

Matthew Higginbotham

Waxlander Gallery, August 28-September 10



Canyon Overlook, oil, 36 x 48.

FOR THE SIXTH year in a row, Waxlander Gallery presents a solo show of elegant landscapes by Matthew Higginbotham. The show features 30 to 40 new works by the New Mexico artist, whose large canvases depict the sweeping countryside and canyons of the Southwest. The gallery hosts an opening reception for the artist on August 31 from 5 to 7 p.m.

“Matthew truly grasps the wonderful lighting in this area,” says gallery director Bonnie French. “His work is very paint-

erly—there’s a wonderful textural quality to everything he does. His brush strokes capture the essence of each scene.” French adds that, over the years, the gallery has seen “how he’s constantly growing as an artist.”

Higginbotham, who was born in Colorado, took a giant leap forward as an artist when he moved to New Mexico in 1995. “New Mexico had the light,” he recalls of his first impression of the Southwestern landscape. “There were these incredible clouds, the expansiveness, a sense of in-

finity and space.” He immediately felt he had found his artistic home—and since then his large, luminous landscapes have been attracting new collectors. He notes that his latest canvases, on view in this year’s show, are more detailed. “There are more canyon pieces,” he adds. “I’m exploring rocks and edges.”

For Higginbotham, “painting is a spiritual practice. I see landscapes as living, breathing, changing entities.” He wants his paintings to be “transformative in a

way that is healing” and to communicate the reverence he feels for the land. The luminosity of his work often emanates from autumnal foliage, bright desert flowers, and golden grasses. He focuses mostly on the subtle light seen on cloudy days, as in ENCHANTED LANDS. “Clouds create exquisite light and shadow displays on the ground,” he points out.

INDIAN SUMMER GRASSES offers another prime example of his approach. “I was inspired by the Bosque del Apache, a bird refuge in central New Mexico,” he comments. “This is my newest in that series.” A faint confetti of color on the tall, detailed grasses in the foreground reflects the muted tones of autumnal trees in the background. “I’m drawn to the golden grasses after they’ve spent their flowers,” says the artist, who starts most canvases with a palette knife and then moves to softer brush strokes.

A study in contrasting textures, CANYON OVERLOOK displays Higginbotham’s affection for the Grand Canyon as a subject. “It’s that sense of space and infinity,” he explains. “I want to create something new and palpable with these paintings—to capture that fleshy feel of the rock.” Deep reds and purples help to define the depth of perspective, drawing viewers into the 36-by-48-inch canvas. “I like to focus on the variations in color, moving from foreground to distant rock cliffs,” explains the artist.

Higginbotham hopes that his latest work inspires a new way of interpreting landscapes. “I hope that viewers feel transformed or affected by how I paint the landscape,” he comments, “and that they grasp the emotional element and the spiritual practice.” —Mark Mussari

contact information

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www.waxlander.com

See more work at www.southwestart.com/events/waxlander-aug2012.



Indian Summer Grasses, oil, 48 x 48.



Enchanted Lands, oil, 54 x 72.

MATTHEW HIGGINBOTHAM
LAND AS SPIRIT



"CONFLUENCE OF RIVER AND CANYON" 30 X 30 OIL

EXHIBITION DATES AUGUST 28 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 10
RECEPTION FOR THE ARTIST FRIDAY, AUGUST 31 5 PM - 7 PM



WAXLANDER GALLERY

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