Stylistic Variety

Different ways of interpreting the landscape and the world

WE'VE BEEN PUBLISHING a landscape issue here at *Southwest Art* every February since 1997, and it has always been a favorite—for many of you, our readers, and for me personally. I started loving the western landscape when my family took annual summer vacations to Colorado, long before I moved here myself in 2006. As I've had the chance to travel throughout the West over the years—seeing the varied terrain in California, Washington, Arizona, New Mexico, Wyoming, Utah, Montana, Oklahoma, and Texas—my appreciation has only increased. It's true that mountains, lakes, and beaches can be found in other parts of the country, but nowhere else do you find nature on such a grand scale.

What strikes me these days is not only how magnificent and diverse the vistas of the West are, but also how many different ways there are to interpret them in paint; this month's issue runs the gamut of stylistic approaches. There's Sallie K. Smith's realism, for example. When Smith first started painting, she envisioned that her style would evolve into looser impressionism than she is known for today. "But that's not what keeps coming out of me," she says. "I have given up fighting it. After all these years and miles of hiking, I am just too enamored to ignore the details." Then there's Laurie Kersey's works, with their swift brush strokes and blocks of subtle color, which favor atmosphere and mood instead of detail. And in our landscape portfolio, Guido Frick's painting goes even further, significantly simplifying the forms of the landscape with bold, passionate strokes. "It's the emotions that attract me," Frick says. "If you forget your emotions, then you end up with a copy of nature. But combine your visual impression with your emotional input, and you might have a chance to create a piece of art."

This stylistic variety extends to the rest of the issue as well. In contrast to the often sweeping perspective of landscape painting, Malcolm Liepke and Laura Robb both offer more intimate views. Liepke's painterly figurative pieces focus on faces, employing juicy brushwork and a very personal sense of color; Robb's delicate still lifes juxtapose vibrant movement with serene calm, sharp edges with fluid shapes. I hope you find something to appreciate amongst the visual bounty that fills these pages.

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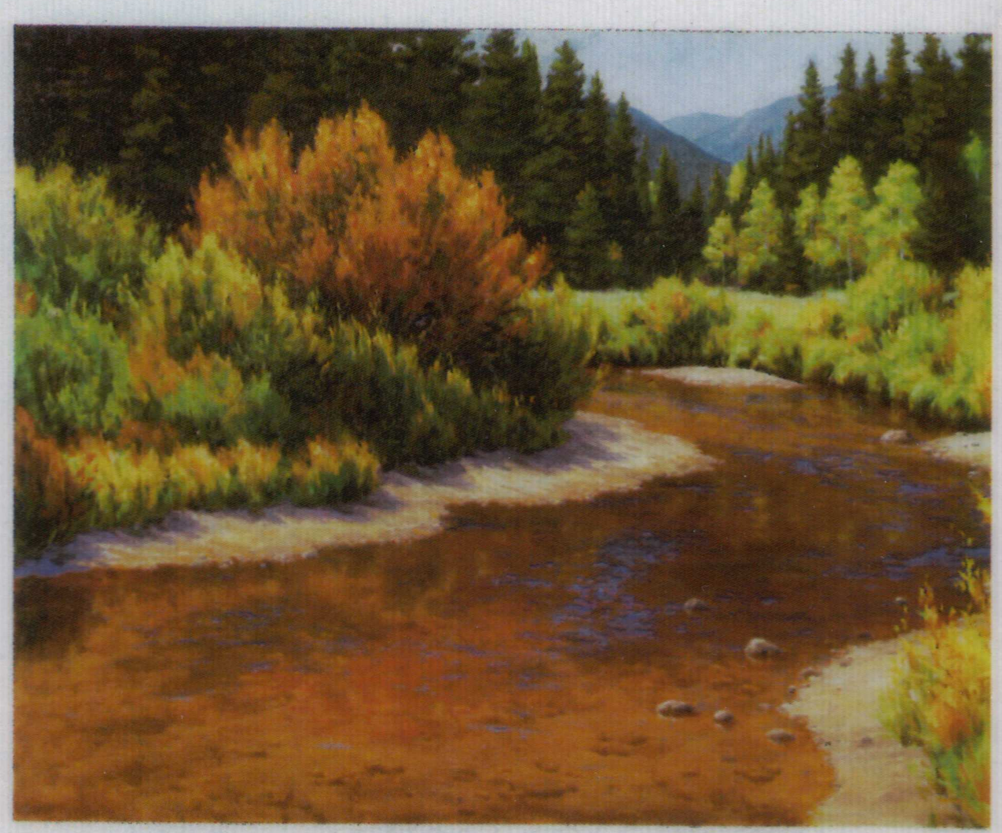

▲ AUTUMN SYMPHONY BY SALLIE K. SMITH

▲ CRIMSON TEAPOT AND POPPIES BY LAURA ROBB

MIKE BUCHER

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