

Jennifer Johnson

Beyond a pretty postcard



▲ Winter Road, oil, 20 x 20.

◀ Fall Lilies, oil, 30 x 40.

WHEN COLORADO artist Jennifer Johnson was in second grade, she learned that she was dyslexic, which explained why she had such difficulty expressing herself in writing. A creative child, Johnson soon looked for another artistic outlet and turned to painting. "I discovered painting was what I did best, and that knowledge developed into a passion wherein I needed to paint," she says.

Johnson eventually earned a degree in graphic design from the University of Kansas and then founded a successful design firm. But on a trip to Paris in 1999, she paid a life-changing visit to the Musée d'Orsay. "THE FLOOR SCRAPERS by Gustave Caillebotte blew me away," she says. "I was amazed how an artist could create the variations from smooth to dull in the floor. I was intrigued with the symbolism. I thought to myself that I need to follow my passion."

When she arrived home, she closed her lucrative design firm and began to paint daily. Today Johnson regularly participates in shows such as Salon International at Greenhouse Gallery of Fine Art in San

Antonio and the Scottsdale Salon at Legacy Gallery in Scottsdale. Earlier this year her painting WINTER ROAD won two top honors at Salon International.

WINTER ROAD took root in Johnson's imagination one day when she was out walking near her Denver-area home. One of the first things she noticed was a shaft of light at the road's end, and it immediately struck her as a symbol of hope. She snapped a few pictures, sketched, and later fashioned the reference material into her award-winning piece. "I am trying to find the symbolism behind a painting rather than just painting a pretty scene," Johnson says. "In this case the light represented a glimmer of warmth that touches the soul."

Her current goal is to continue on the path of loosening her painting style. Instead of using six strokes to depict a particular section, for example, she prefers to use a large brush and make one thick stroke. "Without all the detail, I am trying to get to the essence of a thing. But it needs to be in the right place to create the illusion of realism," Johnson says.

—Bonnie Gangelhoff

representation

Eva Reynolds Fine Arts, Leawood, KS.

upcoming shows

Oil Painters of America Western Regional Exhibition, Gallery 1261, Denver, CO, through November 3. Group show, **Eva Reynolds Fine Arts**, through November.

Holiday Small Works Show, **Legacy Gallery**, Scottsdale, AZ, November 1-January 31.

Western Masters Art Show & Sale, Best Western Heritage Inn, Great Falls, MT, March 2013.

UPCOMING SHOW

Up to 30 works

August 10-31, 2018

A. Banks Gallery
127 E. Main Street, Bozeman,
MT 59715, (406) 586-1000
www.abanksgallery.com

SHOW LOCATION BOZEMAN, MT

JENNIFER JOHNSON

Nostalgia

Growing up as the daughter of a plant pathologist, artist **Jennifer Johnson** was able to travel across the country camping and hiking national parks like Yellowstone, Grand Teton and Arches. In her August show at A. Banks Gallery, Johnson showcases a new body of work along with landscape artist **Gary Huber**. About a year and a half in the making, Johnson's new series was inspired by the mid-1930s to 1940s national park poster series during the Great Depression. During this time period, Johnson explains, unemployed artists were hired to create posters to promote the parks. Johnson says she holds onto the memories of visiting these parks as a child and seeing these iconic posters—most of which have been lost today—and was inspired to create new artwork in the same vintage style.

In these paintings, Johnson incorporates typography over animals like bears, bison and elk in various wilderness backdrops. All lettering is hand-painted and made to look purposefully imperfect, Johnson says. In many ways, she's been able to blend the artistic worlds of graphic design and painting together.

Often, collectors will tell her about certain locations they've visited at national parks that evoke special memories and commission her to paint the spot for them. "I'm trying to pull back those vintage memories," Johnson says. "People have memories from [their] travels. It's a big deal growing up to have those... So it's a fun piece to incorporate into your collection."

"Jennifer's work captures the spirit of the West and is a consistent favorite with gallery clients...She's a versatile talent, and we are looking forward to the upcoming show," says Alissa Banks, owner of A. Banks Gallery. This latest body of work debuted



Vernal Falls, oil on canvas, 36 x 24"



Yellowstone Bison, oil on canvas, 36 x 24"



Vintage Glacier Black Bear, oil on canvas, 36 x 24"

at *The Russell Live* this past March. One of Johnson's pieces, *The Great American Wild West*, sold above estimates at \$23,400.

Currently, Johnson is in the beginning stages of a large piece she is creating on the Sperry Chalet hotel at Glacier National Park for the Glacier National Park Conservancy as a donation to help rebuild the hotel, which was lost to a forest fire last year.

Johnson's upcoming show at A. Banks Gallery will begin on August 10 at 6 p.m. and runs through August 31. 🖼️

For a direct link to the exhibiting gallery go to



www.westernartcollector.com



Johnson in her studio.