt his bust.

I began to explore his work, his love for his birthplace and his views on his fellow men and the society of the time. They are all in this exquisite landscape.



**ABOVE:** Nicole Farhi, BRONZE BUST OF THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH, generously funded by Anna Wintour