

# Southwest Art

Fine Art of Today's West

## CLASSIC WESTERN ART

Sculptor  
**John Coleman**  
takes you into  
his new studio

**Chris Navarro** on  
his monuments  
to the cowboy

**Cowgirl artists**  
steal the show  
in Arizona



MARCH 2008

\$5.99US



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### ► PLUS

Peaceful paintings by **Lanford Monroe**

Scenes of California by **John Cosby**

Colorful portraits of women by **Linda Kyser Smith**

www.southwestart.com

# MyWorld

A VISIT WITH **JOHN COLEMAN**  
AT HIS STUDIO IN PRESCOTT, AZ  
TEXT BY **BONNIE GANGELHOFF**  
PHOTOS BY **CHRISTOPHER MARCHETTI**





**Tell me about your new studio.** The studio is a gift to myself and my wife because she works with me. We wanted to have an environment that is conducive to the process of creating art. It's a park-like setting with lots of boulders and pine trees. My other studio was in an industrial building and it was big, dirty, and noisy with a lot going on. This is a big ranch house about five miles from downtown Prescott. In the new studio there's a library and a gallery. There are also two work spaces—one for larger and one for smaller pieces.

**Do you play music in the studio?** Rachmaninoff, Mozart, and Beethoven. Listening to music is like being surrounded by drama. Listening to someone like Rachmaninoff is like drinking a couple of cups of coffee. The music may invoke and change the mood of the piece I'm working on at that time.

**What part do models play in your works?** I am interested in using authentic-looking models. I go through a network of people I know to find them. Or if I find a person who looks right, I ask them to model. I once found an Apache girl working in a Subway sandwich shop, and she was stunning. But other times, like now, I am using a model not for his face but just for gestures for charcoal sketches. I'm dressing him in a replica of the outfit that Mato-tope, chief of the Mandan tribe, wore in a Karl Bodmer painting in 1832. I had a man who specializes in costumes duplicate it with human hair and quillwork.

**What attracts you to western art?** I'm a mythology buff—American mythology. I feel the point of art is to tell a story through metaphor. If I was in Europe, I might use Arthurian legends. But I live in America, so I go to American history. And sometimes it's easier to tell a story outside your culture. I find Native American culture has so many stories that lend themselves to be told visually and in ways people understand.

**What artists influence your work?** Howard Terpning. We have a lot in common. We are both Anglos doing Native American subjects. The Cowboy Artists of America also influence me. It's an honor to belong to such a great group. I gravitate to people that are doing something new and original. There are a lot of good craftsmen out there, but I am more inspired by people who have something new to say.

**What do you like to do when you are not working in your studio?** I like to travel. I'm interested in historical sites.

**When friends come to visit, where do you like to take them in Prescott?** The downtown area is a time capsule. It's unchanged since 1900. I like to take them to the Sharlot Hall Museum and the Phippen Museum.

**Do you have any shows coming up?** I have a couple of pieces at the C.M. Russell Art Auction in Great Falls, MT, this month. I'm also in the Prix de West show in June at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, OK. ❖

#### DOSSIER

##### REPRESENTATION

Legacy Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ, and Jackson, WY; Claggett/Rey Gallery, Vail, CO; Medicine Man Gallery, Santa Fe, NM, and Tucson, AZ.

