

Ellen Allgaier Fountain

ARTIST STATEMENT

I work primarily in transparent watercolor, mixed-media and digital painting. Self-taught until college, my B.F.A. focused on oil painting. I took my first watercolor class as a graduate student at the University of Arizona. I was immediately intrigued by its simplicity (pigment and water) and its difficulties. Unlike oil or acrylic, mistakes can't be covered up, and early on, I found this both intimidating and challenging. That challenge, as well as the fundamental beauty of watercolor pigments on paper, has kept me focused on the medium ever since.

Painting gives me great pleasure, and my goal is for my work to connect with the viewer. Towards that end, I paint what I know and love, focusing on landscape and still life. I grew up in the wilds of the Idaho panhandle, and as a child made a connection to the natural world that never left me. Drawn to the plants, animals and geography of every place I've lived, I look for the patterns and underlying structure in nature, which at first often seems chaotic. The desert southwest, my home for nearly the past 50 years, provides ample inspiration for my landscape work, whether done plein air or in the studio. Travels elsewhere provide supplemental subject matter. I like to work on site when possible, but if I can't, I use my sketchbook and camera to get down the essentials of what excited me about what I'm looking at, so I can recreate that excitement once back in my studio.



ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Ellen Allgaier Fountain is a signature member of the National Watercolor Society, Watercolor West, the Western Federation of Watercolor Societies, Rocky Mountain National Watermedia, the Arizona Watercolor Association, Arizona Aqueous and the Southern Arizona Watercolor Guild. She is an associate member of the American Watercolor Society.

An award-winning artist, she has exhibited her work in major shows throughout the United States. She shows her work regularly at the Southern Arizona Watercolor Guild Gallery at Williams Centre in Tucson.

Fountain participated for five years in the Artist-in-Residence program, sponsored by the Arizona Commission on the Arts, and has also received a Tucson-Pima Arts Council Visual Artist Fellowship award. Fountain earned a B.F.A. in studio art, then a masters degree in art education at the University of Arizona in Tucson, where she now lives. She taught middle school art for six years after college, after which she pursued a career as a professional artist. She is a retired faculty member of The Drawing Studio in Tucson where she taught watercolor for many years.

Her work is in many private and public collections, including the Tucson Museum of Art, and has been published in Watercolor magazine, The Artists' Magazine, Splash 11 and The Best of Watercolor (Rockport Publishers). In 2000 she produced a 5-volume series of instructional videos for the beginning watercolor painter.

You can see more of Ellen Fountain's work on her website at www.fountainstudio.com.