



HOWELL GALLERY

## TOM PERKINSON

*"I consider myself a regional painter, and my work is grounded in the visually dramatic landscape of New Mexico. I call this work Romantic Realism. I am not interested in creating photorealism; that's boring to me and we have cameras that do that. My desire is to make paintings that relate my emotional and intuitive response to this landscape in which I feel so deeply rooted. The subject matter that I choose to paint is romantic, like the beauty of a fading sunset, with every curve and bend of a river illuminated with that same fading light.*

*I choose to paint the New Mexico landscape because it has always evoked an air of mystery to me. I know I'm not the first one to respond this way, lots of people, particularly artists, get caught under the spell of New Mexico's dramatic light and the endless interplay of abstract shapes and shadows that exist here. I grew up in the Indiana countryside. I first saw New Mexico when I was six years old. I remember feeling, even then, that I would like to live here someday. Seeing the Rocky Mountains for the first time, set against the Rio Grande Valley, took my breath away. The interplay of sunlight, shadow, and abstract shapes in the landscape mesmerizes me. It is visual poetry, and it spiritually anchors me to the land. Delivering this same type of powerful visual sensation to my audience is one of the things I am always striving for in my paintings. For me, painting is like meditation, because everything else falls away, and I am totally present in the Now, this beautiful moment suspended outside of time. All worry is gone, and I get absorbed in my work as it evolves. I say it evolves, because I don't know what the painting is going to be until it's completed, it's an adventure for me. So while I search for this painting, I am totally in the present moment. It's not an intellectual pursuit; it's more a visual and emotional endeavor.*

*I have enjoyed watching my work change through the years. Lately I see a fresh narrative quality appearing, because I have introduced the human element in my compositions: men on horseback, people in a field, children beside a stream. Outside my studio window, I have a feeder for wild birds, and I have become intrigued with adding many different types of birds to my paintings. Where I live in Corrales, many of my neighbors have horses and cows, and images of these animals are starting to appear in my paintings. I have become more intrigued with New Mexico's different seasons, diverse atmospheric conditions, and various times of the day and night. I love to paint the moon. My palette is becoming richer and more robust. I often add pastels on top of the watercolor, which create a luminous glow along with a physically interesting texture and depth.*



HOWELL GALLERY

*One of the most important things for me to consider while painting is to establish my distance from the scene. The element of perspective must be convincing to me and later to my audience. Sometimes during the beginning of the painting, I will change my position in the scene, because I see and like a new paradigm I have chanced upon. This process of investigating and finally deciding on perspective is always a process of trial and error, adding and subtracting, until I ultimately commit to this particular statement about the landscape. After I commit, the completion of the painting occurs quickly. So it's a simple matter of searching and finding the picture. After saying that, although I'm not comparing myself to, I am reminded of reading about Michelangelo's process of finding the figure within the marble. He said all he had to do was just remove everything that wasn't David's body.*

*Thus far this has been about me and how I work. The viewer's response to my paintings is, of course, very important to me, and in a palpable sense, completes my work. Because my work has a contemplative tranquility in which the viewer can become grounded, it's a safe place where one might gather strength or nourish one's soul. In this safe place, I want the viewer to get a glimpse of this moment suspended outside of time that I experienced while painting. This sensation is compelling, and quite liberating. It's a place where one can simply be."*

Tom Perkinson was born in Indianapolis, Indiana. He was raised in the country, and developed a love for the natural landscape. He discovered that he had a talent for art while in elementary school. Art quickly became his chosen passion. During high school he studied at John Herron Institute of Art in Indianapolis. After high school, he studied at the Chicago Academy of Art.

He left Indiana to pursue an undergraduate degree at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Oklahoma. Each year while attending university, he was invited to stage an annual exhibit of his work. His early work focused on the landscape, but also included still-lives and city scenes. At that time, his favorite artists were the early painters of southern Indiana who painted the landscape in which he grew up; painters like T. C. Steele, Vawter, Schultze, and Forsythe.

Upon graduation, he moved to New Mexico to pursue his Master's Degree in Fine Arts at the University of New Mexico. At that time, he focused on creating large-scale works that had a foundation in Surrealism, using detailed and highly rendered images. But he still continued to paint the landscape, which now reflected his new fascination with the southwestern landscape. He found that the drama of light and shadow, and the mystery that characterizes the New Mexico landscape held great appeal to him. He recognized that he had found an infinite source of inspiration in the panorama of the southwest landscape.



HOWELL GALLERY

He taught art at the University of New Mexico for two years after receiving his Master's Degree in 1968. In 1970, he committed his life to painting full time. His work is included in private and public collections across the globe, and he is represented in the collections of many museums, including the Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe; the University Art Museum, Albuquerque; and the Eiteljorg Museum of Western Art in Indianapolis. He has lived in Corrales, New Mexico for over twenty years. His work is included in the May 2006 book titled "Landscapes of New Mexico, Paintings From the Land of Enchantment", authors Suzan Campbell and Suzanne Deats, published by Fresco Fine Art Publications LLC.