



HELPER AND THE
LANDSCAPE

The Helper Project

Our mission is simple: Foster revitalization,
Promote Beautification and Cultural Enhancement
for the City of Helper, Utah.



Courtesy of the Western Mining & Railroad Museum

HELPER AND THE LANDSCAPE

August 12 - October 6, 2018

amjworks Gallery
167 South Main Street
Helper, Utah 84526



HELPER AND THE LANDSCAPE

Essay by Vern G. Swanson, Ph.D
Poem by Nancy Takacs

Steven Lee Adams

Joseph Alleman

Connie Borup

Doug Braithwaite

Charles Callis

Royden Card

G. Russell Case

Paul Davis

Frank Ray Huff, Jr.

Anne Kaferle

Patricia Kimball

David Meikle

Bonnie Posselli

Jeffery R. Pugh

Hadley Rampton

Andrew Skorut

Gary Ernest Smith

Michael Workman

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The HELPER Project

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Cover:

Royden Card

Eastern Bookcliffs

36" x 36"

Acrylic on Canvas

Page 2:

Hadley Rampton

Entre to Helper

12" x 12"

Oil on Masonite

Catalog Design: Kathleen Royster

Printing: Digital Printing Solution, Springville, Utah



Charles Callis, Artist

**What the Landscape Might Say
Helper, Utah**

Nancy Takacs

The mountain
loved you before
you were born.

If you don't look too hard,
the tan land
has a teal blush.

In Spring Canyon
you might find that jewel --
pink glass from an ancient dish.

Turn left
at the withered awning
to see the brightest stars.

A train will call to you
at each crossing
through the darkness.

This is where
they didn't get along,
then did,
after an ocean
of old countries,
to find happiness,

to butter cakes on Main Street,
to arrange the blossoms,
to sell the sausage, the coffee,
to steal a payroll, gamble,
to nail the rails or mine or hook
the helper engines on,
to keep the kids true
among the sorrows.

A newcomer Emily, at first,
said to her husband
George: We live
at the edge of the world.

Their daughter Helen later
had a passion to write
about this world.¹

¹Helen Zeese Papanikolas

New outlaws lift brushes
to vermilion and cobalt
at midnight. They imagine rivers
that take us years to discover.
They paint the pepper-scent
of globemallow. They keep
the past, and mine the present,
for us: in sweeping sepias,
ochres of mesas; keep
the honor of a 40's Conoco;
renew the four-room cottage
and paint it like the sky;
they let the faces rise
from clay so that we can
almost hear the voices;
they smooth a bowl
with the scent of earth
on their fingertips,
maybe to keep the curve
of a wild arroyo close.

This town has a feisty grin
and humble shoulders.

This town bets on rain,
for a community garden,

loves the violet shadows
on cloud-crowded days.

It feels the rush
of big-horned sheep,

feels the ripples between the tongues
who still speak great-grandmothers'
Slovak, Spanish, Italian, Greek.

This town has a fine espresso
you can sip
at *Happiness Within*.

This town carries
a hint of juniper
the canyon lifts
downwind, on your
evening walk, as you watch
another happiness becoming,
new breath rising like
old-country pastries,
warm, tangy, seeded,
in our lighted windows.

Nancy Takacs
Wellington, Utah



David Meikle
Helper Shadowlands
12" x 16"
Oil on Board

HELPER AND THE LANDSCAPE

Vern G. Swanson, Ph.D

Helper is a railroad town bustling with the energy of about 2,700 souls in Carbon County, Utah. She lies about 110 miles southeast of Salt Lake City and 7 miles northwest from Price, the County seat, but for some reason Helper is known as the “Hub of Carbon County.” With the arrival of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad (D&RGW) in 1881-82, Helper began to develop as a population center. By 1887, the D&RGW had erected some twenty-seven frame residences, with more built later that year. The railroad planned to make Helper a freight terminal after the rail lines were changed from narrow to standard gauge. In 1892, Helper was designated the division point between the eastern and western D&RGW terminals in Grand Junction, Colorado, and Ogden, Utah, respectively, and a new depot, hotel, and other buildings were constructed.

“A lot of what you need to know about Helper”

The countryside hosting Helper veritably encroaches upon the City. It’s above the town, side to side and at your feet, for patches of untamed desert dot its vacant lots and forgotten edges. While never a ghost town, Helper like Eureka once had its share of boarded-up buildings. A number of these are now being acquired by a resurgent artistic-class looking for charm, charisma, and low-cost studio space. The attraction is not hard to grasp, for Helper is a village that lets its history show. It is now a full-blown Art Colony with a purpose.

Certainly, Helper’s most iconic “landscape subject” is Balanced Rock, on the cliffs high above the town. It never was for Carbon County artists what Black Rock was for Salt Lake County and Mount Timpanogos was for Utah County, the one “obligatory subject.” Lesser-light Provo artists such as Edgar M. Jensen, Flora D. Fisher, Cleston H. Rigby, and Alberta Johnson Kondratieff were obliged to paint it under the tutelage of landscape professors, E. H. Eastmond and B. F. Larsen at Brigham Young University. In fact, the 1927 issue of *The Y News* sarcastically noted under the by-line “*Painters Sketch Mt. Timp Again*,” reads, “This announcement is bound to bring forth a moan and a protest, “Will students never be free from the Painting Timpanogos Malady?” One brave student ventures the assertion that time will increase the interest of the disease and that a painting of Timpanogos will be a requirement for graduation.¹

We can rightly say that Helper and Carbon artists were never so straight-jacketed, and Balanced Rock is one of a litany of subjects, sometimes painted but not overmuch. The last major exhibition for The Helper Project was called *Nest* and for the women artists who participated in that show it was; but in reality Helper is as much a Hive as it is a Nest. It is a beehive of artistic activity, of adopted cosmopolitan aesthetic sophistication, and of swarming interest throughout the state and West. It is a colony on fire that will not soon become a burnt-out shell of itself.

¹Art Editor, “Painters Sketch Mt. Timp Again,” in the ‘Pessimist Issue’, *The Y News* (23 May 1927)

Even though it was once dominated by University of Utah professors, David Dornan and Paul Davis, who founded it 26 years ago, it has the advantage of distance and isolation from its original hive. This is similar to how in San Pete County, Spring City has many ties to Brigham Young University. Time and distance have worked to their advantage as both are distinct from their mother institutions and from each other. Helper is the younger of the two and interest and activity there is naturally burning hotter. Presently, Helper City, The Helper Project and Artists along with the enthusiasm of the local community have catapulted Helper to its meteoric rise as the new center of Utah Art.

Anne Morgan-Jespersen, Kathleen Royster and Vern G. Swanson have curated an exhibition inviting eighteen Helper and other Utah artists to participate in an exhibition of landscape art. I chuckle to remember what art critic Robert Hughes wrote in *Time* magazine, "Landscape is to American [Utah] art what sex and psychoanalysis are to the American novel." I write this essay somewhat blindly because not all the art has been painted before press day, but I doubt if we are going to be erotically aroused by what we see. What are we likely to see is a broad assembly of a number of Utah's premier landscape painters, some painting mountains and others molehills, but all catching the essence of Helper and the Landscape.

We can turn to the great Utah landscape painter John Hafen (1856-1910) for his astute opinion on what to paint. Hafen's work during his pre-Paris period was typically pioneer-esque in style with prevailing browns, enameled surfaces and linear edges. His studies at the Académie Julien in Paris moved him dramatically toward a very brushy naturalist style au current with young artists of his day. He wrote his wife about the lessons he had learned in France:

Effects to please the eye like Fred Lambourne indulges in are called "Schick" which might be interpreted "cheaty", or a dishonest motive. When I come home I will not need to go out and hunt for a subject a day or two, but sit in our door yard and kitchen, neither need I wait until the sun glides or skips along the landscape of a morning or evening but paint nature as well at broad noonday, for a subject the brow of a hill the winding pathway, the level fields or lovely mountains say of God's beautiful creations will afford ample opportunities to test my humble abilities. If I can only paint them as they really are. You will remark that this is what I have always said true art consisted of, but my dear the "how" of it is the bother.²

Early twenty-first century Utah landscape painting fills all niches, and Helper and the Landscape chronicles fill most of them. There are stylized and patterned artists, color field, and Impressionist artists. A number are tonalists and still others are so abstracted that a branch and a stump may be confused. Each stylistic approach is for the good. All these landscapists are professional artists who have probed Gaia to reveal her secrets. All have done so in their own passionate way. I like what Paul Cezanne said of such diverse approach, "Painting from nature is not in copying the object, it is in realizing her sensations.

² John Hafen letter to Thora Hafen his wife (6 September 1890) BYU Library MSS 356 box1

When asked by Anne Morgan-Jespersen to help curate this exhibition of the eighteen living Utah landscape painters, I made a preliminary list of 109 outstanding artists who fit the bill. Even then I feared that I had left off five or six professionals who have something important to say with their art. I got the list down to about fifty exceptional landscapists, with an emphasis for Helper artists, then deferred to the other two curators. With their perceptive aesthetic vision, they slimmed the exhibition to both famous and lesser-known but all also remarkable talents. I heartily agree with all artists selected they were great choices, and wish more could have been added.³

We begin with one of Utah's most significant artists, raised on a farm in northeastern Oregon, **Gary Ernest Smith** (b. Baker, OR, 1942) and now a long-time resident of Highland in Utah County. A student of Brigham Young University (BFA, MFA) he may be termed a regionalist and American Scene figurative and landscape painter.⁴ He equally excelled in both genres becoming the most famous contemporary American artist in the State. Only LeConte Stewart (Richfield, 1891-1990, Kaysville) and Valoy Eaton (b.1938, Midway) are compared with him in this respect. His ongoing "Farm Series" of the great American farmer and family has garnered critical and popular acclaim nation-wide. For our landscape focus his "Field Series" must be considered among our nation's most enduring images of farmland and plowed soil. And off handedly we can say that he understands and often paints the barebones landscape of southern Utah almost as well as Maynard Dixon (1875-1946).

The question with all artists in oil, "What does the painter have to say; and what does his paint say?" The invariably bold shapes and brilliant compositions make icons of his work, which are painted with hefty pigmentation applied with broad brush and palette knife. Often, he will coat the entirety of his pictures with warm transparent alizarin and then rub them back with a cloth. The effect is brilliant as the crevices of his textured surfaces refuse to release the glaze. He writes of his encounter with Helper:

I found myself in the Price, Helper area of Utah on a late summer of 2017. I am drawn to the sometimes severe, subtle value and color changes of the geography of this area. I ran across a field in Hiawatha just after harvest with its rich tones and abundant texture. It inspired this painting of beauty and open space. I also encountered, in the early morning, shadows across a field of wind rowed hay that inspired the smaller plein-air painting.

³These include sixteen of the greatest of our living landscapists; Brad Aldridge, Bruce Brainard, Linda C. Christensen, Josh Clare, Michael Coleman, Valoy Eaton, Doug Fryer, George Hanrahan, Richard Horrock, John Hughes, Earl M. Jones, Arch D. Shaw, Tony Smith, Steve Songer, Kathryn D. Stats, Kent Wallis, Kimbal Warren.

⁴We should also mention the third or is it forth arrow in his quiver; Gary Smith is also one of the most profound Christian religious painter the LDS Church has. In 1966 he was co-founder of the Mormon Art and Belief Movement.

Certainly the pater-familias of the Helper art movement is **Paul Howard Davis** (b. Rhode Island, 1946) of Torrey, who with Dave Dornan in 1999 lit the fuse that became the Helper art-explosion. After receiving BFA and MFA (75) degrees from Boston University, Paul drove across the United States. He writes, “Utah blew me away. I had no idea of what the red-rock country was like.” He taught at The Art Institute of Boston and upon learning of a position at the University of Utah he applied and won a position, became a professor and taught there for twenty-five years. In his darkened studio like an unctuous Belgian atelier, with varnishes, turpentine and brushes he was an “academic observational figurative artist” and an “abstract imaginative artist” often in the same painting. In all, he describes his work as “controlled accidents.” About Helper he says:

The landscape here is so grand that it has taken me some time to express it in a way that seems my own. I’ve become fascinated by the surfaces of cliff walls and by what I see on the ground on my daily hikes. Erosion, decay, stains, varnishes, lichens, volumes, cracks, contrasted by freshly exposed planes, all modulated by light, wind, water, weather and time are incredibly beautiful and inspiring for a painter. Leonardo suggested that artists should study old walls to stimulate the imagination. In one way or another I have been doing that for years... For me the cliff walls represent an event, which is perfectly balanced in the moment. When I look at them I can’t tell the difference between a thing being created and a thing being destroyed.

Patricia Kimball (b. SLC, 1951) like the two preceding artists paints both figurative and landscape subjects in a contemporaneous way. She earned her BFA and MFA from the University of Utah and has been an active participant in the Utah art scene from about 1995. Her monumentally Impressionist oils are often of diminutive size, each a blend of momentariness and timelessness. Painterly marks streaking from her figures and objects, intimating forms or directions, breaking the solidity of her silhouetted forms on narrow stages, seem like the static resolving of transmitted images. She pulls wet paint across her object/subject thus reducing the difference of background to foreground, and objects from their environment. She writes of her art and life:

I am looking to express only the most essential aspects. Not more information, not more detail, but more specificity in the big relationships of color, value, and space. I enjoy being outside, observing the landscape and the people within it, and searching for the painterly possibilities therein...

I feel I came of age as a painter in large part because of the workshops, offered by Paul Davis, Dave Dornan, and Tony Smith. Their tutelage—close observation, working directly from life, and painting that has a life of its own separate from the image—is the basis of my approach to my work. I also think Helper itself, the town and its surrounds, informed and influenced what I want to paint. The landscape there is not scenic in the traditional sense. But I love its quiet beauty and unspectacular dignity.

Frank Ray Huff Jr. (b. Kaysville, 1958) now lives in Washington County in Southern Utah. He also studied at the University of Utah, especially influenced by Earl Jones, and then returned to train with David Dornan and Paul Davis in 1987. There also seems to be a touch of Richard Diebenkorn, which pops-out occasionally. Frank is as liable to paint in oil and watercolor medium, the bold structures and streets of downtown as he is the monuments of red-rock country. Both are stripped to their essence and forwarded just as academic as they need to be and just as abstract. He fulfills the needs of the Modernist and the Traditionalist depending on your focal length.

He is not just a stylistic or painter of patterns, but a contemporary realist who understands that “Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.” (Leonardo da Vinci) One ‘almost’ could say that his work was the best blend between David Meikle and Russell Case. The late Robert Davis from the LDS Museum of History and Art wrote glowingly of his native talent:

Like the great Utah artists before him.... Huff is moved by ‘Life on the highways and byways.’ A generation from now these works will be important statements of their milieu as the works of LeConte Stewart, Bill Owens and Edward Hopper are of their time and context....Frank Huff’s art captures light effects, subtle moods, and essence of place, but it is also keenly composed and organized. There is a sense and intelligence that permeates every piece...The first premise of his work is creating something true to his inner sensibility.

Another farming artist, **Jeffery Robert Pugh** (b. 1977) of Salt Lake City. He studied with John Ericson at the University of Utah until 2004, then with Gary E. Smith who greatly influenced him. He has developed into a premier regionalist painter of Utah. He makes masterpieces in an original stage-life, squared to the canvas plane and painted with a square brush and palette knife. This is not unlike Soviet Severe period art, which rivets our eyes on the symbolic motifs he so powerfully paints. His thick pigmentation, which is so fully loaded on his brush the paint squirts out on both sides of his brush or palette. His cows, fields, and barns are so positively abstracted and freshly painted that we feel akin to them. I was pleased that he painted Balanced Rock of Helper fame. He writes of his own art:

I continue to evolve, what I paint and why, are moving targets for me and I find myself wondering what I will see next. I couldn’t have imagined that I would relate to the clouds along the horizon or to the skulls on the fence posts but I do. They are both symbolic of changes, whether a storm is rising and there is a change of season or if a life has been lived to it’s fullest and death has become the next chapter. If I’m honest, I feel like I’m just barely starting to understand the ‘why’.

Utah is mostly known for its plein-air painters of an Impressionist manner, with **Bonnie Blair Posselli** (b.1942) of SLC being a prime example. The daughter of a landscape artist, she became an early adopter of a style pioneered by the California Eucalyptus school painters like Edgar A. Payne, William Wendt, and Hanson D. Puthuff. She has been a mainstay of professional Utah plein-air landscape painters since the 1970s and as such is most interested in the fleeting effects of color and light. She writes of one of her paintings, *My Love Affair with Trees* for the Helper exhibition, "I am most intrigued with the kaleidoscope appearance of light dancing through trees. The challenge is to capture the fleeting of light pulsing through the branches with a prism of color." Of her overall techno-aesthetic direction Bonnie explains:

In the beginning, I wash the canvas in hues chosen for a ground that gives energy to the painting. Often, I layer the washes with different colors, suspending bits of pure pigment and letting the paint drizzle for a rich, grainy effect... When I am satisfied with the wash, I will create a slight sketch for placement. From there, a loose block-in is formed with shape, value and line, with the idea of coming back with layers of paint using brush and palette knife. Sometimes, washes and glazes are used to create an effect or mood. Always, there is a reverence for truth that the subject chosen has inspired. Each painting is a separate journey, a different story.

What kind of artist is the eminent landscape painter, **Connie M. Borup** (b. SLC, 1945) of Salt Lake City? She is definitely not a painterly Regionalist painter, nor a plein-air Impressionist landscapist, and though she has the feel of a Tonalists does not really fit that category either. First of all Connie has an intimate almost private vision of nature as many Tonalist do, but hers is a more "close-up" relationship. In this she might be compared with Robert L. Marshall (1944-2017, Springville). Their work has a sense of quietude and a feeling of nostalgia, like in the changing of the seasons. She paints in a linear fashion plants, leaves, pods, branches and the play of light and shade upon them, especially mirrored in a pond or stream.

Borup's close observation of nature and careful composition never allow the complexity of her work to overwhelm the painting's meaning and message. They have a solemn rectitude to them, which is readily appreciated by the connoisseur. A statement by her explains more:

At the center of my creative drive there has always been a connection with nature as a pure force. I am interested in the austere, lonely qualities of country not touched by the human desire to control. This lack of reference to civilization presents us with a slightly portentous, yet peaceful, landscape. It is frail, yet ordered: severe, yet inviting: linked to both place and memory. Land forms which hold potential for describing the mysterious aspects of our existence have become my visual vocabulary. Painting allows me to reconstruct reality in ways that reveal my emotional and psychological make-up. The images that I select reflect this inner world and my sense of life.

Steven Lee Adams (b.1962) now of Helper, studied at Brigham Young University and was among the class of luminaries like Michael Workman, Bruce Brainard, Doug Fryer, and Brad Aldridge, who has had such an impact on Utah landscape painting. An artist who had influence on Adams was the American Impressionist, Edward Willis Redfield (1869-1965) a kindred spirit who worked in the art colony at New Hope, Pennsylvania. One would seldom call a plein-air painter a Tonalist, Steven is both, a painterly color Impressionist with his smaller work, while his larger studio canvases tend to be more studied and subtle. For him both are needed if he is to firmly oblige nature to release to his brush her intimacies and her power. Steven is visually and observationally astute enough to garner what he needs to create such masterpieces. He writes:

Utah's ever-fluctuating atmosphere, it's shimmering, ephemeral quality of light mesmerized me then and to this day it tantalizes and menaces me... The Meditative quality of process is what my heart seeks and has always sought, not the song but the singing. I no longer paint to obtain a finished product, any more than a bird sings to get to the end of its song.

This University of Utah trained artist, **Douglas James Braithwaite** (b. Sunset, 1964) studied with Paul Davis and David Dornan. He paints geometric "square-brush" Utah and uses shadows to construct a contemporaneous view of suburban main-streets, or the untamed wilderness. His forceful plein-air style is quite architectonic, to the point that *Southwest Art Magazine* wrote that his work was, "where realism meets abstraction." Yet, Doug's more meditative art, to quote Cezanne seems more, "... a harmony, in parallel with nature." His work is not unlike David Meikle's, only his has more atmosphere. He writes of his work:

I paint my life experiences. I paint the deserts, the pastoral landscapes, the mountains and the urban landscapes of winter, spring, summer and fall. I paint all the places I encounter as I travel. I am very interested in expressing what life is like here and now... Painting for me, feels like composing and playing music. I look for rhythm and tempo created by the geometry of space. I think of tone and pitch when I work out the color and value relationship. I think of interpretation and feeling as I use tools to manipulate the color atmosphere and spatial relationships.

I digress here to explain Tonalism, a word most people have never heard. Tonalism is a more muted and tender form of Impressionist--- without chromatic boldness but with all her nuances; without strong contrasts of tone light to dark but with a multiplicity of grey and grisaille values. Whereas color Impressionism tends to be more direct and more textured, Tonalism is generally more of an indirect and layered manner of painting and not painted with encrusted impasto. Tonalism also tends to be more aesthetically intellectual than exuberant color Impressionism. Tonalist painting has a softer non-linear edge quality to it. This approach also pays greater concern with negative spaces and silhouette. It seems that art patrons swing like a pendulum between interest in color Impressionist works and more sonorous Tonalist paintings about every decade.

Utah is well respected for its landscape artists, but very few are professionally operating at a national level of artistic notoriety. The two most noted Utah artists on the American stage in this exhibition are Gary Ernest Smith and Michael Workman. Certainly, the most famous of Utah's tonalists is **Michael Workman** (b.1959) of Spring City. His adept use of the brush has a unique sensitivity to pigment, value, relationship, nuance, and scene painting. Sir William Jones could have been speaking of Michael's art when he wrote about the 23 Psalm; "A truer sublimity and a more exquisite beauty." Once when asked what he loved about the landscape he replied, "I love to see it, smell it, touch it...and as a painter, it's all I really care about, I love everything about it!" This may remind one of a similar statement by Valoy Eaton who said as he smiled, "I love to go out and smell the bugs!"

Workman paints with perfect pitch, and he carefully controls the dancing light and brush's bravura but you never notice. His work arrives at the place Monet wished he could attain, "I want to paint like a bird sings." His oil, *Helper in November* (2017, 48 x 48 in.) is a masterpiece of deft touch and evokes a sense of idyllic splendor. His work freezes a sense of transience that could melt away in an instant but doesn't because it is eternal. I think Willa Cather said it best, "What was any art but a... mold in which to imprison, for a moment, the shining elusive element which is life itself--- Life hurrying past us and running away, too strong to stop, too sweet to lose." Or maybe Michael said it best, "Truth, Beauty, and Goodness."

Andrew J. Skorut (b. Krakow, Poland, 1969) of Draper, did not specifically choose Utah, but he came to our Zion and chose to stay here for over thirty years now. He came to America in 1987 and studied at the University of Utah (BFA '95). His works have scale, softly expressing the "look and feel" of the desert and farming country, and broadly reveal the blonde Utah panorama at noon-day and more subtly toward dusk. These he calls his, "moments on canvas" and while they are calm, serene and tranquil to the viewer, were created with concerted energy. His work is painted with a brush, squeegeed, and wiped with a cloth, all the while layering glazes, then manipulating the paint wet into wet. He equates the process of his sonorous paintings to like "listening to the music." He writes about his works:

My landscape paintings are about balance between abstraction and realism. I believe in the process involved in creating a painting is as important as the finalized image. I look for opportunities of applying paint in abstracted way, which from the distance is translated into realistic landscape. I apply multiple glazes then I scratch with various tools to create interesting abstract marks and to reveal the underplaying colors.

Another Tonalist landscapist is **Joseph Oaks Alleman** (b. 1975) of Logan who paints in oil and watercolor, the rural environment not the wilderness of Utah like Anne Kaferle and Charles Callis. He seeks to paint towns, country roads, barns and fields, but not livestock like Jeff Pugh. Unlike most Tonalists, his work has a digital sense of realism, but he moves his medium in such a way so as to personalize it into a quiet sensitivity that resonates. He writes about his work:

There is a beauty within the everyday and ordinary that only painting can reveal. I'm drawn to these subjects in hope of making and sharing such discoveries. Working in watercolor and oil, I strive to capture a personal, and unique, portrayal of the Contemporary American West. An important motive to paint lies in understanding my surroundings. I'm visually compelled by various forms of shape, value, pattern, etc. Through the process of painting, I gain new and deeper insight into my subject and its surroundings as these elements combine and communicate.

A gestural painterly landscapist like **Hadley A. Rampton** (b. 1975) of Salt Lake City breaks from tonal painting and moves toward minimalist outcomes. Earning a BFA in 1999 from the University of Utah, she immediately began to paint professionally, exhibiting throughout the West. Her stark aspen paintings are hard-edge in the foregrounds with soft-focus behind. Other aesthetic approaches feature richly pigmented brushy landscapes with paint oozing off her square brush adding textural allure. Her insistence upon working plein-air keeps her abstraction real and observational works authentic. Donna Poulton perceptively writes of her art, "Swaths of earth and horizon are indistinguishable, with a camouflage pattern disguising the actual environment she inhabits." Hadley's own assessment goes:

I'm drawn to pattern and form in the landscape. I love the juxtaposition of bold highlights and shadows versus the subtleties brought on by atmosphere and gentle undulations of light. In the landscape that cradles Helper, UT, it is the cliffs and rock formations and all the dramas and delicacies within that spark my desire to paint.

I prefer to work onsite where I not only see the scene before which I stand but feel its light, weather and mood. Those feelings inform the energy by which I lay down each stroke. I paint with a palette knife in bold strokes, happy to break my subject matter down into simplified form composed of value and color. This is a two dimensional surface upon which I work and I don't want to hide that. I want my process and the abstract nature of the accumulation of paint strokes to be evident, but when one stands back, for a three dimensional, Renaissance form and space to emerge. This is what excites me.

One wouldn't think a person trained in scientific illustration would be a luminist tonal and painterly wet-in-wet artist but **Anne M. Kaferle** (b. CT, 1981) of Helper is just that. A hearty out-doorist, Anne came to the Western wilderness from her Connecticut confines for hiking, rock climbing and river running. She first came to Helper to attend a Doug Braithwaite plein air workshop in 2012 and stayed on as an intern to Dave Dorman at his Studio Group building. Her expansive views of desert landscape are delineated more by luminous values rather than by details and meld the land with sky. Anne's paintings for the show, *Tableland* and *Column* demonstrate two interpretations of the landscape. Her horizontal painting strokes are unified by running turpentine stains which often signifies erosion. Anne's powerful abstract layers of strata in bluish and beige-ochre earth tones harkens to her love of geology. She writes:

My desert home offers daily reminders of the power of water and deep geologic time. The aftermath of a flash flood reveals a beautiful recording of the sediments, according to size along its path. Surrounding cliffs display the history of a periodically advancing and receding interior seaway over the course of millions of years. In my work, paint echoes geologic processes...deposition and erosion. Gravity plays as much a role as direct mark-making. I hope to find an aesthetic balance reflective of the continual, harmonious rearrangement of our environment.

An artist as opposite from Tonalism as possible is **W. Royden Card** (b. Canada, 1952) of Bloomington in Washington County, Utah. Royden's paint-layers have a scratchy edge quality, and bright pungent colors that challenge the viewer's sensitivities, but which, given time and attention wins one over without fail. Credit the brilliant quality of his brave electric canvases, such as *East of Thompson* and *Eastern Book Cliffs* to his use of acrylic paint; which have a transistor sound to the lilt of oil paint's vacuum tube. More than any other landscape painter in Utah, Card has moved the State's aesthetic needle toward grittiness. His artistic range is enhanced by producing poetic woodcut prints, mostly in black and white, which are a foil and a compliment to his paintings. He writes of what he is now thinking about in his art:

Drawing and then painting desert landscape has been my primary focus for over 50 years. You do the work, learn, teach, keep painting, maybe win an award or two (or not), but you love the work and go on painting. Lately, I seek out those views that get overlooked; not the scenic viewpoint of a turnout. Though I love the slick-rock and the towering red cliffs, I think I love the multiplicity of greys, sienna's, pale ochres, blue green of Morrison hills, purples and faded umbers of the badlands, even more. They seem to be what I tend to paint these past years. Love of the desert, refuge and contemplation... and painting.

The youngest artist in the exhibition, **Charles Stuart Callis** (b. SLC, 1984) of Helper earned a BFA from the University of Utah. Like Andrew Skorut, he is stylistically a tonalist landscape painter who enigmatically suggests rather than delineates valleys, mountains, and skies. He is a “sensations” and “impressions” artist of whom it may be said, “His aim in art is to represent--- not the outward appearance of things, but the inward significance” (anon). Callis’ stream of conscious statement reads:

Earth and sky. Human and living. Unseen realm. Where I am looking is where I discover. Light and chroma. Mood saturation. Landscape and x-scape. Drawing. Cacophony. Agreement. Beauty in all. From deep. Seeing is golden. Beauty is abundant.

Another artist who has departed from the Impressionist-Tonalist polemic is **David Wayne Meikle** (b. SLC, 1969) of Salt Lake City. His geometrically inspired landscapes are finely designed, boldly composed, and should never be called mechanical because of their intricacies. At his best with larger scales, both in size and in scene, David’s work impresses at various distances. He adds to this his penchant for spectacular panorama. “He finds the landforms of the West ideal to explore relationships of pattern, color, and distance. He is particularly attracted to open spaces and the often-overlooked beauty found in desolate rolling foothills.”⁵ His work is popular on many levels, the most appreciable is his love of ‘place.’ He writes of his work:

I have a great love of Utah’s landscape. I am very much drawn to painting grand vistas but I am also fond of portraying small towns and rural scenes. I also look for opportunities to show depth and distance in a scene using light and atmospheric perspective. My experience as an art director had given me an affinity for strong shapes and colors. The design of the composition is very important to me. For myself, the interaction of the landscape and light lead to unlimited opportunities to make statements about our experience in our environment.

Some artists are known for their subjects, others for technique or style, but a few for the light value scale we call ‘blonde.’ **G. (Gary) Russell Case** (b.1966) of Brigham City is an artist who has keyed-up his mid-tonal range, while at the same time giving us bold contrasts in shadows, composition, chroma and subject, so as to give a powerful “high noon” overall effect. Connoisseurs say the understanding of value harmonies allows color free range, and subtle planar areas to enliven textural edge quality. Russell fully senses this in his inter-play and has produced a sizable oeuvre of excellent paintings. He studied art at Snow College and Utah State and is now a professional landscape painter of substance. He writes:

I think mostly I want a painting to look as if it was pure joy to make, even though it was a battle. I usually try to record what I am after in a single meaningful aggressive stroke, moving through the blocking in of abstract shapes quickly, spend most on the modeling of mid-tones and edges. Hoping for something of interest and beauty.

⁵Fifteen Bits, Utah artists biographies



Steven Lee Adams, Artist

We close our parade of talent-laden Utah landscapists, saying that this most beautiful State is made more so, by their painted evocations of our native home. Landscape painting is the antidote of a hectic world and the next best thing to being there. The American painter George Bellows said of it; "The artist is the person who makes life more interesting or beautiful, more understandable or mysterious, or probably in the best sense, more wonderful." The art colony as an art movement has power derived from the understanding that you can be contemporaneous and beautiful.

Vern G. Swanson, Ph.D
Retired Director Springville Museum of Art
Springville, Utah

Steven Lee ADAMS

Utah's ever-fluctuating atmosphere, it's shimmering, ephemeral quality of light mesmerized me then and to this day it tantalizes and menaces me... The Meditative quality of process is what my heart seeks and has always sought, not the song but the singing. I no longer paint to obtain a finished product, any more than a bird sings to get to the end of its song.



Bluff Near Moab
16" x 24"
Oil on Canvas

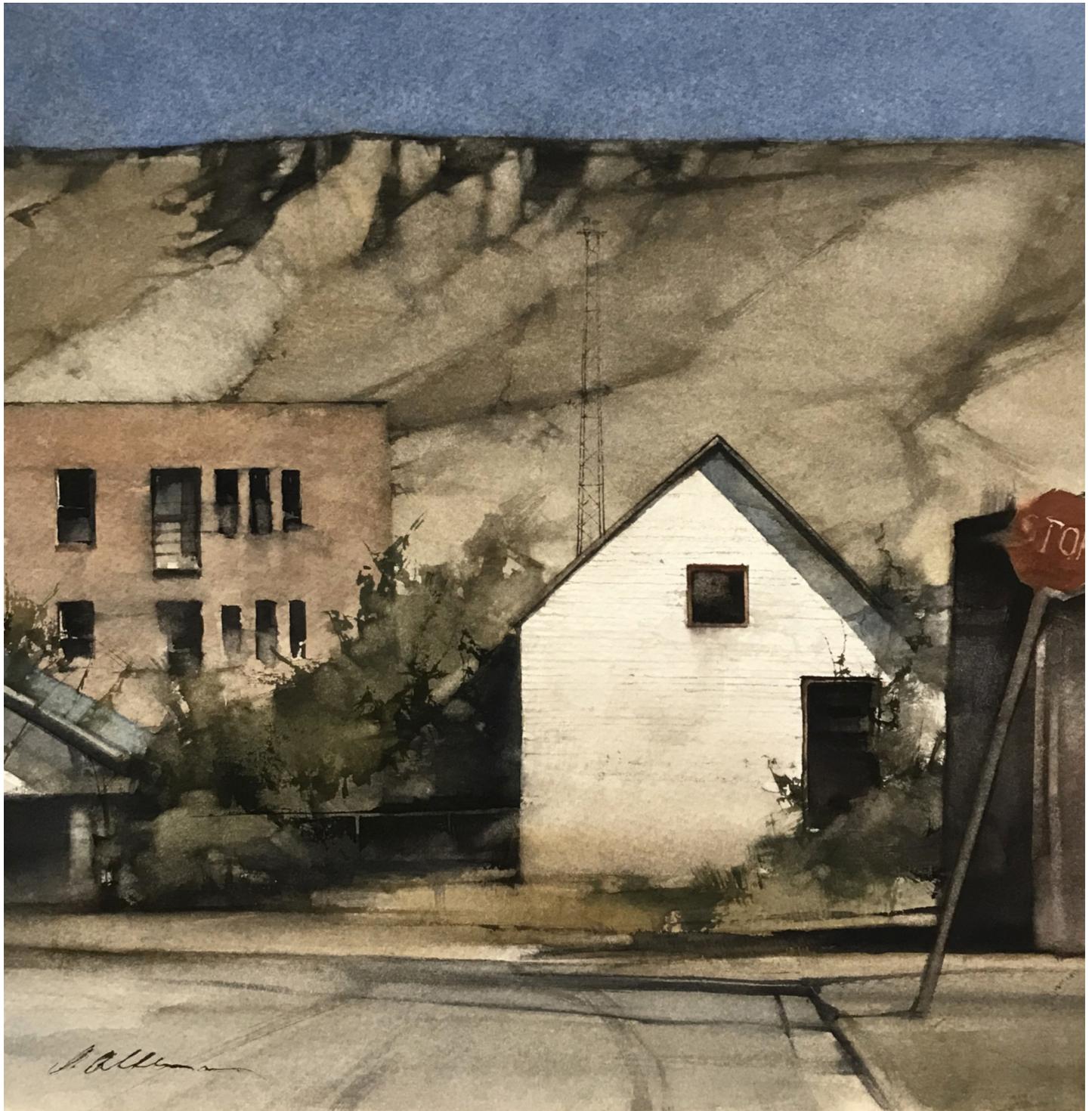


Backyard - Helper, UT
30" x 36"
Oil on Canvas

Joseph ALLEMAN

There is a beauty within the everyday and ordinary that only painting can reveal. I'm drawn to these subjects in hope of making and sharing such discoveries. Working in watercolor and oil, I strive to capture a personal, and unique, portrayal of the Contemporary American West. An important motive to paint lies in understanding my surroundings. I'm visually compelled by various forms of shape, value, pattern, etc. Through the process of painting, I gain new and deeper insight into my subject and its surroundings as these elements combine and communicate.

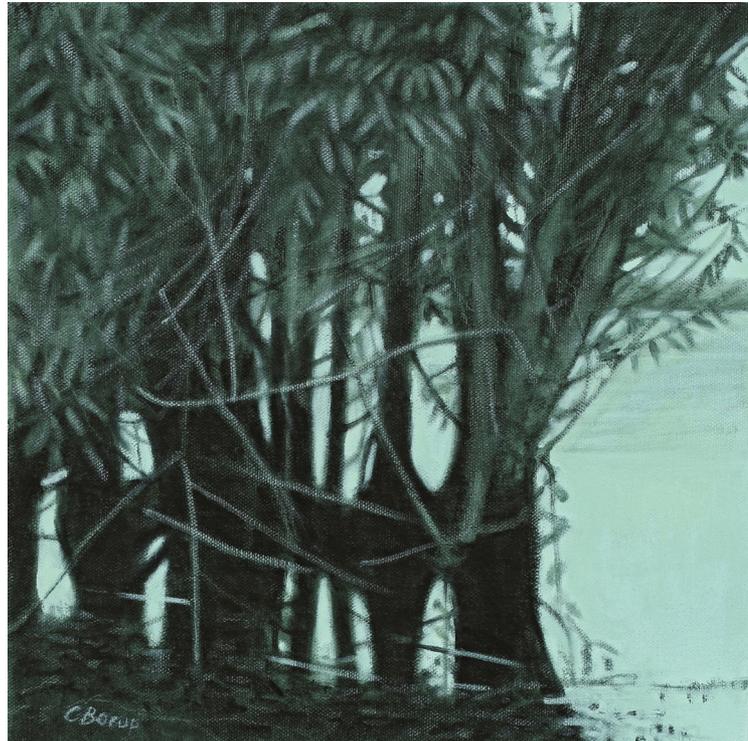
Helper Side Streets
11" x 10.5"
Watercolor



Connie BORUP

In my recent art work I am taking a close, intimate look at nature. With a sense of quietude I invite the viewer to have a deeper, and more direct experience with our natural world. I am fascinated by the shapes of plants, leaves, pods branches and twigs and the play of light and shade on their surfaces. Water interests me because of its many visual and symbolic properties. It acts as a mirror to the sky and reflects its surroundings in unique and complex ways. This kind of complexity can increase the meditative state by holding one's attention and focus longer. My paintings investigate the different levels of reality we can experience with a close observation of nature.

Dark Tree View
Oil on Canvas
12" x 12"





Doug BRAITHWAITE

I paint my life experiences. I paint the deserts, the pastoral landscapes, the mountains and the urban landscapes of winter, spring, summer and fall. I paint all the places I encounter as I travel. I am very interested in expressing what life is like here and now... Painting for me, feels like composing and playing music. I look for rhythm and tempo created by the geometry of space. I think of tone and pitch when I work out the color and value relationship. I think of interpretation and feeling as I use tools to manipulate the color atmosphere and spatial relationships.



Back Around
11" x 14"
Oil on Board



Rock Tumbler
24" x36"
Oil on Canvas

Charles CALLIS

High desert landscapes surround me and I am in awe of its beauty. Paying tribute to the natural world keeps me grounded and more in tune with my surroundings. My work codifies the beauty of the landscape, blending reality and imaginary elements. I respond with intuitive gestures to its vastness and complexity becoming densely layered, intricate, and ultimately human.



Undergrowth
12" x 16"
Oil on Canvas

Royden CARD

Drawing and then painting desert landscape has been my primary focus for over 50 years. You do the work, learn, teach, keep painting, maybe win an award or two (or not), but you love the work and go on painting. Lately, I seek out those views that get overlooked; not the scenic viewpoint of a turnout. Though I love the slick-rock and the towering red cliffs, I think I love the multiplicity of greys, sienna's, pale ochres, blue green of Morrison hills, purples and faded umbers of the badlands, even more. They seem to be what I tend to paint these past years. Love of the desert, refuge and contemplation... and painting.



East of Thompson
16" x 16"
Acrylic on Canvas



G. Russell CASE

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West of Town
12" x 16"
Oil on Board

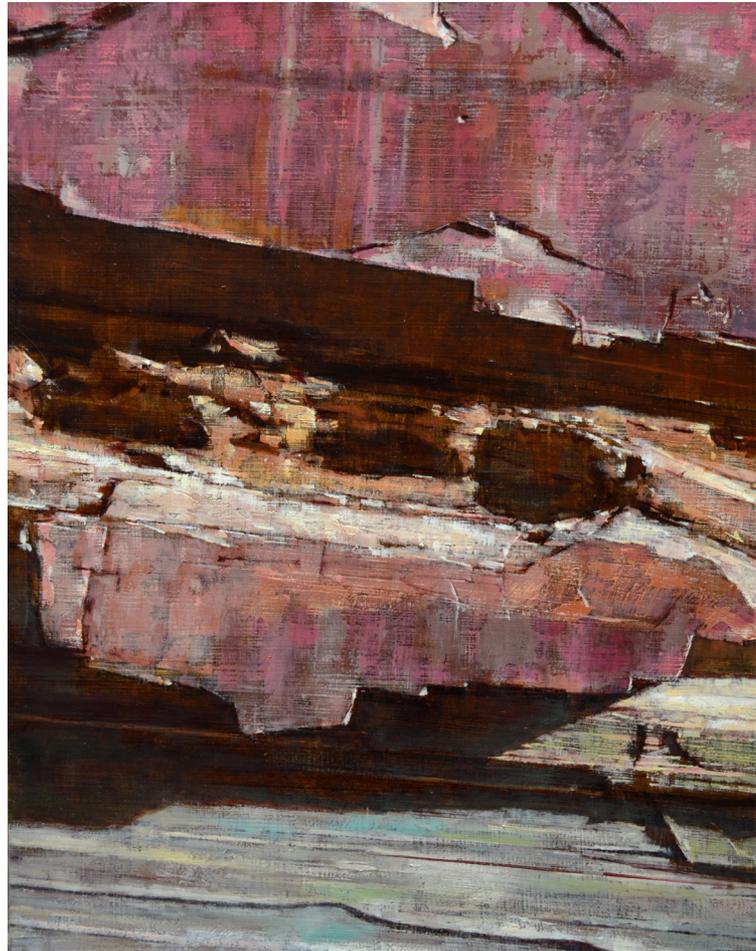


October Farm
24" x 36"
Oil on Linen

Paul DAVIS

The landscape here is so grand that it has taken me some time to express it in a way that seems my own. I've become fascinated by the surfaces of cliff walls and by what I see on the ground on my daily hikes. Erosion, decay, stains, varnishes, lichens, volumes, cracks, contrasted by freshly exposed planes, all modulated by light, wind, water, weather and time are incredibly beautiful and inspiring for a painter. Leonardo suggested that artists should study old walls to stimulate the imagination. In one way or another I have been doing that for years... For me the cliff walls represent an event, which is perfectly balanced in the moment. When I look at them I can't tell the difference between a thing being created and a thing being destroyed.

Cliff Wall
11" x 14"
Oil on Board





Frank Ray HUFF, JR.

One thing has remained constant throughout the years is the continuous excitement of finding something interesting to paint. I find that the most important part of painting is the scene, comfort is not important. I have been on a freeway overpass and had my easel blown off the bridge and there were times I've painted in freezing cold where the watercolor would freeze on contact with paper just to get a color study.



Winter Light
24" x 30"
Oil on Canvas



Anne KAFERLE

My desert home offers daily reminders of the power of water and deep geologic time. The aftermath of a flash flood reveals a beautiful reordering of sediments according to size along its path. Surrounding cliffs display the history of a periodically advancing and receding interior seaway over the course of million of years. In my work, paint echoes geologic processes... deposition and erosion. Gravity plays as much a role as direct mark-making. I hope to find an aesthetic balance reflective of the continual, harmonious rearrangement of our environment.



Column
16" x 16"
Oil on Panel



Tableland
30" x 40"
Oil on Panel

Patricia KIMBALL

I am looking to express only the most essential aspects. Not more information, not more detail, but more specificity in the big relationships of color, value, and space. I enjoy being outside, observing the landscape and the people within it, and searching for the painterly possibilities therein...

I feel I came of age as a painter in large part because of the workshops offered there by Paul Davis, Dave Dornan, and Tony Smith. Their tutelage—close observation, working directly from life, and paint that has a life of its own separate from the image—is the basis of my approach to my work. I also think Helper itself, the town and its surroundings, informed and influenced what I want to paint. The landscape there is not scenic in the traditional sense. But I love its quiet beauty and unspectacular dignity.

*Windbreak*

12" x 12"

Oil on Board



David MEIKLE

I have a great love of Utah's landscape. I am very much drawn to painting grand vistas but I am also fond of portraying small towns and rural scenes. I also look for opportunities to show depth and distance in a scene using light and atmospheric perspective. My experience as an art director had given me an affinity for strong shapes and colors. The design of the composition is very important to me. For myself, the interaction of the landscape and light lead to unlimited opportunities to make statements about our experience in our environment.



Helper Shadowlands
12" x 16"
Oil on Board



Bonnie POSSELLI

In the beginning, I wash the canvas in hues chosen for a ground that gives energy to the painting. Often, I layer the washes with different colors, suspending bits of pure pigment and letting the paint drizzle for a rich, grainy effect... When I am satisfied with the wash, I will create a slight sketch for placement. From there, a loose block-in is formed with shape, value and line, with the idea of coming back with layers of paint using brush and palette knife. Sometimes, washes and glazes are used to create an effect or mood. Always, there is a reverence for truth that the subject chosen has inspired. Each painting is a separate journey, a different story.



Harmony Within
12" x 12"
Oil on Canvas



My Love Affair With Trees

36" x 48"

Oil on Canvas

Jeffery R. PUGH

I continue to evolve, what I paint and why, are moving targets for me and I find myself wondering what I will see next. I couldn't have imagined that I would relate to the clouds along the horizon or to the skulls on the fence posts but I do. They are both symbolic of changes, whether a storm is rising and there is a change of season or if a life has been lived to it's fullest and death has become the next chapter. If I'm honest, I feel like I'm just barely starting to understand the 'why'.



Morning Under Balance Rock
12" x 12"
Oil on Canvas



Hadley RAMPTON

I'm drawn to pattern and form in the landscape. I love the juxtaposition of bold highlights and shadows versus the subtleties brought on by atmosphere and gentle undulations of light. In the landscape that cradles Helper, UT, it is the cliffs and rock formations and all the dramas and delicacies within that spark my desire to paint.

I prefer to work onsite where I not only see the scene before which I stand but feel its light, weather and mood. Those feelings inform the energy by which I lay down each stroke. I paint with a palette knife in bold strokes, happy to break my subject matter down into simplified form composed of value and color. This is a two dimensional surface upon which I work and I don't want to hide that. I want my process and the abstract nature of the accumulation of paint strokes to be evident, but when one stands back, for a three dimensional, Renaissance form and space to emerge. This is what excites me.



Entre to Helper
12" x 12"
Oil on Masonite



Andrew SKORUT

My landscape paintings are about balance between abstraction and realism. I believe in the process involved in creating painting is as important as the finalized image. I look for opportunities of applying paint in abstracted way which from the distance is translated into realistic landscape. I apply multiple glazes then I scratch with various tools to create interesting abstract marks and to reveal the underplaying colors.



Sunset
38" x 43"
Oil on Canvas



Winter Sky
35" x 39"
Oil on Canvas

Gary Ernest SMITH

In my travels, which I call my research and development time, I found myself in the Price, Helper area of Utah on a late summer of 2017. I am drawn to the sometimes severe, subtle value and color changes of the geography of this area. I ran across a field in Hiawatha just after harvest with its rich tones and abundant texture. It inspired this painting of beauty and open space. I also encountered, in the early morning, shadows across a field of wind rowed hay that inspired the smaller plein air painting.



Field Shadows
12" x 16"
Oil on Board



Field Near Hiawatha
36" x 48"
Oil on Linen

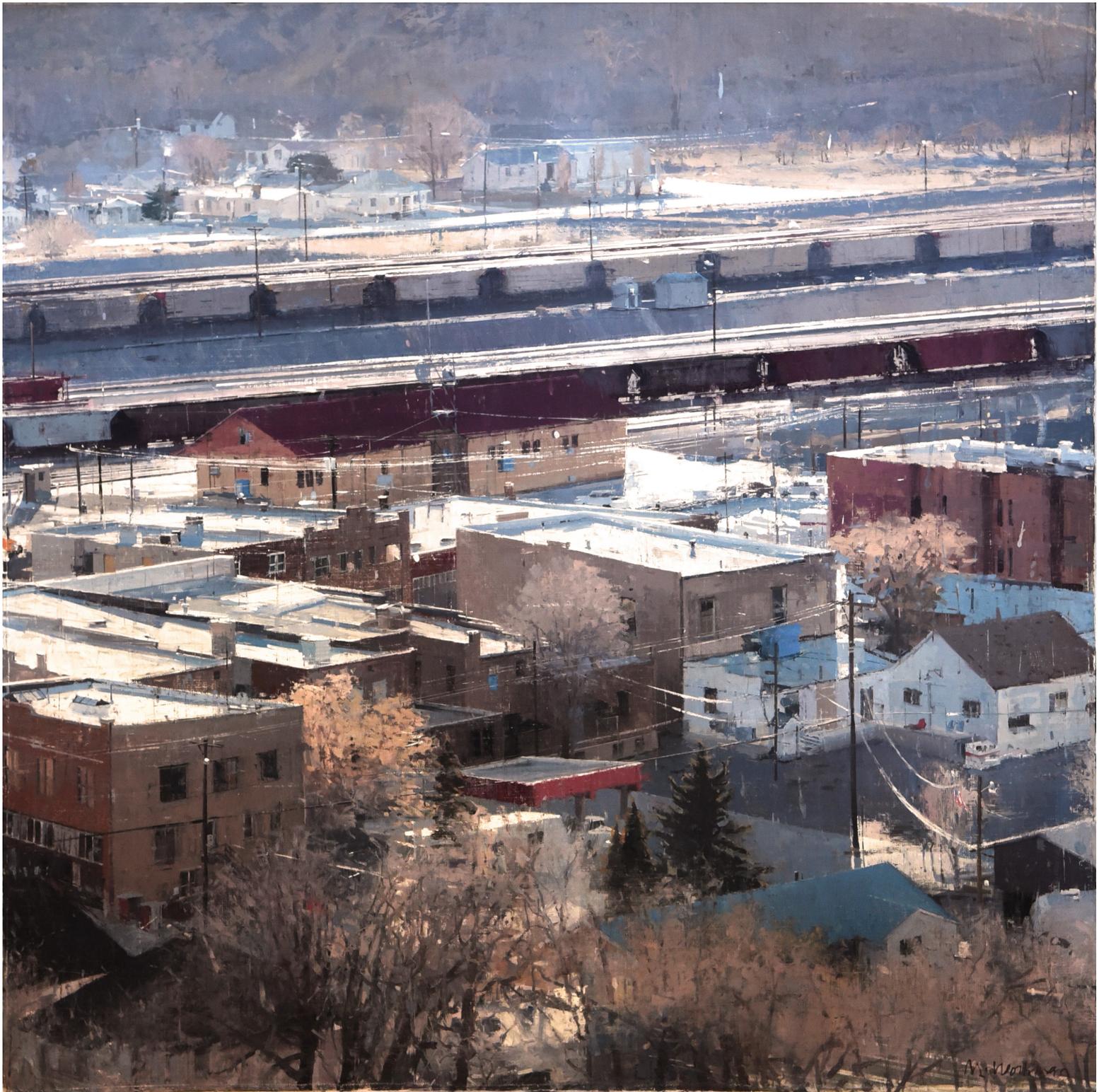
Michael WORKMAN

When asked for an artist statement I try to keep it simple; I am a "contemporary traditionalist". I know that sounds contradictory, but I hope I can be up-to-date, and still honor tradition. One thing that is consistent in art history, is the opposition between different ideas, i.e. contemporary vs. traditional, romantic vs. classic, naturalistic vs. abstract, etc. I decided years ago not to choose between the opposites, but instead work to bring them together in a beautiful way.

My watchword is beauty. It is not difficult to see that we live in a world that is full of turmoil. On the other hand, it is easy to be tempted by the cliché. Rather than choose between angst or picturesque beauty, I hope to offer a reminder that there is beauty in the ordinary. When asked for an artistic statement one is tempted to try to impress with intellectual rhetoric, but my statement is simple: "There are still good things."



Helper Winter
10" x 10"
Oil on Board



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