

NatureWorks Show Tulsa, OK

One of the Top 3 Shows in the United States

NatureWorks, Inc. is a non-profit organization focused on the nationwide conservation of wildlife. By assisting with projects such as the development of wildlife preserves, and introducing wildlife into new habitats, their values concerning conservation are ceaselessly shared with others.

The funds needed to provide support to such projects are generated through donations, as well as any profits made at the annual Art Show and Sale. With 2009 bringing 60 national and international artists to Tulsa's Renaissance Hotel, NatureWorks is again proud to sponsor the event, which remains one of the top three wildlife art shows in the country.

Established and residing exclusively in Tulsa, Okla., NatureWorks has no national affiliation, and unpaid volunteers provide all management. The organization's Board of Directors selects all wildlife projects supported and funded by NatureWorks. Criteria are based strictly on the value the project will have for wildlife, and can be conducted at the local, state or national level.



“Buffalo Runner’s”
John Phelps
12 x 16 Oil

Some recent projects include: study of diseases in Wichita Mountains Elk herd, the purchase of a Trumpeter Swan for Swan Lake, the construction of a hiking trail in the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, the acquisition of wetlands near Kerr Reservoir, the improvement of the fish habitat in the Illinois River, and the provision of scholarships for student wildlife artists.

Artists for 2009 NatureWorks, Inc. Art Show and Sale

Mark Anderson	Linda Besse	Kalon Baughan
Ray Brown	Dan Brueggeman	Robert L. Caldwell
Gary Cooper	Ilse de Villiers	Terry Donahue
Tim Donovan	Adele Earnshaw	Charles Ewing
Melanie Fain	Lindsey Foggett	Jow Garcia
Royce Gilliland	Jim Gilmore	Shawn Gould
Matthew Higginbotham	Cindy Lewis	Mark Holland
Brenda Johnson	Gary Johnson	Joni Johnson-Godsy
Mark Kelso	Leslie Kirchner	Christine Knapp
Lee Kromschroeder	Susan Labouri	Karen Latham
Stephen LeBlanc	Renee Buller	Terry Lee
Ron Lowery	Diane D. Mason	Kenny McKenna
Carolyn Mejstrik	Bruce Miller	Bill Mittag
Rock Newcomb	Judy Osburn	Pat Pauley
John Phelps	Amy Poor	Jerry Ricketson
Jocelyn Russell	R. Scott	Eric Slocombe
Lyn St. Clair	Scot Storm	John Strutt, III
Garth Swift	Sam Terakedis	Jerry Thrasher
Ronnie Wells	Brad Williams	Chris Wilson

The 2009 show was held between Feb. 28 (10a.m.-6p.m.) and March 1 (11a.m.- 5p.m.) at the Renaissance Tulsa Hotel and Conference Center: 6808 South 107th East Avenue Tulsa, OK 74133.

The Art Show and Sale is annually sponsored by NatureWorks, Inc. in efforts to raise funds and awareness for wildlife conservation. 25 percent of every artist's profit is donated directly to our organization, and that portion is therefore tax deductible to all buyers.

For information regarding the 2010 show please contact:

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The 2009 NatureWorks featured Artists were John Phelps and Mark Higginbotham

John Phelps' art exemplifies the history of the Great American West, beginning with the explorations of its vast terrain, the fur trade era and its mountain men, the epoch years of the cowboy, both ranching and rodeo. His works portray the early years in American history through present day, and a lifetime of cowboying, horse packing, hunting and fishing lend authenticity to his subject matter.

Born and raised in Cheyenne, Wyo., Phelps is truly a lifelong cowboy. After attending the University of Wyoming, Phelps joined the United States Navy and was sent to Viet Nam. Upon his return, he served as a guide for elk and bighorn sheep hunters in the Fitzpatrick and Glacier Wilderness areas in Fremont County, Wyo., and has now lived in Dubois, Wyo. for over twenty-five years.

The NatureWorks Art Show & Sale honored Phelps with an Award of Excellence in 1999, and selected his work as the Best in Show in both 2003 and 2007. The Veteran's Plaza Committee in New York City commissioned Phelps to design and sculpt "The Phelps Award" in 2004. Aptly named and fashioned to recognize both his and his son's service in the United States military, the award is a sculpted replica of a Viet Nam era battle helmet, and was first awarded to Rudy Giuliani.

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“When Hunters Meet”
18 x 24 Oil

Matthew Higginbotham was born in Colorado Springs, CO. in 1963. His early beginnings with art took place in a pottery studio in 1974 at the age of 11 at Tulsa's Philbrook Art Institute. This weekend class his mother enrolled him in opened up something deeper that would one day lead to a career in the arts first on the kick wheel and eventually on canvas. From 1991-1995, Higginbotham owned Northwest Pottery and Fine Arts based in Spokane, Washington, selling both functional pottery and fine are ceramics. Galleries such as Sasak in the Seattle Design Center, Seattle's Southwest Collections, and others throughout the state marketed and sold his work. Then in 1995 a creative transformation occurred that led Higginbotham to painting. He discovered a new way to communicate his creative vision in the immediacy of painting on canvas that he felt was absent in painting glazes on pottery. This change was profound. In a matter of days, he decided to sell most all of his pottery equipment and devote himself entirely to painting. His decision turned out to be life changing.

It was really a transformational event for me when I started painting. I remember diving into all the art books on painting I could get a hold of and going back to the studio to practice and practice. Then it took off for me. I painted a series of Southwest churches, which led to a solo show in 1995 at Metro Mall Gallery in Spokane, WA and later at Bedford Gallery in Colorado Springs, CO. But it wasn't until I moved to northern New Mexico in late 1995 that I began to mature as a painter.”



“Harvest Blossoms IV”
48 x 60 Oil on Canvas

Higginbotham moved to Chimayo, NM at the end of 1995 and continued his series of churches, one of which was his first large commission of the famous Santuario de Chimayo. At the same time, he also ran Casa Escondida Bed & Breakfast for an absentee owner, sold his paintings and postcards to guests, and was represented in a local gallery. In time, he began to focus on landscapes as his subject of choice in his paintings.

“In the early years of painting I experimented with many subjects and eventually landscapes became my primary focus. It just seemed natural for me to want to study the nuances of what I was seeing in the fields and skies, and the more I painted them, the more I began to understand how they made me feel. Then when I found the colors that worked the best for me and could paint better, a whole new world opened up. I could really get into a landscape and start seeing the many wonderful opposites- darkness and light, peace and chaos, subtlety and directness, intensity and muteness. At that level, I could begin to really start expressing my emotions on canvas.”

S T A T E M E N T

I paint my personal experience of the lands in which I live; what I see and what I feel. The cloud pieces represent the beginning of the cycle of life in the New Mexico environment that all my work refers to. The spring monsoons bring the first rains after a long winter – they replenish the earth and bring forth life from the ground. The rivers swell as these pregnant clouds let loose sky-sweeping storms and the acequia ditches flood. The acequias bring water to wild flowers and farms, which start to bloom and grow. The colors in the burgeoning flowers and fields reflect, in brilliant hues, the subtle colors that dance across the sky and within the spirit of the massing clouds. Each season offers up its soul - manifest in varying hues and intensities. Spring’s brilliant colors eventually transform to the softer, subtler shades of fall.

This body of work is very much about the spirit of life in water- clouds are transcendent sprits and rivers carry their life. Water holds color and light and nourishes our environment with it. It nourishes and excites and soothes me as I hike through and meditate amid these rangelands and bosques. I feel as though I am a constant witness of miracles. By painting this glory and the emotions I experience in the landscape, I hope to bring that energy and that soulful ness to each canvas so that it communicates the reverence I feel for these living lands. It’s especially important at this time when we truly must cherish and protect and be thankful for the natural environment; it nurtures the life around us, and the life within us.

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