

# Arizona Landscapes

## Celebrating the state's Centennial

Arizona became the 48th state on Feb. 14, 1912. Today, more than 6 million people live between its versatile borders. The beautiful landscapes of Arizona feature natural wonders of deserts, canyons, forests, mountains, lakes and valleys and built environments like historic adobes, modern skyscrapers, highways, subdivisions, farms and golf courses. Throughout Arizona's history, artists have been drawn to the majesty of the canyons and blue skies. More recently, artists have provided commentary on the urban footprints left on the environment.

This exhibition honors the state's Centennial and the creative spirit of the artists and landscapes that inspire those who live, work and play in Arizona.



*Desert Arroyo* by David Gordinier

# Arizona Landscapes

Roger Asay and Rebecca Davis



*Arizona Dinner Party*

Both Davis and Asay were born in Denver, Colo., and have been together as a collaborative art team since 1983. Davis received a Bachelor of Arts degree in anthropology from the University of New Mexico and was an artist in residence at the Roswell Museum and Arts Center. Asay received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and a Master of Fine Arts degree in painting from the University of California Berkeley.

Davis and Asay moved to Arizona in 1982. Both continue to create and show artwork separately, but working together has given them the opportunity to hike, explore and gather in environments throughout the West. They like to highlight materials that allow viewers to experience the familiar elements of the natural world that surrounds them. This keeps in line with an ongoing body of collaborative work called “Wood & Stone, Substance & Spirit.”

“ ‘Arizona Dinner Party’ offers an off-kilter look at eight rivers from around the state presented in an unexpected context, that of a very recognizable formal table setting. We are not trying to make these sediments look like food, just hoping to undermine expectations, so that one can see afresh this otherwise very familiar material... We hope they will provide a feast for the eye.”

# Arizona Landscapes

Scott Baxter



*First Snow*

Baxter received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the College of Wooster in Ohio in 1979 and has been working as a professional photographer for more than 25 years. His most expansive body of work is titled 100 Years 100 Ranchers Project. It has been touring Arizona at places such as Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport Museum, Desert Caballeros Western Museum in Wickenburg, the Tucson Museum of Art and the Tucson International Airport. One of his photographs was chosen as the cover image for the 2011 “50 Greatest Photos” issue of Arizona Highways Magazine.

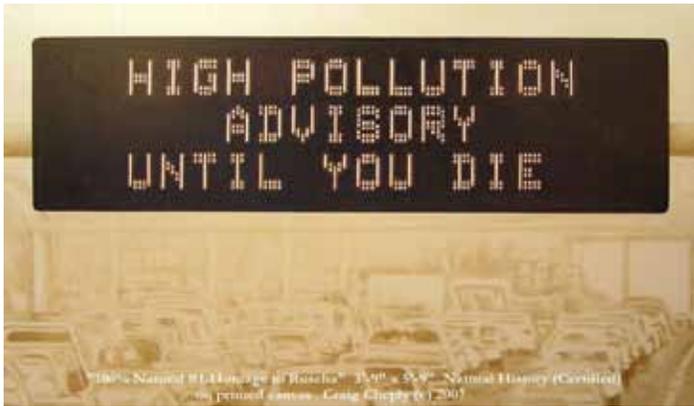
For more than a decade Baxter has been traveling around the state in his pickup, documenting the everyday lives of ranchers in Arizona. While on location, Baxter often is seen riding on horseback loaded down with cameras and supplies. The people featured in his photographs are part ranching families dating back to the time before Arizona was designated as a state.

“I wanted to recognize these families who have struggled to survive and persevere in these difficult times... As ranches are lost to development and to poor economic conditions, I hope to preserve photographically an integral part of Arizona tradition.”

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Craig Cheply



*100% Natural #1-Homage to Ruscha*

Craig Cheply was born in Elmhurst, Ill., and studied at New York City's Fashion Institute of Technology (A.A.S.) and Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, N.Y. He received his Bachelor of Fine arts degree in Interior Design from Arizona State University. He is both a commercial artist and a fine artist. His photo realistic paintings are inspired by observations of the elements pertaining to light, color and texture of the Southwest and numerous travels. His focus on Southwestern skies, landscapes and fauna address the political and ecological issues related to the dramatic population growth in the region. Cheply also does scenic and special effect painting for the motion picture and television industries and was one of two Arizona muralists chosen to work with the New York City-based Evergreen Painting Studios to paint the 10,000 square feet of murals in the Chase Field Ballpark.

“The ongoing ‘100% Natural’ series since 2005 is my visual statement about the observed socio/polit/enviro/econo/relig/geo/natural landscapes playing out on daily domestic and world stages... . My artworks are rendered with attention to natural history and use a literal and allegorical approach to represent and comment on man’s current history in this 21st century arena and the future state of affairs. It shows the good, the bad and the downright ugly.... Those who cannot or refuse to remember the past are condemned to repeat it. Nothing new there.”

[www.craigcheply.com](http://www.craigcheply.com)

# Arizona Landscapes



Bryon Darby



*90 Flights in 90 Minutes*

Darby was born and raised in Northern Utah. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Utah State University in graphic design. After working as a commercial designer and photographer, he attended Arizona State University where he received a Master of Fine Arts in photography. On the ASU campus, Darby worked as a photography instructor, art editor for Hayden's Ferry Review and as the head web developer for the Phoenix Transect Project, an ongoing program lead by Regent's Professor Mark Klett.

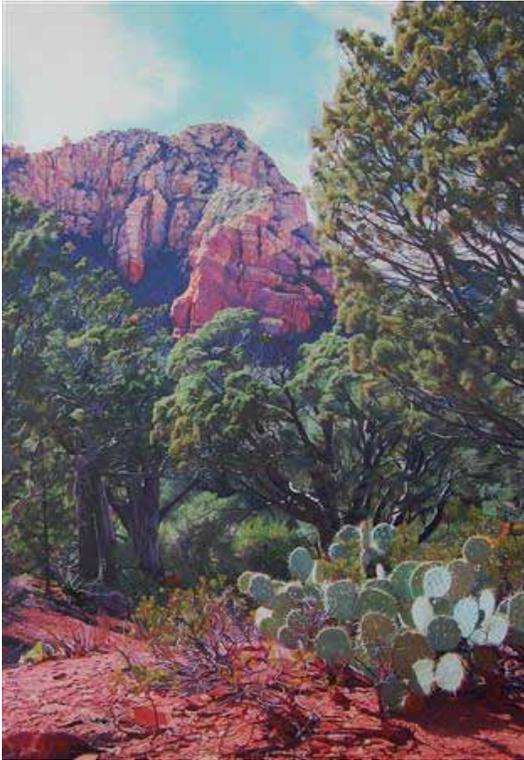
In the Fall of 2011 Darby accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Photo Media at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. His work has been featured in exhibitions both nationally and internationally, including the Northlight and Step Galleries at ASU, Shemer Art Center and Museum in Phoenix, Museum of Contemporary Art in Jacksonville, Fla., and the Pingyao International Photography Festival in China.

“My creative research investigates personal experience in the context of place. Specifically, my interests lay in the cultural perceptions of the American West, its deserts and expanding urban areas, as the place my family and I call home. Following in the steps of cultural geographers, I see landscape as a reflection of society. I draw heavily from my own personal experiences and, through a series of related projects, use photography and technology as a means to mediate my encounters with the modern world.”

[www.bryondarby.com](http://www.bryondarby.com)

# Arizona Landscapes

David Gordinier



*Sedona Cliffs*

Gordinier was born in Des Moines, Iowa, and later lived in Cedar Rapids. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Iowa in Iowa City and ran a commercial art supply and framing store for nearly 12 years. Today, Gordinier describes himself as a man making up for lost time. He looks back on his early adult years as time squandered, when his dream of painting full-time seemed elusive. Like so many “transplants” he came to Arizona in 1996 with a dream. Gordinier sold his business with the motivation for pursuing a full time career in art. Today, he lives in Mesa with his wife and six dogs, and his work is included in private and corporate collections such as Bank of America, Maytag and Citicorp. He is represented locally by Scottsdale Fine Arts Gallery.

“As a painter I am drawn to landscape probably because growing up I spent so much time in the landscape. The person I most wanted to be with was my grandfather, which meant traipsing through fields, bushes, woods... . I would go through anything to be with him. It has all paid off in years of observation. When I moved to the Valley I was immediately drawn to the late afternoon light of the monsoon season. In the desert, the low angle of the sun intensifies the color in the bush and cactus, back dropped by the mountains and towering thunderheads. It is an ongoing drama that I could spend a lifetime observing.”

[www.davidgordinierfineart.com](http://www.davidgordinierfineart.com)

# Arizona Landscapes



Mark Klett and Bryon Wolfe



*Point Imperial*

Klett was born in Albany, N.Y., and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Geology from St. Lawrence University in Canton, N.Y., and a Master of Fine Arts degree in photography from the State University of New York at Buffalo. For the past 25 years, Klett has been living and working in Arizona. Klett's images could be called comparisons of past and present, but, really, each one of his works is a cohesive narrative about a particular place.

Wolfe was born in Alamosa, Calif., and “came of age” in Tulsa, Okla. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology and Biology from the Johnson Center for Intergative Studies at the University of Redlands in California and a Master of Fine Arts in Photography at ASU where he studied under Mark Klett. Like Klett, his interest in photography and digital imagery includes a combination of scholarly research, creative expression and personal narrative.

**Collaboration: Charting the Canyon**  
Klett and Wolfe's Charting the Canyon series began in 2007. The photographs are largely inspired by images created by explorer artists who have visited and studied the Grand Canyon since the late 1800s. The two artists have been “rephotographing” historic images together since 1997 in an effort to document changes in the landscape – whether man-made or natural.

[www.klettandwolfe.com](http://www.klettandwolfe.com)

# Arizona Landscapes

William Lesch



Untitled

Lesch has been a photographer for more than 30 years. He earned Bachelor of Fine Arts and Master of Arts degrees from the University of Arizona. While in graduate school, Lesch worked as the first staff photographer for the Center for Creative Photography at the U of A campus and had his first one-person exhibition there in 1979. Today he is represented by Etherton Gallery in Tucson and Larsen Gallery in Scottsdale and owns his own photography studio in Tucson.

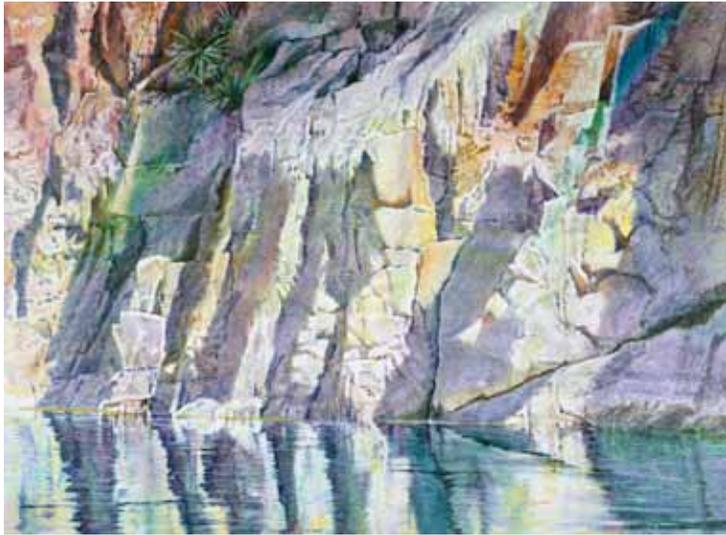
In 2001, Lesch and his son (a pilot) began to collaborate on aerial photography projects. The work in this exhibition is from a series of aerial photographs he took of the Arizona landscape and the many copper mines located in the state's southern region. Lesch refers to the mines, as seen from above, as "modern petroglyphs" or evidence of human activity.

"Seen from above, the Arizona landscape is like a canvas. Just as a canvas records the brushstrokes of the artist, the desert records and preserves the brushstrokes of its history. "Ancient cultures in Arizona left signs for us of their passing. They tell us about their relationship with the land. We, too, are leaving signs of our passing, signs that will be here long after we are gone, but I wonder what those signs will say of us...what they will say about our relationship to the land."

[www.williamlesch.com](http://www.williamlesch.com)

# Arizona Landscapes

Merrill Mahaffey



*Population Explosion*

Mahaffey was born in Albuquerque, N.M., and was raised in Grand Junction, Colo. His father worked for... and subsequent generations of the family have continued embrace the outdoors. Through the years, Mahaffey has spent countless days hiking, fishing, rafting and horseback riding throughout the state of Arizona. While enjoying the landscape, he frequently stops to sketch, write or ponder the imagery before him. His adventurous spirit is not tied to the outdoors, but also is present in his willingness to explore different art styles and techniques.

“I am praised or pilloried as a Grand Canyon painter, but I can express anything I feel about art by selecting some part of my Grand Canyon experience. There’s a sensuous beauty everywhere I go. The forms of nature have definite, intriguing rhythms – cadences, I call them. The Grand Canyon has the ultimate form, shape, cadence and color. In an elemental way, my paintings are about wilderness. I feel we’re losing it. I’m looking to put people in closer touch with the land. I find the same kind of excitement in the space, rock forms and light in the Rocky Mountains, Oak Creek Canyon, Lake Powell and Yosemite.”

<http://www.merrillmahaffey.com>

# Arizona Landscapes



Ed Mell



*Navajo Horses*

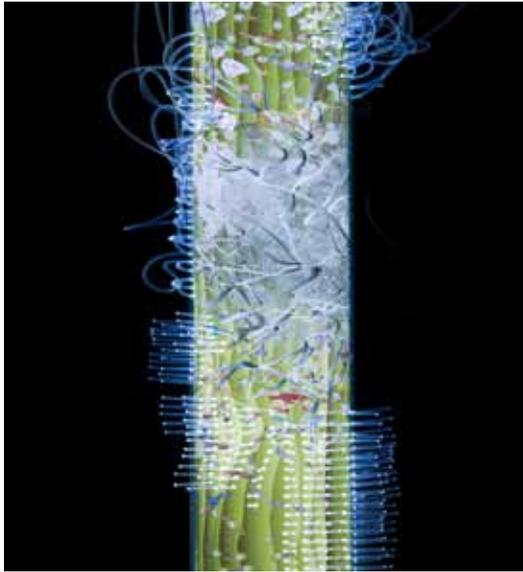
Mell was born in Phoenix and describes his upbringing as an idyllic childhood in the West. He began drawing at an early age and was inspired by the automobiles and futuristic designs of the late 1940s and 50s. After graduating from Phoenix Junior College, an interest in advertising and illustration led him to attend Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles. He went on to work at major advertising firms in New York City, but found that the work smothered his creativity. He switched to illustration and became one of the first airbrush artists to emerge in the 1960s. He attracted clients such as Cherios, RCA, Tang and National Lampoon.

By 1978, Mell made the transition to becoming a full-time landscape artist. Through the years, he has become known for depicting the Southwest in his own recognizable style. That style still has roots that trace back to the little boy who grew up in the desert and loved modern design and automobiles.

“Arizona is my heritage, inspiration, heart and home. Only leaving made me appreciate what a paradise we have here. I love working and living in this great, young state. It still has a frontier spirit and a sense that your efforts can take you anywhere. I draw from its cities and landscapes. I wouldn’t live anywhere else.”

[www.overlandgallery.com/Artists/Mell.html](http://www.overlandgallery.com/Artists/Mell.html)

## Mary Shindell



Heat Dust, Vapor

Shindell was born in Ponca City, Okla., and her family moved to Arizona when she was five years old. Her father worked as a seismographer for Phillips 66 and introduced her early to a love for the outdoors. Shindell earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting from Northern Arizona University and a Master of Fine Arts degree in drawing from Arizona State University. After graduation she worked as an artist in the schools and taught drawing at the university level in both Arizona and Nebraska. In 1989, Shindell and her husband and four sons moved back to Arizona.

Today, Shindell works in drawing, print, installation, digital art and public art. Whether she is using a pencil or computer, her work explores the intersection between digital and hand-drawn media, utilizing the desert's habitat in unconventional landscape formats.

“My fascination with Arizona lies in the contrast of detail and vast space. This phenomenon is nowhere more apparent than in the light rays cast by a blistering sunset as they splinter through thousands of Saguaro needles.... The feeling of standing in the desert is, perhaps, comparable only to that felt by those who have stood in outer space.... I use both traditional and nontraditional media. This allows me to use hand-drawn work in combination with computer-generated drawing. It also means I can push the boundaries of drawing out of the picture plane and use line, light and space as a three-dimensional landscape drawing.”

# Arizona Landscapes



Joe Tyler



*Citrus*

Tyler was born in Central Phoenix and received a Master of Science degree in environmental horticulture from Arizona State University. Shortly after, he owned and operated his own plant nursery for 15 years. After selling his independent business, Tyler became the founding director of the Arboretum at Arizona State University for six years. At around the same time, he began creating art for his own home which includes an extensive garden and more than 500 different species of trees on his 40 acre property.

Today, the majority of his works are commissions for large and small scale public art projects. Because he is a native Arizonan and has an extensive background and passion for the Sonoran Desert, the bulk of his pieces focus on nature. His pieces can be seen in the cities of Surprise, Phoenix, Tucson and Scottsdale.

“I have been inspired by surprisingly little things such as a conversation, a phrase, a song, a thought while driving in traffic, a dream, an ordinary rainstorm, the colors of a rainbow or a relaxing moment after a long hot hard day of sweaty work under the welding helmet. Suddenly, without warning, the perfect form will appear in my mind’s eye. Sometimes the best ideas come from community members or from the particular history or folklore of a town. I design functional art or free-standing sculptures that meld into a particular environment, helping to give a project a sense of place and purpose.”

[www.artistic-vision.com](http://www.artistic-vision.com)

# Arizona Landscapes



Ellen Wagener



*Yuma, Arizona*

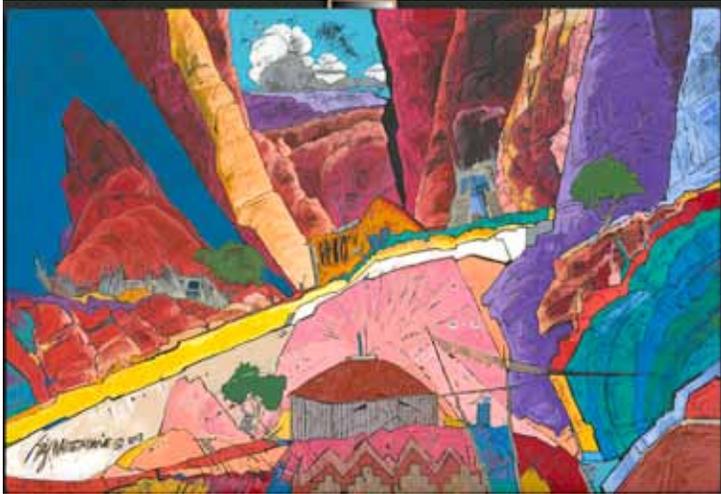
Wagener lives and works in Arizona but is really an Iowa girl at heart. She was born in Mauquoketa, Iowa, and while growing up became an avid observer of the seasons, crop rotations and atmospheric conditions. She studied at the University of Iowa in Iowa City and Marycrest College in Davenport before receiving a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting from the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C. Her works are included in numerous public and private collections including the Tucson Museum of Art, Iowa University and several United States embassies. Currently her work is represented by Gebert Contemporary in Scottsdale and J. Cacciola Gallery in New York City.

Wagener has been inspired by the landscape traditions of the artists of the Hudson River School, American Luminism and even vintage photography. She creates the works exclusively with pastels and charcoals and builds her drawings first as composites from sketches, memory and photographs. She often revisits sites to observe such changes as crop rotations, weather, time of day and season.

“Landscape painting is best practiced daily, often on the back road. I traveled with a small ‘outdoor working studio’ throughout 2011. I documented Arizona’s sublime and mythical landscapes, from the historic giant Wall and Monmouth wildfires to the enormous and engulfing monsoons in ‘plein air pastels.’”

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## Baje Whitethorne



*Spirit of the Canyon*

Whitethorne grew up on the Navajo Reservation near Shonto. As a child, he was drawn into the world of storytelling when he and his brothers would make up stories while taking care of the sheep or going to their grandmother's house. His grade school teachers encouraged him to pursue art. Today, Whitethorne is known for depicting the striking landscapes of the Southwest and the rich heritage and culture of the Navajo people. His artwork has branched into many different media including watercolor, printmaking, bronze casting and illustrations for nine children's books. He is the recipient of many national awards, including the Western Heritage Wrangler Award from the Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma and a sculpture award from the Santa Fe Indian Market in New Mexico.

“In my lifetime, Arizona has gone through a lot of growth and change. The world has changed and I have been able to see so much of it, even overseas, to show my work. The landscape is where I am from. If you want to know where I come from and know who I am, go to the mountains and canyons and see the rocks, plants, and animals. The land gives me solitude. Cell phones don't work, and that's all right.

“I was not born in a hospital. I recently took my grandkids out to where I was born and had them lay down and look up and around to see what I first saw when I was born: the sky, the hills and the sage brush. They thought it was 'cool.' ”