

# INTO THE HEART OF THE SOUTHWEST: 20 PAINTERS INTERPRET THE FORBES TRINCHERA RANCH

Forbes and *American Artist* again invited a group of artists to spend a week together interpreting a vast Colorado ranch in their choice of medium, subject, and style. | **by M. Stephen Doherty**

**One way** of gaining a better understanding of how artists interpret what they see is to ask several of them to respond to the same location in their own individual manners. That is, keep the subject matter constant, allow the artists to offer their own interpretations, and the variations will become obvious. This idea has been explored in five projects sponsored by *American Artist* and Forbes over the past 10 years. Each of the ventures brought together groups of artists from different regions of the United States to properties owned by Forbes, and the art-

work that resulted has been published in *American Artist* and exhibited in The Forbes Galleries, in New York City. The painting locations have included the Château de Balleroy, in Normandy, France; Old Battersea House, in London; and the 150,000-acre Trinchera Ranch, in Fort Garland, Colorado.

The most recent residency took place in Colorado from July 31 to August 8, 2006, and involved 20 artists, some of whom were selected through an open art competition, and others by invitation. The exhibition of their artwork, titled "Into the Heart of the Southwest:

20 Painters Interpret the Forbes Trinchera Ranch," will be on view at The Forbes Galleries from March 2 through May 5 (see sidebar page 28).

Although the artists were selected because their artwork indicated they would likely create work specific to the location, they were free to gather information in any way they felt appropriate; and they were given three months to spend in their home studios refining or enlarging their sketches, photographs, and paintings into works for the exhibition. As it turned out, most of the artists made an effort to draw and paint on location, when weather permitted. Even those accustomed to painting still lifes, figures, or urban scenes came prepared to paint the Trinchera Ranch as it appeared from the decks of ranch houses, along a rugged canyon road, or high up on mountain trails.

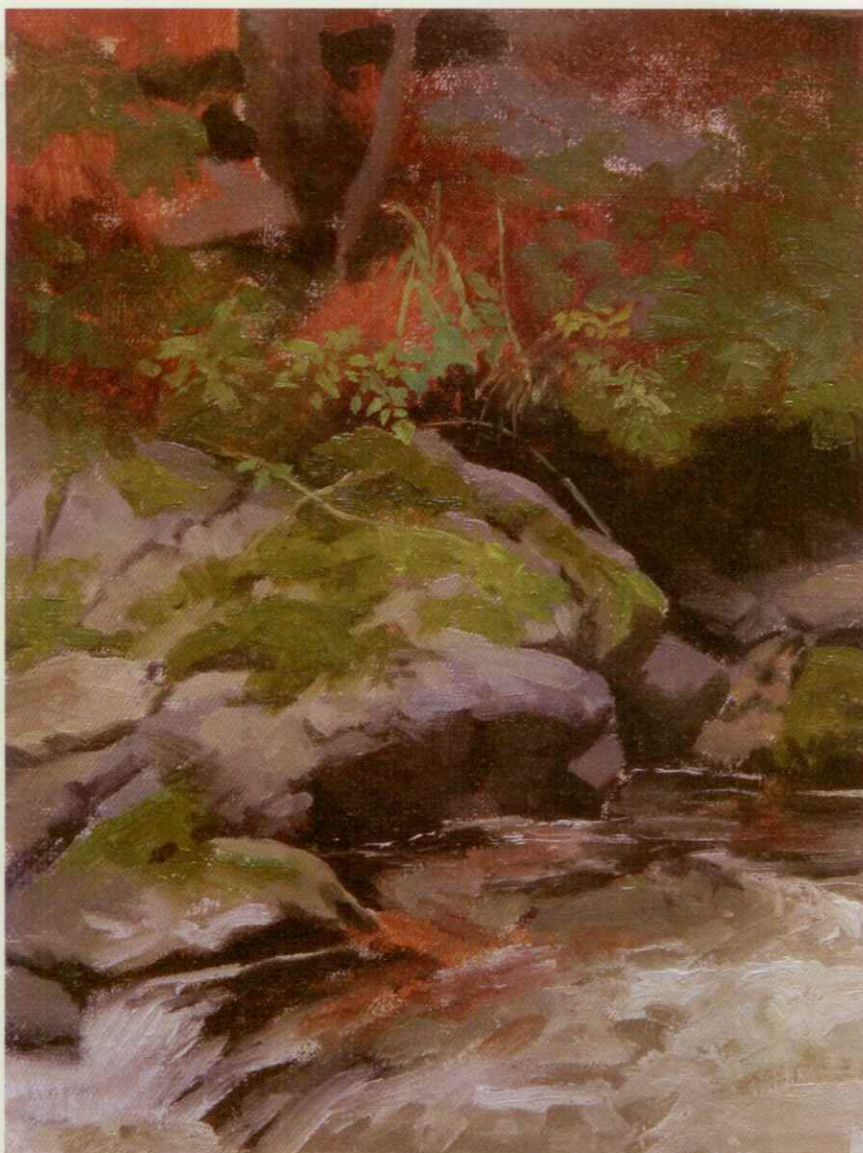
The artists familiar with painting the vast open spaces in the Western states didn't have to adjust to the painting conditions at the ranch; but those from New York, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Wisconsin—most of whom had never painted west of the Mississippi River—needed time to interpret the space that extended for hundreds of miles in all directions and to understand the weather patterns that could be observed hours before they affected the atmosphere at the ranch. Those artists also needed to acclimate themselves to the intense light, thin air, dry climate, and changing weather of the region.

"As someone who has lived my whole life on the East Coast, I was not

The painters at the Forbes Trinchera Ranch (left to right): Stephen C. Early, Sylvia Franco, John Varriano, Kim Lordier, Ira Goldberg, Stacey L. Peterson, Frank O'Cain, Ryan S. Brown, Anita Hampton, Aleksander Balos, Ruth L. Beeve, Brad Teare, Laura Ibbotson, Darren S. Kingsley, Deborah L. Chabrian, Edward Martinez, Peter Adams, Joseph Peller, Ellen Hutchinson, and Dean Hartung.

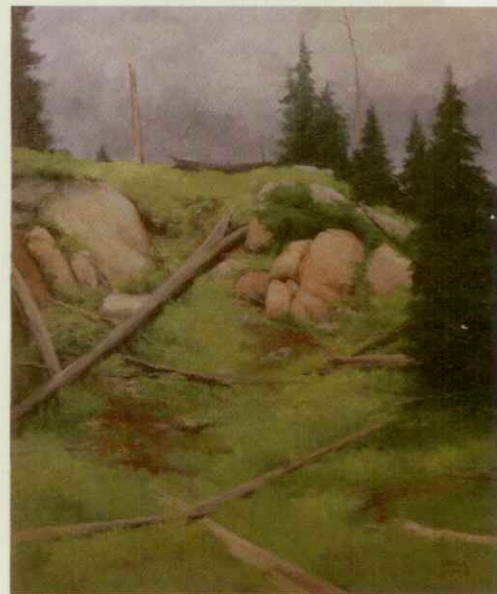






@ [www.myAmericanArtist.com](http://www.myAmericanArtist.com)

There are many more paintings from the Forbes Trinchera Ranch residency on the American Artist website.



**Ryan S. Brown** received a B.F.A. from Brigham Young University, in Provo, Utah, and studied privately with William Whitaker before enrolling in The Florence Academy of Art, in Italy. In May 2004 he opened the Classical Drawing Academy, in Springfield, Utah. For more information on Brown, visit his website at [www.ryansbrownart.com](http://www.ryansbrownart.com).

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

**Forbes Canyon Rock Study**

by Ryan S. Brown, 2006, oil, 8 x 6.  
All artwork this article collection the artist unless otherwise indicated.

**14,000 Feet Forbes Trinchera**

by Ryan S. Brown, 2006, oil, 24 x 20.

**Forbes Pond Study**

by Ryan S. Brown, 2006, oil, 11 x 14.



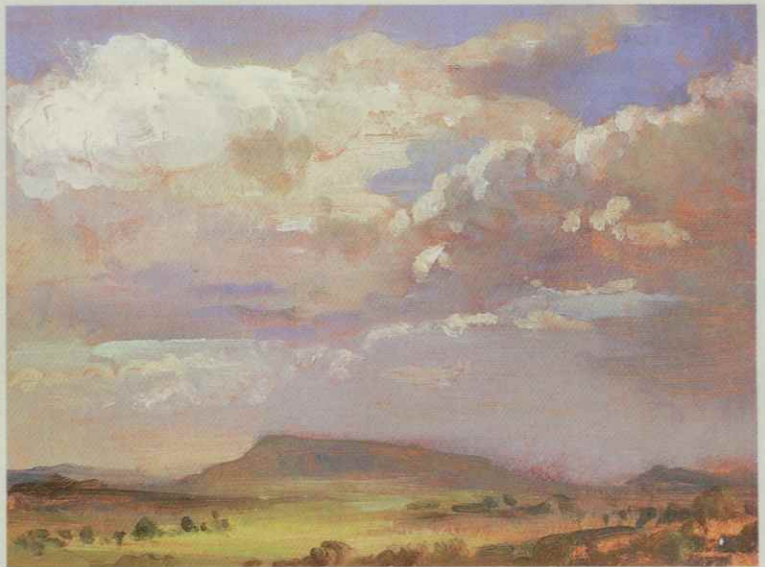
sure I believed the way 19th-century artists painted the West. It seemed very unreal," says Maryland artist Ephraim Rubenstein. "Shortly before leaving for Colorado, I saw an exhibition at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, in New York City, that brought together some of the finest 19th-century paintings and drawings in their collection. The show featured the work of Frederic Edwin Church, Winslow Homer, and Thomas Moran, all of whom I greatly admire. I was immensely impressed with the pictures, but I thought the artists must have been exaggerating for



Aleksander Balos attempted to paint in the rain.

effect. The skies were too big, the clouds too dramatic, and the lighting too quirky and unnatural. After my encounter with the landscape that encompasses the Trinchera Ranch, I saw how true their observations had been: the spaces *are* vast, and the weather is so powerful and swift as to completely transform a landscape view in a matter of minutes. The fact that one could be up on a bluff and see several distinct weather patterns in the distance all at the same time really blew my mind.

"The relative unfamiliarity of the landscape was not the only factor affecting my painting," Rubenstein



**John Varriano** studied art privately as a teenager, but he majored in electrical engineering in college. In 1985 he began studying at the Art Students League of New York, in Manhattan, with Gustav Rehberger and Frank Mason. Over the past 10 years, his artwork has been included in exhibitions organized by a number of art organizations, including Allied Artists of America and Audubon Artists Inc., and he is represented by Mark Gruber Gallery, in New Paltz, New York. He teaches privately and in workshops, and he currently serves as president of the board of directors of the Art Students League of New York. For more information on Varriano, e-mail him at [johnvarriano@yahoo.com](mailto:johnvarriano@yahoo.com).

**TOP**  
**Founders' Lodge Vista**

by John Varriano, 2006,  
oil on paper, 9 x 12.  
Collection the artist.

**ABOVE**  
**Colorado Cottonwoods**

by John Varriano, 2006,  
oil on paper, 12 x 18.  
Collection the artist.





LEFT

**Mount Blanca**

by Aleksander Balos,  
2006, oil, 11 x 24.  
Collection the artist.

BELOW LEFT

**Forbes Pond**

by Aleksander Balos,  
2006, oil, 8 x 11.  
Collection the artist.



**Aleksander Balos** moved to the United States from Poland in 1989 and graduated with a B.F.A. from Cardinal Stritch University, in Milwaukee, before studying art at the School of Representational Art, in Chicago. His paintings have been included in solo exhibitions at the Ann Nathan Gallery, in Chicago, and in group exhibitions in Florida, New York, Illinois, and Wisconsin. For more information on Balos, visit [www.aleksanderbalos.com](http://www.aleksanderbalos.com).

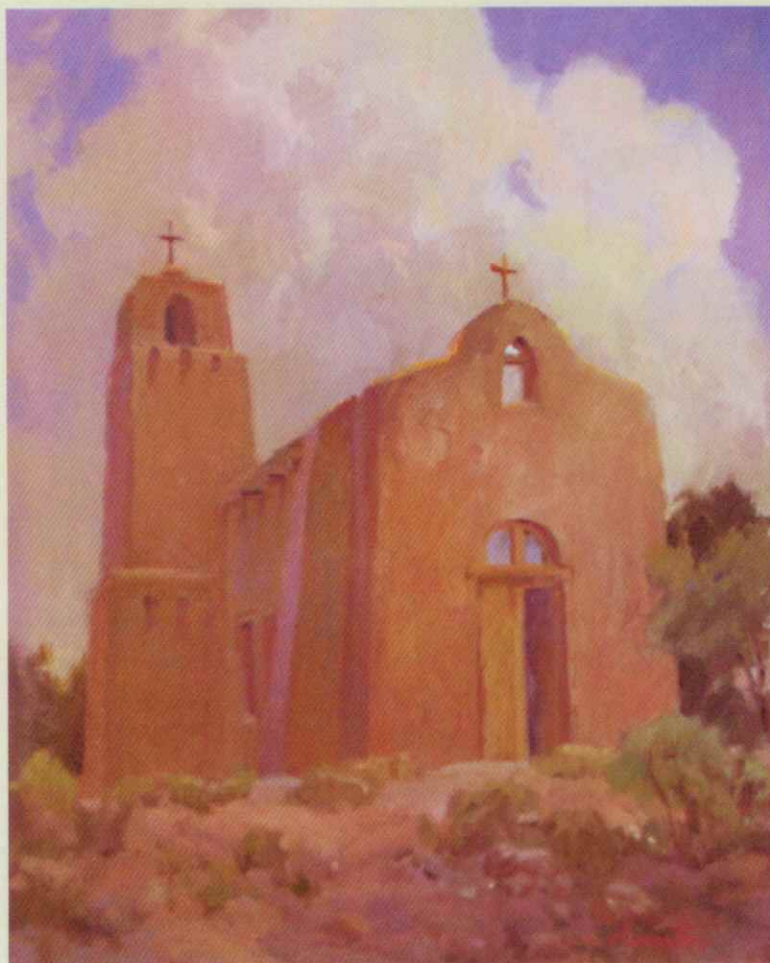
## Trinchera Artists Featured Separately in *American Artist*:

**Brad Teare** studied at the University of Idaho, in Moscow, and Utah State University, in Logan, before pursuing a career as an illustrator. In 1994 he moved to Utah with his family and set up a printing studio, where he produces woodcut prints. His plein air paintings and prints have been exhibited in a number of important exhibitions at the Springville Art Museum, in Utah; Southam Gallery and Bingham Gallery, both in Salt Lake City; as well as Medicine Man Gallery in Tucson, Arizona, and Santa Fe.

**Ruth L. Beeve** studied art at the University of California, Berkeley; Ohlone College, in Fremont, California; Pacific Union College, in Angwin, California; and in numerous workshops with Dale Laitinen, Robert Reynolds, and Stephen Quiller. She is a signature member of the California Watercolor Association and exhibits her paintings in California with Valley Art Gallery, in Walnut Creek; Pacific Wildlife Galleries, in Lafayette; and Gallery Concord, in Concord. She maintains a studio in Concord, California. For more information on Beeve, visit [www.valleyartgallery.org](http://www.valleyartgallery.org).

**Kim Lordier** graduated from the Academy of Art University, in San Francisco, and worked as a flight attendant before devoting herself to fine art full time in 2001. Her paintings have been included in exhibitions organized by the Pastel Society of America, the International Association of Pastel Societies, and the Carmel Art Festival; and she is a signature member of the Laguna Plein Air Painters and the Pastel Society of the West Coast. She is an artist-member of the California Art Club. For more information on Lordier, visit [www.kimfancherlordier.com](http://www.kimfancherlordier.com).





LEFT

**Sacred Ground**

by Anita Hampton, 2006,  
oil, 20 x 16. Courtesy  
Salisbury Fine Art, Avila,  
California.

BELOW

**In Silence**

by Anita Hampton, 2006,  
oil, 20 x 24. Courtesy  
Salisbury Fine Art, Avila  
Valley, California.

BOTTOM

**Then There's Pepper**

by Anita Hampton, 2006,  
oil, 20 x 24. Courtesy  
Salisbury Fine Art, Avila  
Valley, California.

OPPOSITE PAGE, ABOVE LEFT

**My Desk at Trinchera**

by Deborah L. Chabrian,  
2006, watercolor, 12 x 18.  
Collection the artist

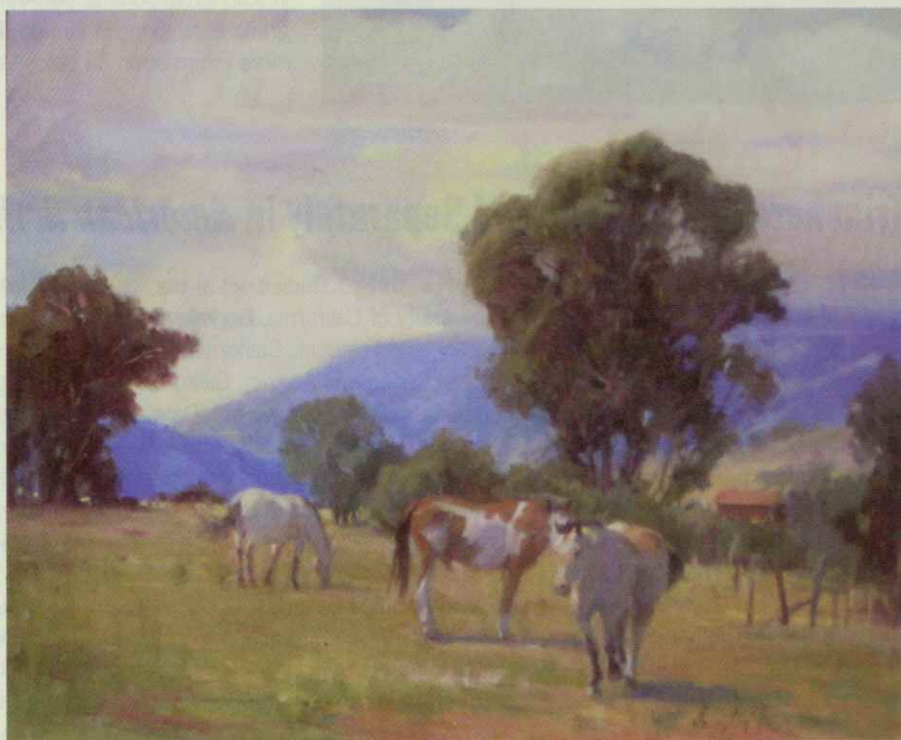
OPPOSITE PAGE, BELOW LEFT

**Road to Mt. Blanca**

by Edward Martinez, 2006,  
oil on board, 9 x 12.  
Collection the artist.



**Anita Hampton** is a signature member of Oil Painters of America, Laguna Plein Air Painters Association, and the California Art Club; and she is the author of *Oil Painting Step by Step* and *Oil Landscapes* (Walter Foster Publishing, Laguna Beach, California). Her paintings have won awards in a number of exhibitions, including those organized by the Sedona Arts Center, the Carmel Plein Air Painting Competition, the California Art Club, and *The Artist's Magazine*. For more information on Hampton, visit [www.ahamptonstudio.com](http://www.ahamptonstudio.com).







**Deborah L. Chabrian** studied at Parsons The New School for Design, in New York City; The School of The Art Institute of Chicago; the School of Visual Arts, in New York City; and in the private studio of Burton Silverman. She maintains an active career as an illustrator while exhibiting her watermedia paintings with galleries and art societies around the country. She is a signature member of the American Watercolor Society, the National Watercolor Society, and the Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Art Club; and her paintings have been included in exhibitions organized by those groups as well as the Society of Illustrators, the National Academy of Design, and the National Portrait Institute. For more information on Chabrian, visit her website at [www.chabrian.com](http://www.chabrian.com).



**Edward Martinez** grew up in Argentina and first studied painting with his father. He then moved to the United States to study at Parsons The New School for Design and Pratt Institute, both in New York City, and in the private studio of Burton Silverman. He has had an active career as an illustrator while exhibiting his oil paintings with galleries and art associations around the country, including Gregory James Gallery, in New Milford, Connecticut; Susan Powell Fine Art, in Madison, Connecticut; Meyer Gallery, in Santa Fe; and ThePortraitSource, in Hendersonville, North Carolina.

adds. "The variety of scenery on the ranch was equally staggering—from breathtaking alpine vistas to dry valleys with sagebrush and cactus. One ranch contained multiple microclimates and biospheres. Among the most moving of these was a forest of aspen trees that extended as far as the eye could see and that occupied acres of a mountainside. It is a great



Deborah L. Chabrian worked on a watercolor in a field of wildflowers.

experience to grapple with an unfamiliar landscape. It would have been much easier to paint in a more familiar setting, but the whole value of the experience lay in the shock to the system. I had to hit the ground running, as it were, and scramble to organize my responses."

"The residency at the Forbes Trinchera Ranch was a bracing elixir of plein air painting in the Southwest landscape," says New York artist Joseph Peller. "I enjoyed a week of painting without the interruptions and obligations of daily life. Trinchera's majestic wilderness and pastoral stillness provided a stunning contrast to the main focus of my work: the figure in the urban context of the frenetic maelstrom of New York City.





LEFT

**On the Edge**

by Laura Ibbotson, 2006,  
watercolor, 18 x 11½.  
Collection the artist.

BELOW LEFT

**Aspen Leaves**

by Laura Ibbotson, 2006,  
watercolor, 3½ x 5.  
Collection the artist.

BELOW

**Roadside Sage**

by Laura Ibbotson, 2006,  
watercolor, 5½ x 9.  
Collection the artist.

BOTTOM RIGHT

**Aspens**

by Laura Ibbotson, 2006,  
watercolor, 14½ x 10½.  
Collection the artist.



**Laura Ibbotson** graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran College, in Milwaukee, with a B.F.A. in fine art. In June of 2003, she was the artist-in-residence at Whitefish Dunes State Park. Since then, her paintings have been exhibited in shows organized by the Maryland Federation of Art; the Missouri Watercolor Society; Period Gallery, in Lincoln, Nebraska; and the Anderson Arts Center, in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Ibbotson paints in oil, acrylic, and watercolor. Recently, she has been focusing on watercolor, experimenting with new techniques, such as adding layers of Japanese paper to the paintings. She maintains a studio in Milwaukee. For more information on Ibbotson, visit [www.lauraiibbotson.com](http://www.lauraiibbotson.com).



BELOW

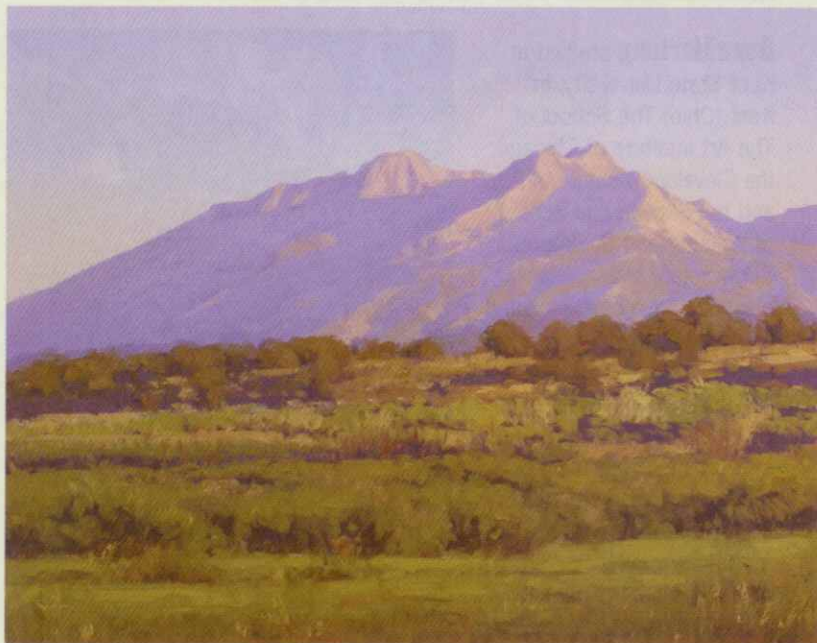
**On a Clear Day**

by Stacey L. Peterson,  
2006, oil, 18 x 36.

BOTTOM

**Sunrise, Mt. Blanca**

by Stacey L. Peterson,  
2006, oil, 16 x 20.



**Stacey L. Peterson** grew up in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains and had an interest in drawing and painting since childhood. She earned a degree in chemical engineering and worked as an environmental engineer, all while studying at Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design, in Lakewood, Colorado, and participating in painting workshops with nationally known artists. Peterson is a member of Oil Painters of America and Plein Air Artists Colorado, and has exhibited her oils with those and other national organizations. For more information on Peterson, visit [www.staceypeterson.com](http://www.staceypeterson.com).



"All my Colorado paintings are based on direct observation and the thrill of working in situ," Peller adds. "Each painting considers a moment in the daily cycle of unpredictable weather from sunrise to sunset, from the bucolic lifting fog of Lake House Pond to the stinging sunlight of rail cars at Blanca during the early moments of a Southwest sunset. Although Trinchera is light years from New York, I am still attracted to subjects that show man as a measure of all things. *Thunderhead*, *Trinchera* and *Rail Cars at Sunset*, *Blanca* use man-made objects as elements of composition and scale to reveal the great expanse of the desert landscape. *Lake House Pond*, *Lifting Fog*, and *Trinchera Sunrise* (not shown) reveal



Joseph Peller worked on a landscape painting.

in the brooding beauty and stillness reflected figuratively and literally in the man-made ponds that are the focus of both paintings. Together, this suite of paintings explores the ever-changing moods of the Forbes Trinchera Ranch, the unforgettable experience of a lifetime."

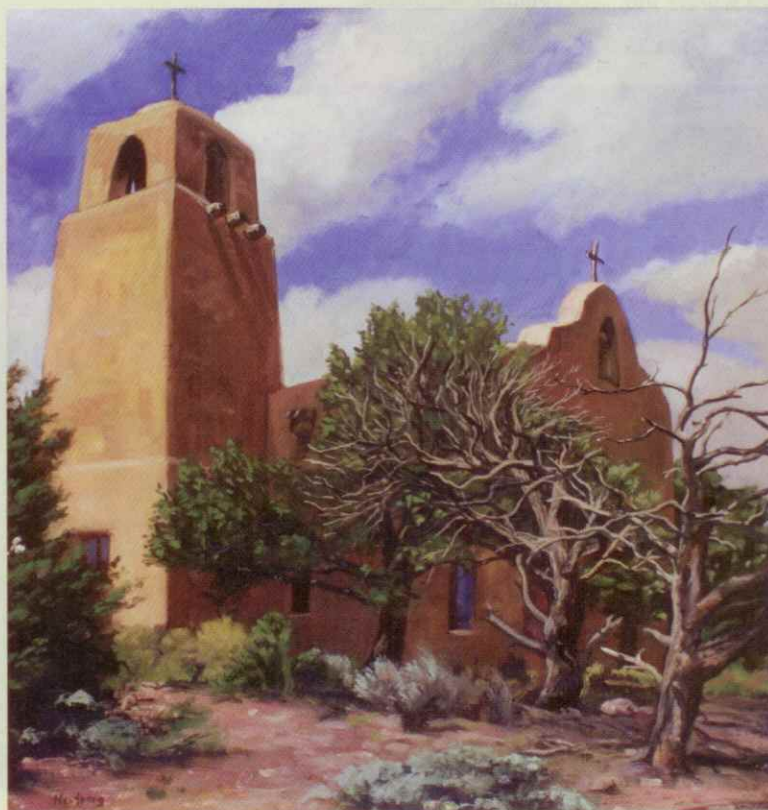
"Colorado is vast and the landscape is spectacular," says Pennsylvania artist Ellen Hutchinson. "I'm used to working in an indoor, controlled environment so I gathered objects such as flowers, pinecones, and tableware from the ranch and assembled them along with a map and landscape photographs to create my homage to Trinchera. One of the

**BELOW**  
**The Trinchera Chapel**

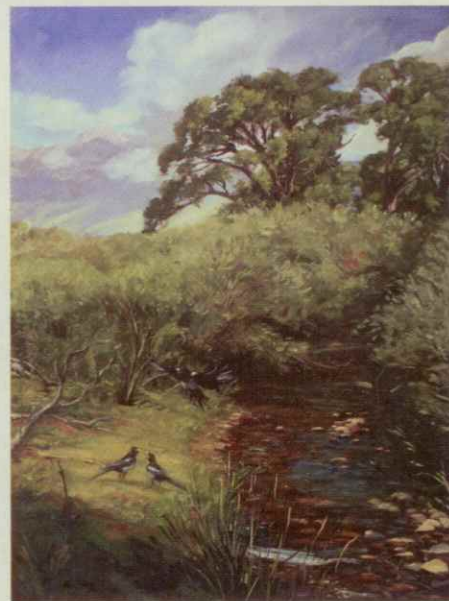
by Dean Hartung, 2006,  
oil, 24 x 23.

**BOTTOM**  
**Mt. Blanca With Magpies**

by Dean Hartung, 2006,  
oil, 32 x 24½.



**Dean Hartung** studied at Kent State University, in Kent, Ohio; The School of The Art Institute of Chicago; the Cleveland Institute of Art; and the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, in Skowhegan, Maine. His paintings have been included in exhibitions organized by a number of galleries and museums, and he has been commissioned to create several important murals. He teaches drawing, painting, and mural-painting. For more information on Hartung, visit the website of Gross McCleaf Gallery at [www.grossmccleaf.com](http://www.grossmccleaf.com).







LEFT

**Lake House Pond,  
Lifting Fog**

by Joseph Peller, 2006, oil,  
24 x 27. Courtesy ACA  
Galleries, New York, New York.

BELOW LEFT

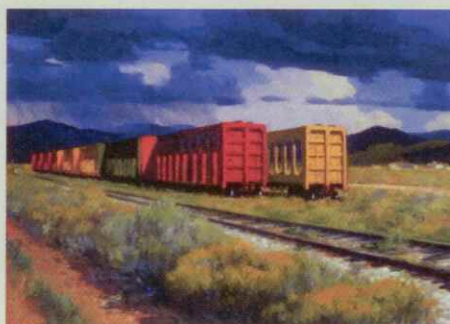
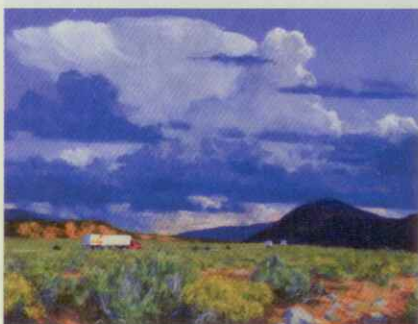
**Thunderhead,  
Trinchera**

by Joseph Peller, 2006, oil,  
26 x 36. Courtesy ACA  
Galleries, New York, New York.

BELOW RIGHT

**Rail Cars at Sunset,  
Blanca**

by Joseph Peller, 2006, oil,  
21 x 30. Courtesy ACA  
Galleries, New York, New York.

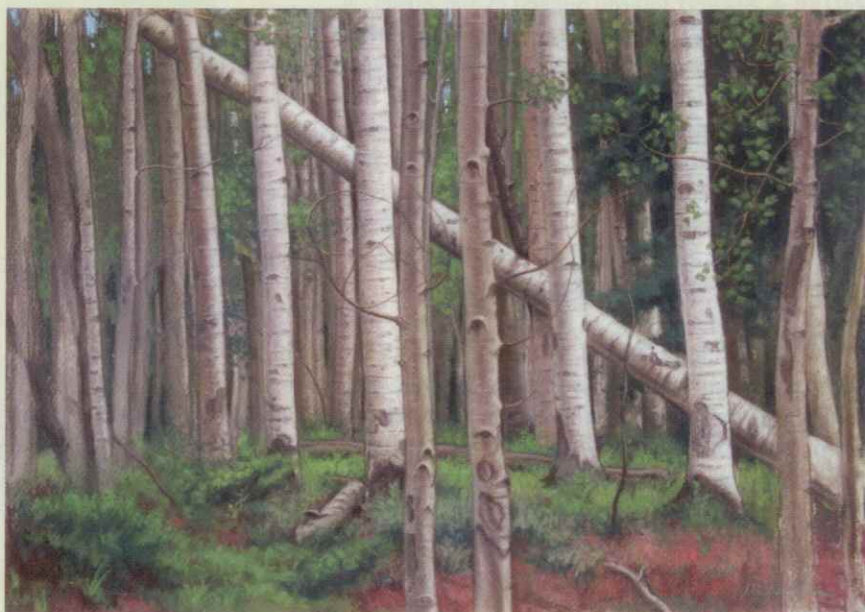


**Joseph Peller** was born in Toronto and studied at the School of Architecture at the University of Toronto, in Canada; as well as at the Art Students League of New York and the National Academy School of Art, both in Manhattan. He currently teaches at the Art Students League and exhibits his paintings with ACA Galleries, in New York City. For more information on Peller, visit [www.josephpeller.com](http://www.josephpeller.com).

**Ephraim Rubenstein** received a B.A. in art history and an M.F.A. degree in painting from Columbia University, in New York City. He also studied art at the Brooklyn Museum Art School, the National Academy School of Fine Arts, and the Art Students League of New York, all in Manhattan. He currently teaches at the Art Students League of New York and the National Academy School of Fine Arts. Rubenstein has had numerous solo exhibitions, and he writes for *Drawing* magazine. For more information on Rubenstein, visit [www.ephraimrubenstein.com](http://www.ephraimrubenstein.com).

**Aspen I**

by Ephraim Rubenstein, 2006, pastel, 19 x 26½.







**Darren S. Kingley** (above) studied at The Atelier, in Minneapolis; the Art Students League of New York, in Manhattan; and Studio Incamminati, in Philadelphia; and he participated in workshops with Michael Grimaldi, Rob Liberace, Anthony Ryder, and Ted Seth Jacobs. He received a scholarship from the American Society of Classical Realism, and one of his paintings was included in the exhibition "Realism Today," organized by *American Artist* magazine. He now teaches at Studio Incamminati. For more information on Kingley, visit [www.darrenkingsley.com](http://www.darrenkingsley.com).

**Frank O'Cain** (right) studied at the Art Students League of New York, in Manhattan, where he now teaches. He works in both oil and watercolor, and his recent work explores a new approach to space. "I am always wandering about in the unknown, asking myself questions, creating new problems, finding fresh possibilities," he explains. His paintings have been included in dozens of museum exhibitions and have been acquired for public and private collections. He currently exhibits with the Atelier Gallery D.D. & B., in New York City.







**Ellen Hutchinson** received a B.F.A. from the School of Visual Arts, in New York City, and studied at the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, in Skowhegan, Maine. She has been the subject of solo shows at Gross McCleaf Gallery, in Philadelphia; and group shows in North Carolina, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. For more information on Hutchinson, visit the website of Gross McCleaf Gallery at [www.grossmccleaf.com](http://www.grossmccleaf.com).

OPPOSITE PAGE, ABOVE  
**Tree Line**  
by Darren S. Kingley,  
2006, oil, 30 x 36.

OPPOSITE PAGE, BELOW  
**Study for  
Silence, II**  
by Frank O'Cain,  
2006, oil on linen,  
32 x 32. Collection  
the artist.

ABOVE LEFT  
**Trinchera Still  
Life**  
by Ellen Hutchinson,  
2006, oil, 30 x 24.  
Collection the artist.

most rewarding aspects of the trip was being inspired by the disciplined energy of other talented artists."

As Hutchinson indicates, the opportunity to share ideas and inspiration was one of the greatest benefits to accrue from artists working together—especially when they didn't have to be concerned about preparing meals, cleaning rooms, arranging transportation, or paying for accommodations. There was time to talk about the creative and business aspects of being an artist while relaxing in a hot tub, riding horses across the fields, lounging



Darren S. Kingley painted in the rain.

on the deck, playing pool in the lodge, driving along the canyon roads, and painting side by side below the three mountains that stretched 14,000 feet in elevation.

"One of my favorite times was toward the end of the week," remembers Kim Lordier. "The clouds were parting, a sparkle of light traveled across the valley floor, and we were hanging out at the lodge reveling in the experience of painting and breaking bread with one another. I set up my easel one last time, and Ryan Brown asked about the pastels I was using. I suggested he try them out, so he set his easel up near mine and





Kim Lordier and Ryan S. Brown worked side by side.

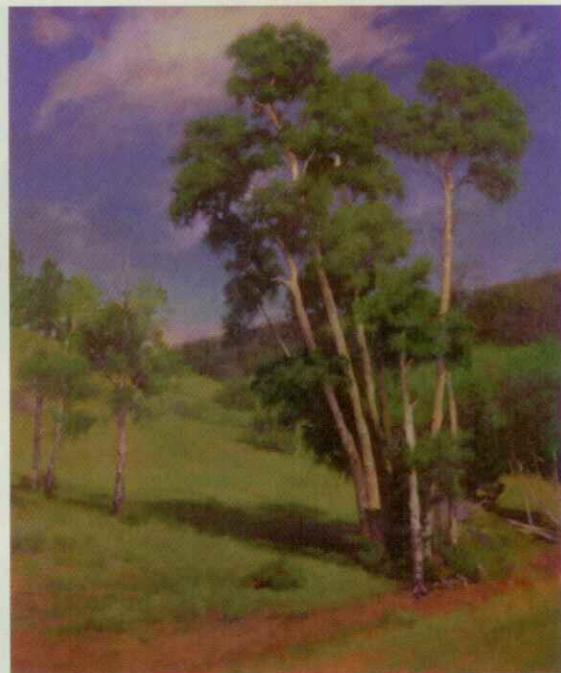
Painted the same scene. That's what the week was all about for me—everyone had something to share and to learn about the different ways we go along on our personal paths. The week together was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for all of us to immerse ourselves in art, surrounded by a shared passion for the creative process.” ■

## Exhibition at The Forbes Galleries

An exhibition of work created at the Forbes Trinchera Ranch this past August, titled “Into the Heart of the West: 20 Interpret the Forbes Trinchera Ranch,” will be on view at The Forbes Galleries, in New York City, from March 2 through May 5. The Forbes Galleries are located at 62 Fifth Avenue (at 12th Street), New York, New York. The galleries are open to the public, free of charge, Tuesday through Saturday (Thursdays are reserved for group tours by appointment) from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call (212) 206-5548.

## Stephen C. Early

studied at The Art Institute of Philadelphia; the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, in Philadelphia; the Art Students League of New York, in Manhattan; and Studio Incamminati, in Philadelphia. He was a successful illustrator who worked for major corporations and advertising agencies before devoting himself full time to fine art. Early is currently a teaching assistant to Nelson Shanks at both Studio Incamminati and the Art Students League of New York, and he conducts his own painting workshops. For more information on Early, e-mail him at [earlystudio@yahoo.com](mailto:earlystudio@yahoo.com).



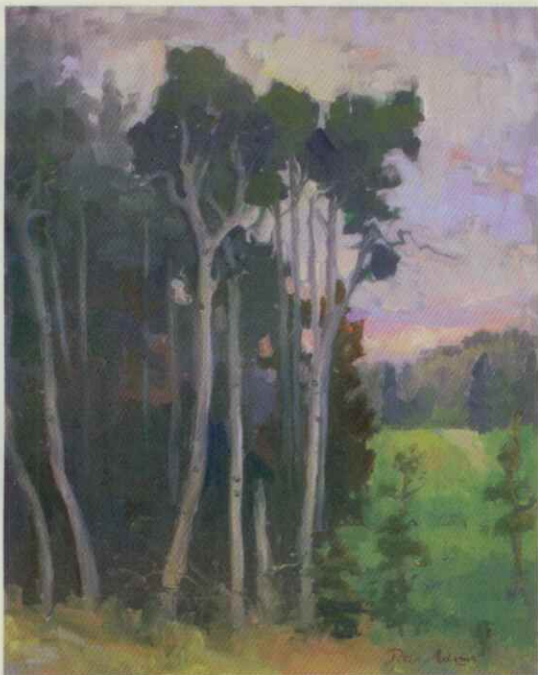
**ABOVE**  
**Cosset Evergreen**  
by Stephen C. Early,  
2006, oil, 24 x 20.  
Collection the artist.

**Ira Goldberg** studied at the Art Students League of New York, in Manhattan, with Robert Beverley Hale and David A. Leffel, while working as a bookkeeper in the league's business office. In 2001 Goldberg became the executive director of the Art Students League. “I believe the league to be the leading institution in the field of art education,” he says. “It has the distinction of operating as an atelier school based on the founding principles of self-guided and open-ended study in which students develop at their own pace as they study with professional artists. I am a product of that process and environment, and I firmly and wholeheartedly stand behind its effectiveness.”

**BELOW**  
**Lyle Canyon Rock and Roll**  
by Ira Goldberg, 2006,  
oil on paper, 18 x 15.  
Collection the artist.







**Peter Adams** studied art at Art Center College of Design, in Pasadena, California; Otis Art Institute, in Los Angeles; Instituto de Bellas Artes, in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico; and the Lukits Academy of Fine Arts, in Los Angeles. He is a signature member of the California Art Club, the Pastel Society of America, and Plein-Air Painters of America, and he is a master signature member of Oil Painters of America. Since 1993, Adams has been president of the California Art Club. For more information on Adams, visit [www.americanlegacyfinearts.com](http://www.americanlegacyfinearts.com).

**LEFT**  
**Aspens at Sunset**  
by Peter Adams, 2006,  
oil on panel, 20 x 16.  
Courtesy American  
Legacy Fine Arts,  
Pasadena, California.

**BELOW**  
**Passing Storm  
Over Trinchera**  
by Peter Adams, 2006,  
oil on panel, 16 x 20.  
Courtesy American  
Legacy Fine Arts,  
Pasadena, California.

