

ART *of the* WEST

Artists Master the Mood

by Vicki Stavig | [March 19, 2026](#)

How do artists create moods in their paintings—and why is that important? A doctor who has studied emotions for many years identified eight primary emotions, including joy, sadness, surprise, and anticipation. Artists create those moods in their paintings through their use of light and colors. Yellow, for example, conveys a positive, warm feel, while blues are calming and reds are exciting.

Artists are well aware of the importance of connecting with viewers, not only by subject and style but by mood. And gallery owners and directors know—and support—those artists. One of them is **Elaine Adams**, director of **American Legacy Fine Arts** in Pasadena, California. That gallery is hosting an exhibition that celebrates the power of light, color, and atmosphere in representational painting. *Mastering the Mood: Atmospheric Emotion* runs through June 6, and features works that explore the emotional resonance found in nature.



Lucent, Jennifer Moses, oil on linen, 20" x 22"

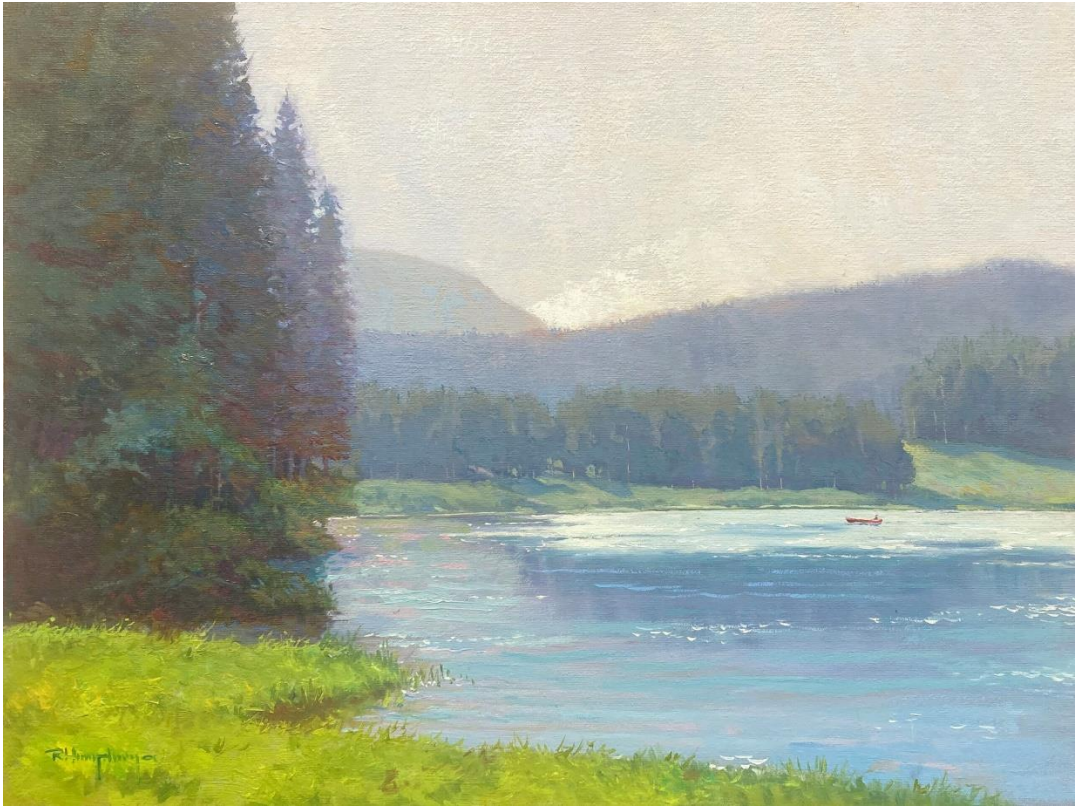
“Atmosphere has the extraordinary ability to transform the familiar into the transcendent,” Adams says. “This exhibition brings together artists who harness mood and light with exceptional sensitivity, creating works that stir memory, invite contemplation, and offer a sense of refuge in an increasingly fast-paced world.

“At a time when audiences seek respite from constant digital stimulation, *Mastering the Mood* invites viewers into a quieter, more contemplative visual experience rooted in atmosphere, light, and emotional nuance.”



Alpine Glow above Caples Lake, Jean LeGassick, oil on canvas panel, 8" x 10"

Participating artists in *Mastering the Mood* include **Peter Adams, Nikita Budkov, Warren Chang, John Cosby, Steve Curry, Karl Dempwolf, Richard Humphrey, Chuck Kovacic, Jean LeGassick, Calvin Liang, Jim McVicker, Stephen Mirich, Jennifer Moses, Michael Obermeyer, Tony Peters, Daniel W. Pinkham, Ray Roberts, Dan Schultz, Amy Sidrane, Mian Situ, W. Jason Situ, Alexey Steele, Alex Tabet, Jove Wang and Mary Kay West.** Artwork in the exhibition ranges from serene coastal vistas and luminous sunsets to moody interiors, still lifes, and moonlit expanses and embraces tonal harmony, expressive brushwork, and subtle shifts of illumination—qualities that allow a scene to transcend its geographic setting and become an intimate, personal experience for viewers.



A Quiet Morning; Upper Twin Lake, Mammoth CA, Richard Humphrey, oil on canvas, 18" x 24"