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ABOUT THE ARTIST

William Kenneth Laursen

Born in 1948, Bill Laursen grew up in Salt Lake City and Brigham City, Utah. He graduated from Utah State University in 1972 with a BFA degree in art and art education. While at Utah State, he studied with Harrison Groutage and Everett Thorpe. He served as an art teacher at Cottonwood High School in Salt Lake City from 1972 to 2005. During most of that period, he served as chairman of the art department and a set designer and painter. In the classroom, he taught drawing, painting, calligraphy, design, and art history. During the summers, for many years he conducted student fine art tours to New York City. He has been the recipient of many awards as a teacher, including in 1996 a “Golden Apple Award” presented by Utah Governor Michael Leavitt and an Outstanding Service to Education Award from the Utah State Board of Education. Recognition of his painting includes Best of Show, Brigham City Museum Gallery, 1972; Park City Arts Festival Award of Merit, 1974; and Oneta J. Thorne Memorial Art Award—Outstanding Watercolor, 1993, 1994, and 1995.

Artist's Statement

My current interest lies mainly in landscape painting and my approach is not so much the representation of actual locations as the interpretation of my personal observations and experiences. Regional landscapes provide a fascinating challenge and opportunity to explore their endless combinations of colors and moods. Inspiration and ideas for my compositions come from the interpretation of personal photos, drawings, places I have visited, and my imagination. I find interest in the curvilinear forms and colors of old, abandoned vehicles and the abstract forms created by light falling on man-made structures.

I have been influenced greatly by Impressionism and especially the colors of the American Impressionist Childe Hassam. John Singer Sargent represents a personal hero in the history of art for his style and complete mastery of painting in watercolor and oil. I fully subscribe to

James Whistler's philosophy of "art for art's sake," and the works of Edward Hopper have inspired me since discovering him during my high school years and appreciating his genius for his use of light, strong composition, and subject matter. Some time ago, a woman told me she found my paintings to be "very evocative." I have come to realize that her comment represents the very essence of what my art is about and, to my mind, the nicest of all compliments.

Front Cover: *Rural Landscape II*, Bill Laursen, watercolor, 13¾" by 16½", 2005.

Back Cover: *A Morning in Fall*, Bill Laursen, watercolor, 13" x 16", 2004.