

Paul Murray, PSA

If you've seen my work, you will know that light, more importantly, the color & quality of light is an important part of the paintings I do.

To help understand this fascination, let me explain some things about light. Light is the visible part of the electromagnetic spectrum. It is, except for it's wavelength, identical to x-rays & radio waves. Light begins with infrared & ends with ultraviolet. To understand the primacy of light, we need only go back to the first chapters of Genesis. After the heavens & earth, the next thing created was light. Akhnaton, an Egyptian pharaoh, who ruled 13 centuries before Christ, was the first to create a religion based on light. He chose the sun as its symbol. Perhaps it is on our self-esteem that light should have its greatest impact. Consider this: In hydrogen furnaces scattered throughout the universe - what we call the sun & stars - wonderful things happen. These sources of light have created a stunning legacy. In the explosive aftermath of a star's death, elements are released, carbon, oxygen - all the things that we are. This star residue formed earth. Coalescing & combining it evolved into oceans & continents, plants & animals, you & me. It is no wonder that we are so enchanted with light. We are its offspring. Our distant relatives are the stars.



HONORS

Artist in Residence, Grand Canyon National Park, 2010
Elected Master Pastelist, 2009, Pastel Society of America
Landscape Juror, Pastel Journal Top 100 Competition, 2009/10
Outstanding Achievement Award, Masterworks of NM, 2008
Museum of Albuquerque Miniatures Invitational Exhibition, 2009, 08, 07
University of New Mexico Homecoming Poster Artist, 2006
Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, OH, "Selections from the Pastel Society of America Exhibition" 2009, 06
Judge, NM State Fair Fine Arts, 2006
Poster Artist, Weems Artfest, 2005
Judge for Miniatures, Masterworks of New Mexico, 2005
Juror for the Rio Grande Artists Association Annual Exhibit, 2005

Poster Artist, New Mexico Arts & Crafts Fair, 2004
Signature Memberships: Pastel Society of America, Pastel Society of New Mexico, Plein Air Painters of New Mexico

COLLECTIONS

US State Department, Permanent collection
Sun Health Care, Corporate collection
NM State Fair Fine Arts Gallery, Permanent collection
City of Albuquerque, Public Art collection
Endura Associates, Corporate collection
Miller, Stratvert, Torgerson, PA
University of New Mexico

RECENT NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

Pastel Journal Top 100: Honorable Mention, Landscape 2009, 2008, First Place, Landscape, 2007; Best of Show, Third Place, Landscape, Honorable Mention, Landscape, 2006. Honorable Mention, Landscape, 2006, 2004, Three honorable mentions, 2002.
Miniature Arts Society of Florida, International Show, Second Place, Acrylic, 2007; Third Place Landscape, 2005; Second Place, Exterior/Architectural, 2004.
Pastel Society of America International Exhibit; Professional Artists of America Award, 2006, Ridgeway Art Institute Award, 1999.
Artists Magazine Annual Competition Finalist, 2009, 05,03, Honorable Mention & Published Image, 2003.
Arts for the Parks, Mini 100 & Top 200, 2006; Mini 100, 2005; Mini 100, Top 200, 2004; Top 100, Top 200, Mini 100, 2002.
International Association of Pastel Societies, Grand Prix 'd Pastel, Best of Show, 2001.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Artist Magazine, The Music of Light, October 2007
Pastel Journal, Article on Skies, Afterword Column on final page, Oct 2005
American Artist Magazine, six page article, January 2003
International Artist Magazine, 10 page article, January 2002

First Place

Paul Murray

In his painting *Sanctuary*—with its dark foreground and striking butte formation, bathed in light—New Mexico artist Paul Murray continues his exploration of the drama, contrasts and spirit of the western landscape. “I like to paint the volatile light changes in the western landscape, the storms, and especially the changing light at the edge of the day, early and late. It seems to be the time of day when emotions come into play for me.”

The artist came upon this particular scene while hiking near Ghost Ranch, the beautiful area in New Mexico that inspired Georgia O’Keeffe (1887-1986). “The great challenge with this painting was to paint shadows bright enough for detail to read well, yet adequately deep in value to keep the mood of the scene,” Murray says. “The sunlit butte had adequate light, but the horse was grazing in a very dark area.” And, while an approaching storm with

gathering clouds did provide the opportunity to create some excitement in the light and color combinations, Murray says he had to change and simplify the scene to make it work in the painting.

In recent years, the artist has been moving his imagery toward simpler, more graphic statements with a more limited color palette. A graphic designer by education and professional experience, Murray likes to go beyond the obvious and look for the drama in a scene—a feeling of intense sense of mystery or a timeless quality.

Murray says he “feels like a stage or movie director” when composing a painting. “I plan on taking the viewers on an adventure through the work—granting liberties with nature, if necessary.” The result is a very personal and masterful interpretation of the most colorful area of the United States—western landscape.

Sanctuary (18x31)

