

MASTERPIECES  
of  
COLORADO  
A RICH LEGACY OF LANDSCAPE PAINTING



CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS STATEMENTS

JOE ARNOLD (b. 1954)

*"In Philadelphia College of Art I was exposed to the whole gamut of stylistic and philosophical artistic issues. I experimented in my own work with many "isms". Plein-air work was to me at the time simply a way to learn how to paint. It was a starting point, not an end in itself. On my trips into the mountains I never brought so much as a pencil or a camera. But gradually the lure to paint the landscape was irresistible, and in the end it was a far greater challenge than the mountaineering. To really paint a landscape well was a more serious enterprise than I had imagined; completely absorbing for a lifetime. In seeking a unique approach to the subject I kept going back to the mountaineering views.*

*A really great painting transcends matters of style and taste. It also transcends the subject matter. I have never been to Giverny or seen windmills on the Zider-Zee, or those strange pointy mountains of Southern China, but Monet, Rembrandt and Sung Dynasty landscapes move me deeply. Even if you've never been to the top of Longs Peak I hope my paintings can move the viewer, and point to some epic adventure of the soul on its journey."*

Joe Arnold returned to Wyoming in 1980 after graduating from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. He is the fifth of seven generations of Arnolds to live in Laramie. A mountaineer and technical climber, Arnold frequents the highest peaks of the Rocky Mountains of Colorado to take in, study and paint the high altitude panoramas that have earned him the reputation as the 'plein air artist of thin air'.

CLYDE ASPEVIG (b. 1951)

*"I choose to paint realistic landscapes because I was drawn to recreating nature in a way that appealed to my own ideas, senses and intellect. I am firmly convinced that a literal naturalistic painting can still satisfy the passions of an intellectual mind. Inventing your own concept of realism is the first and most important step in achieving that goal.*

*My work is the culmination of many years of painting. Look deeper into the layers of paint and you begin to see thoughts woven together, idea by idea, until an image appears. Or start with the image and work backwards. Look at the grass, the water, the mountains and skies and you begin to see transparent glazes,*

*scumbling, and impasto – abstract forms from which the symbols of realism emerge.*

*Through the whole process of painting, the artist suspends in time a fleeting moment that allows our senses to be played repeatedly. Our lives become richer and more meaningful through our visual senses."*

Clyde Aspevig grew up in northern Montana where he nurtured his love of the land on walks through the prairies past the natural mosaic of color and textures of glaciated rocks, grasses and forbs. His paintings of the West are personal evocations of the places that he perceives as disappearing during his lifetime – subjects worthy of both artistic and social preservation. Aspevig, who lived in Colorado for 12 years before moving back to Montana, has always had great passion for painting the Rocky Mountains and plains.

GORDON BROWN (b. 1962)

*"Why do I paint landscape? Instinct, I guess. I don't give it much thought, I just do it with an open mind, not bound by rules. If I had to explain what it is about the landscape that makes me want to paint it, I'd say I'm drawn to skies and light -- the movement and the different moods of the sky and how the light catches my eye. The land and the sky affect each other and are constantly changing with the atmosphere. When I paint outside, I try to record and reveal the natural beauty of the landscape as faithfully as possible. But when I work in the studio, it's different.*

*In the studio, diversity is the key. Design, shapes, texture, surface quality – when all those things are playing against each other it gives a painting strength and harmony. And, it's the freedom to invent that takes painting the landscape from the literal copying of a photograph to making something that allows the eye to put things there, allows people to make up their own interpretation. In other words, I take the actual landscape and transform it to make compositions that the viewer will, hopefully, never get tired of.*

*There are many images of the land that I have filed away in my mind and will never be able to act upon because I always want to see new things. As I gather more experiences, I'm even more excited to use them in the next painting. Ultimately, though, I always want to seize the moment when all the elements of the land are working together and try to translate it into painting."*

Born and raised in Grand Junction, Gordon Brown's painting instruction began in his youth when an uncle gave him his first set of oil paints and another bought his first paintings, encouraging him to continue in his career path. Primarily self-taught, Brown cites the tonalist painters of the nineteenth century as highly influential. Brown spends a great deal of time in the field studying his subject matter, doing small oil studies and taking photos for reference, however, these materials often bear little resemblance to the canvases he ultimately produces.

His work is in important collections around the world including that of the Denver Art Museum.

LEN CHMIEL (b. 1942)

*"Landscape is malleable, quite plastic, given that it can be manipulated by my determination to engage my modernist sensibilities combined with long study of tradition, while still remaining identifiable. The result must reflect my personal convictions. It's a recipe of observation, experimentation, and hopefully, enough skill and craftsmanship to bring the ingredients into harmony. Tradition is the glue, dialog with the subject the connection, and unfettered release of ego the conceit."*

There is an intimacy and honesty to the subjects Len Chmiel chooses, so that each painting is an expression of himself. Landscape is a tool he uses to stretch the truth past actual representation, to emphasize the importance and subtlety of the land. And, though his subject matter is recognizable, his intentions are often quite different.

Since his days as an illustrator some 30 years ago, Chmiel has immersed himself in understanding and depicting the land he has come to know by 'getting his hands muddy' gardening, tending his grape vines and fruit trees, making wine and hunting. Chmiel makes his home in Hotchkiss, Colorado. Chmiel works outdoors a great deal, frequently taking trips dedicated to painting on location. His travels have taken him to England, Scotland, and across Europe, into Mexico, Guatemala, and Uruguay, as far away as Nepal and Thailand, and as close to home as his own backyard on a butte in Hotchkiss, Colorado where some 60 head of elk make freely graze. When he returns to his studio, his small on the spot paintings often serve as the genesis for Chmiel's larger compositions. Chmiel has had numerous sell out one-man shows, is listed in *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in the West*. He has been featured several times in *Southwest Art*, as well as in *Business Week*, *Western Art Digest*, and *American Artists Magazine*. His work has been collected by museums and major corporations across the United States and can be seen in such prestigious shows as the Prix de West Invitational.

MARK DAILY (b. 1944)

*"I paint landscape to both mark my experience of nature and to share it. The drama of light and shadow, the subtle beauty of atmospheric effects, the infinity of the sky, ancient rocks and moving water, any one of these elements would be enough to inspire a landscape painting. Being in nature and finding something enjoyable and artistically compelling creates an impulse to try and convey everything that not only my five senses can process, but also how I felt! However, what I can do with paint and canvas must be reduced to a visual statement, and usually just the essentials of that. Over the years I've noticed the effect of*

*those essentials produce a wide variety of interpretation. The light and color in any landscape can portray far more than the subject itself. For example, with keen observation, an artist can make a powerful seasonal reference, one of the strong gateways to a viewer's interaction and one I'm especially fond of. Because so many events in our lives are intertwined with specific seasonal references, they can invite connection and participation of a different kind for each viewer. I feel as many artists do, that expressing my fascination with the landscape and nature is motivating and important. The elements in nature, the weather, the seasons, and all the beauty we encounter outdoors are a constantly changing and challenging opportunity to create with."*

Although he is known for his inspired compositions of man-made objects in his intimate and intriguing still life paintings, Mark Daily can't help but return to his roots as a *plein air* painter in touch with the drama of the outdoors. Daily's art reflects the most basic human longing for connection to pure unadulterated nature. Regardless of the location depicted, the sky, the earth or the sea, in all their revelatory aspects, became his ultimate muse. And more than just an accurate depiction of the reflection and refraction of light, Daily is able through holistic compositions to evoke the divine quality he feels in nature. Indeed, in a number of paintings of mountain streams, the viewer realizes that as they are looking at the subtle reflections in the water they are actually seeing the sky and light itself in a new way. This Colorado-based painter is so highly attuned to the power of light in nature that he finds himself painting the sky while actually painting a stream and in the process instinctively grasping the encompassing power of the natural world. In this way Daily, who most would consider a "realist," is actually painting abstract paintings, distilling his experience of his potent interaction with the air, the weather, and above all the seasons into a pure depiction of one's deep connection to the environment. -Alex Hanna, Nedra Matteucci Gallery

JOELLYN DUESBERRY (b. 1944)

*"When I moved west two decades ago, the arid sculptural light of Western landscape jolted me into a new language of quirky forms and colors unlike any prior stimulus from former humid Eastern landscapes where everything shares edges. It was as if a veil had lifted to reveal the abstract geometries of nature present there all along, while I struggled... self-taught, with the time-honored tensions of geometry in depth and geometry on the surface of a composition. My peculiar and personal new forms were born of memories of my earliest sense impressions and the urge to impose consoling structure upon them. The odd corners, tangles, and, to me, exotically illuminated forms of desert, plains, and mountains resonated with the bliss and terrors of deep pre-verbal memory more acutely in the West. The passion to paint the West, it was as much coming home to my own mental furniture, as it was a celebration of the rocks and trees and waters, which galvanized my attention here. Thus, what hankers for expression of the whole self, but eludes me in words has at last alighted upon Western*

*landscape forms with a high-voltage necessity to keep painting them on and on..."*

Duesberry divides her time between studios in Denver, Colorado and Millbrook, New York, and has painted plein-air around the world for 40 plus years. She began exhibiting in New York City in 1979, and has since had ten New York solo exhibitions, with recent retrospectives at the Denver Art Museum in January 2006, titled "Joellyn Duesberry: Three Decades in Paint" and the Century Association travelling to Smith College.

JOHN O. ENCINIAS (b. 1949)

*"Painting the landscape is my way to express myself and the beauty that surrounds us everyday. My intent is to simply paint an impression of what's in front of me. Not to literally copy nature, but to convey a certain feeling of what I'm painting. In this painting of Berkeley Park, I wanted to capture the colors of an autumn evening -- the fading light -- but more importantly, I wanted to portray the quiet, alone feeling of being with nature. A photograph can be very static and lifeless as compared to a painting done of the same scene. To recompose nature, to move things around, subdue certain colors and objects that is something the camera cannot do."*

John Encinias was born near Santa Fe, NM in 1949. His family moved to Colorado where he finished high school and lives today. Self-taught, he started painting at the age of fifteen and began working as a full-time professional artist in 1975. He prefers painting directly from various subjects and describes his technique as impressionistic realism. Encinias` many exhibitions include consecutive showings at the National Academy of Western Art/Prix de West since 1985, a one-man show at the Frye Museum in Seattle, Washington, and a one-man show at the Birger Sandzen Memorial Gallery in Lindsborg, Kansas. His work has also been featured in shows at the National Wildlife Art Museum in Jackson, Wyoming, the Albuquerque Museum in New Mexico, the Loveland Museum in Colorado, the Coors Western Art Exhibit, as well as in the American Embassy in Rome, Italy. His paintings are in numerous private and corporate collections, including the Frye Art Museum, the Millicent Rogers Museum, Taos, New Mexico, the Wichita Art Association, Kansas and the Hutchinson Art Association, Kansas.

TRACY FELIX (b. 1957)

*"The landscape has been a favorite subject in art for thousands of years. Many artists have tried to capture the emotion they feel from nature and I, too, am exploring this long tradition with my paintings. I feel very much a part of nature and live in awe of it."*

*I was born near the Sangre de Cristos mountains in the San Luis Valley, Colorado and grew up under the looming summit of Pikes Peak in Colorado Springs. My whole life has been spent hiking and skiing in the mountains that I feel so much a part of. My paintings are all about expressing my love for the Western landscape. The mountain peaks, wild cloud forms, the expansive sky and incredible geology are all the ingredients I use to create a painting.*

*I want the viewer to draw his or her own perceptions about my work from the paintings themselves. Everyone sees and feels something different in them, just as in nature."*

Tracy Felix was born near the town of Center, Colorado in the San Luis Valley where his father's family owned a farm. At the age of six they moved to Colorado Springs – his mother's family came to the Springs in 1919. He grew up there and moved to Manitou Springs after marrying his wife Sushe. In 2004 the couple moved to the Denver Metro area to be closer to the contemporary art scene that they have been a part of since the early 1980's.

CHARLES FORSMAN (b. 1944)

*"Nothing in a solitary landscape seems innocent to me. Such places are too dense with experience and portent and promise. The feeling that I'm being watched or summoned or told something may be as strong as the conviction that I am surrounded by indifference. Human impact is a constant. This may be sensed as a silent presence or noted in an eroded streambed or it might be as draconian as a strip mine or suburban shopping mall. An increasingly impacted place will eventually cross a threshold into our commonplace - the world of commerce and habitation. Later, it may sink into neglect and cross a threshold again into solitude, shifting our attention from schedules and consumption to the uncertainty of contemplation. Such places may seem haunted and bewildering - as elusive as riddles. Whether by design or unconscious impulse, these thresholds appear again and again in my paintings.*

*Landscape painting is still most often an affirmative tradition and there is a lot to be said for celebrating the beauty of nature. It requires a lot of editing, however. I feel more honest in leaving things messy. I live in a magnificent and troubled natural environment. It seems natural for me to paint the pain along with the wonder. It's my nature."*

A native of western Idaho, Forsman has been Professor of Fine Art-Painting at the University of Colorado, Boulder since 1971. He has work in the permanent collections of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Denver Art Museum, among many others. "Rightly or wrongly," he says, "I have always held a working assumption that art and nature are inextricably bound and must have sprung from parallel convulsions. Beauty and honesty are uneasy bedfellows. Still, I am trying to make honest pictures that are also beautiful because the West is still the landscape of hope."

NED JACOB (b. 1938)

*"Looking over my shoulder at my career spanning fifty years – mostly spent in the Rocky Mountain West – the best of times by far were the happy hours spent working out of doors. Ever a challenging and elusive subject, nature is never still. Each location, every hour in all seasons, shaped and colored by changing light and weather, demands the workman's full arsenal of technical skills, keen powers of observation and the aesthetic sensitivities of a poet. I consider the finished canvas successful only when the theme, the artist and the medium speak with equal voice and clarity. The difficulty of execution erased through the fluency of the practiced brush. As Whistler said, "Painting is hard work. The artistry comes in making it look easy."*

Ned Jacob is a distinguished artist and lecturer known for his adherence to traditional values of craftsmanship and excellence. In a career spanning four decades, Jacob's search for subjects has taken him to five continents, with resulting works in numerous public and private collections. To date, his pictures have been exhibited in more than fifty museums and galleries worldwide, and he has been profiled in such publications as *American Artist*, *Southwest Art*, *Business Week*, as well as in the award winning monograph by Sandra Dallas, published by Fenn Gallery, Santa Fe in 1979. He is known as an outspoken advocate for a return to traditional aesthetic values of fine craftsmanship and excellence in the arts, devoting much of his time and energy to lecturing and encouraging the younger generation who must one day "carry the torch". Jacob moved to Denver in 1966, and became a driving force in the arts during his years in Colorado.

KAREN KITCHEL (b. 1957)

*"'Landscape' is a fantastic, complicated idea, not just something to look at, or a place we inhabit. It's a bottomless pit of human activity, priorities, mistakes, dreams, and desires. Perhaps because I live in the west, my attraction to working with landscape imagery is very strong. Not because the land is so beautiful, which indeed it is, but because the tradition of European exploration and discovery is so recent here. My need to understand, document, and bear witness to the place I inhabit demands unlimited discipline and honesty about what is really here, right now. The western landscape also has had a long-time starring role in some of our most American dramas, which makes it very potent--not at all a neutral subject. I'm thinking of immigration and migration, of exploration and exploitation, and development of all kinds. As Wallace Stegner so eloquently put it: '...the west exists as a geography of hope'; it has been, and remains, a very powerful stage.*

*My work focuses on contemporary land use, and like today's America--a complex grid of property lines, roads, and subdivisions--I create epic, horizonless*

*landscapes of many small parts. I make frequent use of the grid, relying on it for its cultural and economic symbolism. It refers to real estate, development, and the divisions that make up contemporary landscape. The fragmentation embodied in these paintings speaks to the same fractures in the mythic American Landscape.*

*Of this body of work, Kitchel wrote: Weeds are "plants out of place", categorized according to shifting human inconvenience and investments, not any fixed botanical order. As the series title suggests, they persist where planned landscapes fail and native landscapes are undermined, exhibiting stunning persistence and longevity in a variety of adverse conditions."*

Karen Kitchel received a B.A. in art from Kalamazoo College in Michigan, after spending her Junior year in Madrid and the Prado Museum, studying the works of Goya and Velazquez. She came west in 1979 to attend Claremont Graduate School in southern California, earning her M.F.A. in painting in 1982. Working in the Rocky Mountain region since 1990, Kitchel lived and worked in downtown Denver from 1997-2003, and is represented in numerous local private and public collections. She returns to the area regularly, continuing to exhibit at Robischon Gallery in Denver, and to work with the Ucross Foundation in Clearmont, Wyoming. She now lives and works in the foothills of the San Gabriel mountains in northern Los Angeles.

MICHAEL LYNCH (b. 1950)

*"Why the Landscape? My favorite quote on the subject is by artist and author Charles Lewis Hind from his wonderful 1904 book titled "Adventures Among Pictures":*

*"To me, here, in this place of skies, and seas, and winter sunlight making hills and meadows radiant, one way calls out insistently from the rest- the way of landscape and marine painting; that way that is rooted in the love of nature, to which the artist brings a personality that selects, composes, and makes harmonious beauty out of the chaos of nature's rough - ridden opulence."*

Michael J. Lynch is a Denver native who, after having lived and worked in both the Midwest and on the East Coast, returned to Colorado in 1976 to pursue a full time art career. Lynch has been a full member of the National Academy of Western Art, an Artists of America Master, a long standing participant in the Coor's Invitational Art Exhibit, and a member of the Chelsea Arts Club in London. His work has appeared in many art publications including the cover of American Artist Magazine, Southwest Art, Midwest Art, Art of the West, The Santa Fean, and Focus Santa Fe. He has had numerous one-man exhibits including the John Pence Gallery in San Francisco , Fenn Gallery in Santa Fe, and Keating Fine Art in Aspen. He has work in many public and private collections throughout this country as well as those in Holland, England, and Japan. Several of his pieces

have recently been acquired by the U. S. Ambassador to the Netherlands for his residence in The Hague.

Although known mostly for his landscapes, Lynch has had wide experience with portraiture, figure work, and cityscapes. Preferring to work from nature, he paints the greater part of his work on location, and has taught many outdoor painting workshops over the years. Lynch currently resides in Denver where he has recently built a new studio.

JIM MORGAN (b. 1947)

*"The ever changing moods of nature's landscape provide me with an endless supply of inspiration and a place to retreat to refresh my soul. The goals in my work are simple: to enjoy the process of painting and seeing, hoping to gain an emotional participation from people who view the painting and to bring awareness to others of the often overlooked intimate aspects of nature. The excitement for me is constantly exploring new ways of interpreting nature. The untouched landscape is our most precious possession."*

Born in Payson, Utah, Morgan received his BFA from Utah State University. His work is distinctly of the Rocky Mountain region, a compilation of his many trips through Colorado and the west. Morgan has been honored with the Robert M. Lougheed Memorial Award from the National Academy of Western Art, the Red Smith Artist' Choice Award from the National Wildlife Art Museum, and the Don Pittman Wildlife Award from the Prix de West Exhibition. Noted for painting the Rocky Mountain, American West, Morgan's work and career have been documented in the publications *Modern Wildlife Painting*, Nicholas Hammond, Pica Press, 1999 and *Leading the West: One Hundred Contemporary Painters and Sculptors*, Donald J. Hagerty, northland Publishing, 1997.

DANIEL SPRICK (b. 1953)

*"While landscape painting has always presented some of the most challenging of technical problems for me as an artist, it also provides some of the most sublime opportunities for an instinctively emotional involvement in our world for me as a sentient being. As has been pointed out by various art historians, man's place in this world, which is the essential component of landscape painting, has a relevance somewhat aside from art history; I think that it engages our love of beauty, our aesthetic sensibilities, without knowing why we find a subject to be beautiful."*

Enter stranger, the world painted by Daniel Sprick. An inheritor of pictorial tradition that goes back at least as far as ancient Rome and later compelled the best efforts of such Northern European masters as Roger van de Weyden and Jan Vermeer...His ultra realistic oil paintings continue and expand old dialogues about appearance and reality, the relationship of art and life, the revelation of

the multiples on the simple...Sprick paints with intensity and even joy. He keeps an eye out for signs of transcendence in the everyday, yet he has a completely contemporary sense of irony. For all his devotion to the realist tradition in painting, Sprick's views are entirely contemporary, and he emphasizes the abstract underpinnings of his and others' work. "All art is abstract, of course. The art is to extract the parts of reality we can use and leave the rest."  
-from the essay by Jane Fudge, assistant curator of modern and contemporary work at the Denver Art Museum

DON STINSON (b. 1956)

*"I strive in my work to reflect and magnify changes in both the cultural geography and the physical formation of the landscapes I paint. Our landscape exists in a state of accelerated change. Some of Colorado's landscape painters reflect the shifts we see in the public realm. Some provide society with inventive visions of the landscape and how it is changing. These visions may, ultimately, influence the way humans see and shape the landscape in the future. Albert Bierstadt's great nineteenth century painting "Storm in the Rockies" is one landscape painting that helped to define the cultural value of Colorado's front range.*

*The small watercolor and the large oil painting in this exhibit reflect the effort of the people of a small mountain town in Southern Colorado to reinvent its own relationship with an elemental and powerful force of nature within the landscape: the flow of water off of the San Juan Mountains. The Ouray Ice Park, conceived in 1994 by local volunteers, is made with 6,000 feet of recycled mining pipe outfitted with small sprinklers atop the cliffs of the Uncompagre Gorge.*

*For a landscape painter, the natural force of these home-made ice falls set at the foot of the San Juan range offer a rare and significant image: a spectacular, do-it-yourself example of the man-made sublime, in the middle of the same grand ranges that inspired Bierstadt's and many other artists' paintings over one hundred years ago."*

Don Stinson is known for his panoramic vistas that explore the physical and cultural landscapes of the West, his most recent work examines the dynamic, elemental and creative forces that have shaped and continue to shape the terrain. Stinson portrays the visual contrasts between human pursuits and the sublime expanses of the western landscapes. His encompassing views reveal much about our shared myths of the West, notions of progress, individual creativity and the subsequent surrender to the elements themselves. Stinson received his B.F.A. from Colorado State University and his M.F.A. from Tufts University/School of Fine Arts in Boston. He was the recipient of a Colorado Council on the Arts Director's Grant and his work is placed in the collections of the Denver Art Museum and the Art in Embassies Program in Riyadh, Saudi

Arabia. He has been featured both in extensive solo and group exhibitions in Colorado and Texas with prominent showings at the Nicolaysen Art Museum, Casper, Wyoming and Artist Space, New York. Don lives and works in Evergreen, Colorado.

MW SKIP WHITCOMB (b. 1946) ([www.skipwhitcomb.com](http://www.skipwhitcomb.com))

*"The Cache la Poudre River flows down from the mountains to the west through the center of Fort Collins, Colorado – my home. I hike its banks and channels, ride my bike along riverside trails, snowshoe its headwaters in winter, and year round my wife and I walk with our dogs along its banks. The town of Fort Collins owes much of its identity to the river. The Poudre has a rich texture and diversity, from the serenity of snow fields and delicate little feeder streams at its origin to the primal rollercoaster ride down through the Narrows to the dark, sensual sweeps after it emerges from the canyon and into the domestic life of town with its shops and bistros. As I get older, and hopefully more insightful, I find myself returning more frequently to the river and its surroundings.*

*To nurture receptivity to those things that simply feel right is crucially important, and from youth I have been drawn to this town and this river: They have always felt right. The areas along and around the river where the delicate tendrils of cast shadows can have a deeper impact than the objects themselves present subjects that speak to me. I seem to be hard-wired to this place in so many ways. Gustav Klimt said, "If you want to know me study my work." My work is who I am, it's the way I process and orchestrate my world. Hopefully, the resulting images approach the condition of poetry."*

Whitcomb, an accomplished plein air painter, draftsman and printmaker, studied at the Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles. Raised on a ranch near Sterling, Colorado, Whitcomb spent his summers working ranches in Wyoming, and the wide-open spaces of the West feel like home to him. He now lives in Fort Collins, Colorado.