

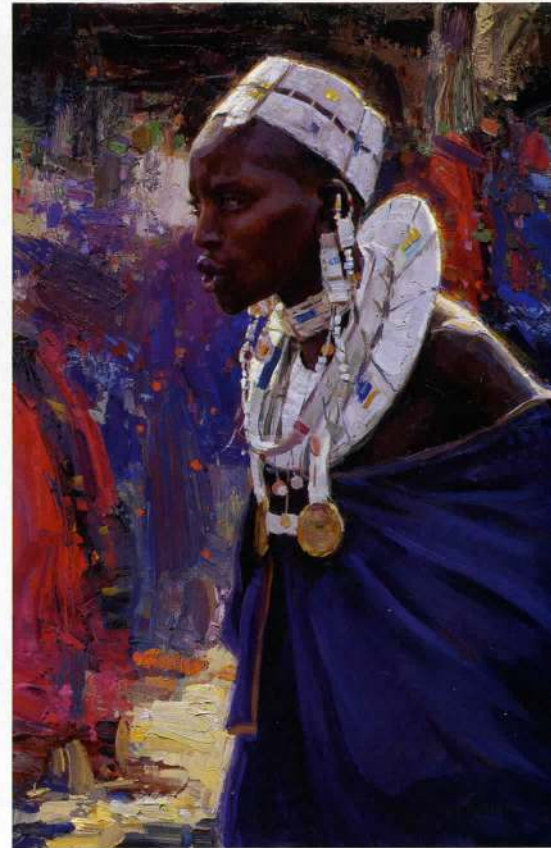
*Meet 10 leaders shaping the world
of representational art*

Prominent People

BY BONNIE GANGLEHOFF

Join the editors of *Southwest Art* this month as we celebrate 10 people who make outstanding contributions to the western art world—gallery owners, artists, and museum directors. We celebrate those who foster an appreciation for the American

West, whether they paint the majestic terrain of the Grand Tetons or display these paintings in their museums and galleries. We salute those who bring a multicultural perspective to their art, as well as others who bring art from other cultures to the



Craig Nelson, *Out and About*, oil, 24 x 30. Scott Burdick, *Massai Woman*, oil, 36 x 24.

shores of America. And, finally, we pay tribute to the talented artists who share their expertise in the classroom to help nourish the next generation. Peruse the following pages and appreciate with us this dedicated cadre of prominent and passionate art lovers.



The Last Spike, Historical Union, San Francisco to Los Angeles, Lang Station, CA, September 5, 1876, oil, 48 x 72.

Mian Situ

Painter • Laguna Beach, CA

What are some of the biggest changes you have seen in the art world during your career? When I came to the United States for the first time in 1987, it was hard for me to find a gallery interested in my subject and style. But during the last decade, people have shown more interest in traditional representational art. It is making a comeback. Since the late '90s, artists and collectors have found inspiration in the art that most reflects what they see in the [natural world] around them. The plein-air movement experienced a revival. At the same time, art collectors' enthusiasm for traditional western art has increased. Representational art has flourished as the demand for such works has boomed.



Where do you find inspiration for your work? As a visual artist, I am always moved by sights—a beautiful profile, a weathered face, a moment in movement, the rhythm of a line, an interesting shape, meaningful gestures, the interaction between people, the effect of the light hitting upon a subject. A visual element is a must for me in order to start a painting. How a story is

told is just as important as the story itself.

Of what accomplishments are you most proud? The first wave of Chinese immigrants came to America during the California Gold Rush of the mid-1800s. Now their stories have become the history of the American West. There have been some pictures and paintings about their lives, but I might be the first serious painter to make a series of the subject of Chinese-Americans in the West. I will continue to try to cover every aspect of their experience. American art collectors' recognition of my art makes me feel as though I have achieved something important through my art.

How do you define success? To be successful, an artist must first have skill. Then he must be in the right place at the right time. I feel that I am lucky because I came to America just as representational art was making its return. Art lovers' ardor for collecting such works provides so much support for an artist. The multitude of art events and exhibitions that exists today serves as an essential platform through which one can expose his work to the art world.