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## Three to Watch: Artists Making Their Mark

There is a lot of superb art being made these days;  
this column shines light on a trio of gifted landscapists.



**BRYAN MARK TAYLOR** (b. 1977) paints sparkling rural and urban scenes in the Western U.S., which makes sense because this native Oregonian grew up in Utah, earned a BA at Brigham Young University, and then took an MFA at San Francisco's Academy of Art University, where he now teaches.

Several years ago, Taylor discovered the world of plein-air painting, which entails not only a set of technical practices but also a growing community of artist-colleagues who experience nature intensely. "Painting on location," he says, "has allowed me to develop greater sensitivity to my subject and capture a truer sense of light, texture, and distance." Indeed, Taylor is particularly adept at conveying the varying atmospheric conditions one can see while looking across valleys, as well as the flickering reflective effects glimpsed along city avenues.

His attraction to working outdoors is not entirely procedural, however. Taylor notes that his plein-air studies, to which he refers while painting larger canvases back in the studio, "have become my preferred means of recording my impressions and feelings about nature. We need to take time to see nature and let it rejuvenate our spirits in this fast-paced world. I personally believe in a powerful, wise, and loving Creator who made the earth beautiful for our benefit; therefore, I see the landscape as an expression of love toward us."

In 19th-century America, the spiritual dimensions of landscape painting were widely understood and discussed: George Inness's Swedenborgian belief in God's immanence within nature is just one example, though there were others, of course. In today's secularized art world, many opinion leaders find such views disconcerting, so it is refreshing to encounter an artist — especially a younger one — who can articulate this perfectly valid aspect of his work. The intensity of Taylor's engagement extends right down to the placement

of each brushstroke, which helps convey not only an accurate depiction, but also the emotions he feels on location.

Taylor's next solo show, *Moments of Light*, is on view April 4-May 1 at Elliott Fouts Gallery in Sacramento, CA. He is also represented by Lovetts Gallery (Tulsa), Montgomery-Lee Fine Art (Park City, UT), and Williams Fine Art (Salt Lake City).

BRYAN MARK TAYLOR (b. 1977)

*FARMER'S PATCHWORK*

2008, OIL ON CANVAS, 10 x 12 IN.

ELLIOTT FOUTS GALLERY, SACRAMENTO





**NANCY BUSH** (b. 1947) was always drawing during her childhood in Austin, Texas. In her grandmother's home she especially admired pictures made by her great uncle, the portraitist Ralph Rowntree, who would sometimes let her watch him paint. Yet Bush did not initially pursue a career in art, and it was only after working in business that she enrolled in Austin's Mission Renaissance school, where aspiring painters emulated the Old Masters. She also took classes at the Laguna Gloria Art Museum nearby, and, for 12 years now, she and her husband Bill have been running the Fredericksburg Artists' School in the scenic hill country west of Austin.

Although Bush paints the occasional still life, landscape is her primary subject: "It is ever changing yet soothingly the same," she says. "The variety and vastness of it can sometimes be overwhelming, but I find myself thinking 'less is more.'" Early in her career, Bush emphasized the "more," using bright, colorful strokes *alla prima*. Several years ago, however, she changed course after spending time on the East Coast and in Europe. Her shift to a subdued tonalist palette and a more methodical technique has been informed by devoted study with Michael Workman and Scott Christensen, and by looking closely at such historical idols as George Inness, Bruce Crane, and Isaak Levitan, as well as the contemporary masters Richard Schmid and Russell Chatham.

NANCY BUSH (b. 1947)  
*AUTUMN ON FLAT CREEK*  
2008, OIL ON CANVAS, 40 X 48 IN.  
WHISTLE PIK GALLERIES, FREDERICKSBURG, TEXAS

Not surprisingly, Bush treasures "the fleeting moments that you get in the early mornings and late evenings. They convey more of a mood, a feeling, because of the light." She travels regularly around America and Europe, yet the landscapes she records are rarely traceable to a particular region. Rather, she achieves a tranquil universality by melding her painted field studies and reference photographs back in the studio: "I want viewers to feel the physicality and emotional essence of the subject, and to find a little bit of peace, serenity, and quiet moments of reflection." Indeed, Bush's cool, foggy visions deftly let us know the artist was actually there, even as they transport us far away.

A selection of Bush's work will be seen March 6-7 during the invitational *Night of Artists* show and sale at the Briscoe Western Art Museum in San Antonio. Her year-round representatives are Astoria Fine Arts (Jackson Hole, WY), Jack Meier Gallery (Houston), Nedra Matteucci Fine Art (Santa Fe), Sylvan Gallery (Charleston), and Whistle Pik Galleries (Fredericksburg).

**SUSIEHYER** (b. 1954) paints not only landscapes, but also streetscapes and still life. Having earned a BA in studio art at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania's Moravian College, this New Jersey native moved on to Allentown's Baum School of Art and the University of West Florida (Pensacola). She returned to the studio in 2002 when she

enrolled at the Art Students League of Denver, studying with Kevin Wechbech, Quang Ho, Kim English, Doug Dawson, John Lencicki, and Ron Hicks. "Taking their classes has encouraged me to teach others," she notes. "It's so important to keep the energy circulating, to give back." Therefore, when she isn't painting in such scenic locales as Tahiti, Corsica, and New Mexico, Susiehyer teaches regularly at the Center for the Arts in Evergreen, Colorado, near her family home in the foothills west of Denver.

Even a quick survey of Susiehyer's paintings suggests the exceptional diversity of her materials and techniques: "On some canvases, I paint very thick. On linen, I use washes because the weave of the linen shows through, while masonite panels convey a scratchy appearance because of my stiff brushes." The artist also pushes herself "by making different versions of a painting — in other colors or ranges of value. I'm always experimenting, hoping to learn something. It's the best rush when I can let my intuition take over; my mind then relaxes and I get into a sort of Zen state. When that happens, those paintings are always the best ones."

Although it may not immediately register, what unifies Susiehyer's wide-ranging creations is her dedication to abstraction. "Painting, for me, is like doing a puzzle. I like the idea that, underneath the subject matter, even in landscapes, is a good abstract design based on a structural integrity. To organize the painting, I use big, abstract designs of major value groups as the under-painting or the block-in. Then I further organize those big value shapes by creating smaller shapes within them. How a painting evolves seems to be determined by my response to the shape relationships of the subject. This may account for differences in style or focus, but the goal is always to be just at the edge of abstraction."

The fruits of Susiehyer's explorations can be seen across Colorado at Framed Image (Littleton), Geoffrey Lasko Fine Art (Colorado Springs), Mary Williams Fine Art (Boulder), Showings Fine Art (Denver), and The Cultural Arts Council of Estes Park Fine Arts Gallery. ■

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*Text by ANNE HOPPER VICKSTROM*

SUSIEHYER (b. 1954)  
**NOVEMBER SNOW**  
2008, OIL ON BOARD, 36 x 24 IN.  
COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST

