

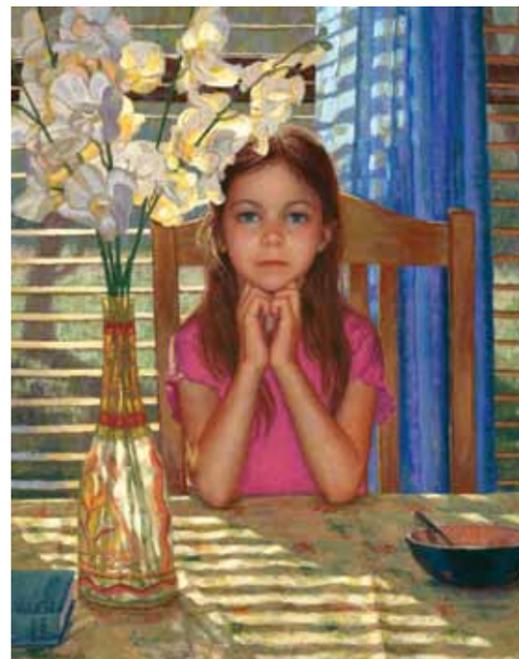
Meet the Finalists

Each year we receive thousands of entries for our Artistic Excellence competition. Round after round, we whittle them down until only three top winners and 10 honorable mentions remain. But beyond these 13, we receive many works that are dynamic, expressive, and skillfully executed. Here we present a sampling of the 70 artists who made it to our final round.

After a career in illustration and advertising, **Terry Barnes** has returned to his first love, oil painting. He captures landscapes of the Texas Hill Country and canyonlands as well as the people and animals living there. Fantasy artist **Julie Bell** recently branched out into wildlife painting, where she explores dynamic relationships in animal packs and

captures the grace and beauty of both domestic and wild creatures.

Although not yet 20 years old, **Barry Carter** has explored myriad artistic genres, from historical and western paintings to portraiture and sculpture. After college, **Victoria Castillo** continued her art studies by exploring works in great museums and



Rita Kirkman, Audrey With Flowers at Seven, pastel, 28 x 22.

private art collections. Her figurative paintings focus on the softly lit female form in intimate settings.

Susan Driscoll says she is inspired by things that are “spooky, funny, or pretty” and loves to paint people and faces. As a child, **Nicole Finger** was powerfully influenced by the colors and excitement of, and her late father’s passion for, thoroughbred horseracing. She paints horse- and horseracing-themed works as well as figurative works.

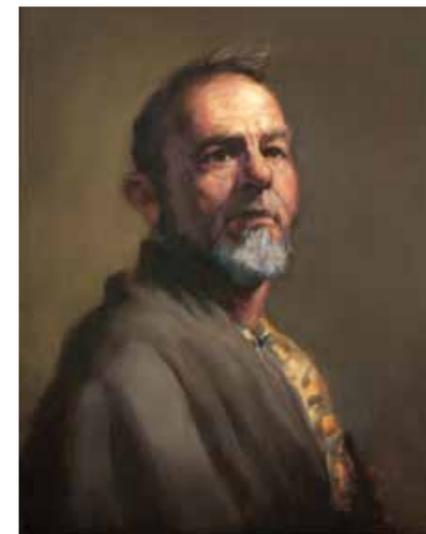
Drawing inspiration from wildlife parks and zoos, **Janetta Gee** paints endangered birds and animals as well as pet and horse portraits on commission. Denver-area artist **Lindsey Bittner Graham** paints loosely rendered and emotionally charged horse-, rodeo-, and western-themed works in oil and watercolor.

From rolling heartland farms to rocky Pacific coastlines, **Debra Joy Groesser** captures the western landscape in subtly hued plein-air and studio works. Though best known for her coastal and Lowcountry landscapes, **Paula Holtzclaw’s** *oeuvre* also includes still lifes featuring flow-blue china and classically rendered fruits and flowers.

After many years away from the Southwest, **Peggy Immel** returned to live in Taos, NM. She paints intimately cropped impres-

sions of the mountainous and adobe-strewn landscape. **Lisa Johnson-McLoughlin’s** acrylic and oil paintings depict western and Southwestern lifestyles and contemporary American cowboy life.

Banff-area artist **Sarah Kidner** is intrigued by the human figure. She captures featureless subjects as they move through and interact in powerfully backlit urban scenes. Korean artist **Taeil Kim** is currently pursuing his master’s degree in fine art in the United States. His impressionistic urban landscapes



Taeil Kim, Richard, oil, 20 x 16.

and portraits begin with an intrinsic concept that he attempts to reveal through expressive brushwork.

Pastelist **Rita Kirkman’s** portfolio includes warm renderings of people and animals, from Renaissance festival-goers to buffalo to near-comic caricatures of pets and farm animals. **Tracey Lane’s** thickly textured acrylic paintings combine impressionistic renderings of birds, flowers, horses, and trees set against abstract backgrounds.

Cincinnati-based **Yvette Mazza** paints sensitively rendered portraits of animals and people. Horses, equestrian events, children, and dogs are favorite subjects. After a career in motorsport painting, **Anne Peyton** now captures waterfowl, songbirds, and birds of prey in realistic acrylic works.

Neal Philpott paints Northwestern landscapes that render the joy of a moment in time. His works explore patterns of rural country roads, farmland, and water in mo-



Susan Driscoll, Le Danton, oil, 30 x 48.

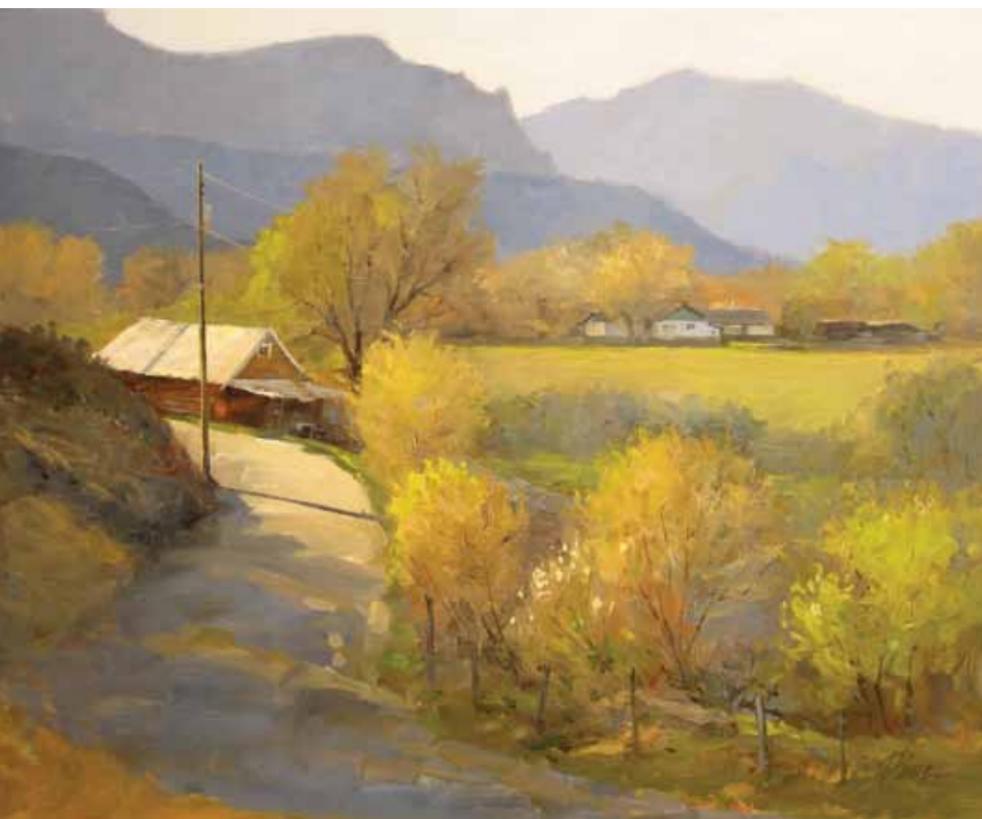


Paula Holtzclaw, Miss Hope, oil, 12 x 16.

tion. In 2004, **Erin Schulz** left her engineering job to pursue art full time. Her classical still lifes and figurative works are marked with warm colors and nostalgic imagery.

After a 35-year hiatus from art, **Robert Talbert** returned to watercolor painting.

He skillfully renders subjects ranging from historical-reenactment characters to his own cherished blue roan. **William C. Wright** employs watercolors and oils to create dramatically lit still lifes and landscapes, alive with vibrant color. —*Laura Rintala*



Peggy Immel, April in Dixon, oil, 16 x 20.



Air Supremacy, Ferruginous Hawk, 30" x 20", Acrylic

Anne Peyton

Mountain Trails Gallery
www.mtntrails.net
www.annepeytonart.com



Forty-Seven, 16" x 20", Watercolor

Rob Talbert

Watercolor and Pastels

12504 Gravenhurst Lane, North Potomac, MD 20878
www.talbertfineart.com • 240-506-5715
rob@talbertfineart.com



Distant Silhouettes, 20" x 42", Oil on Canvas

Neal Philpott

Oregon City, OR
503-407-9263
neal.philpott@me.com
neal@ccgmail.net