



Hope Realized, oil, 36" by 36"

"The title came after the painting. When I saw the finished painting, my first thought was, 'This is just how our hope is answered, or realized—with, and in, glory.'"

PHIL BOB BORMAN

SKY KING

By Vicki Stavig

Phil Bob Borman's mission, he says, is "to paint the world, one sky at a time." He's well on his way to doing so, currently painting in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Wyoming, and Utah, with plans to add skies on the East Coast, Europe, and Scotland to his repertoire.

"I love the light, the shapes, the magnificence of clouds," Borman says. "I love watching them change. There are times when I'm out by myself and I can actually hear the clouds. I can hear the clouds going across the sky; I can hear them building."

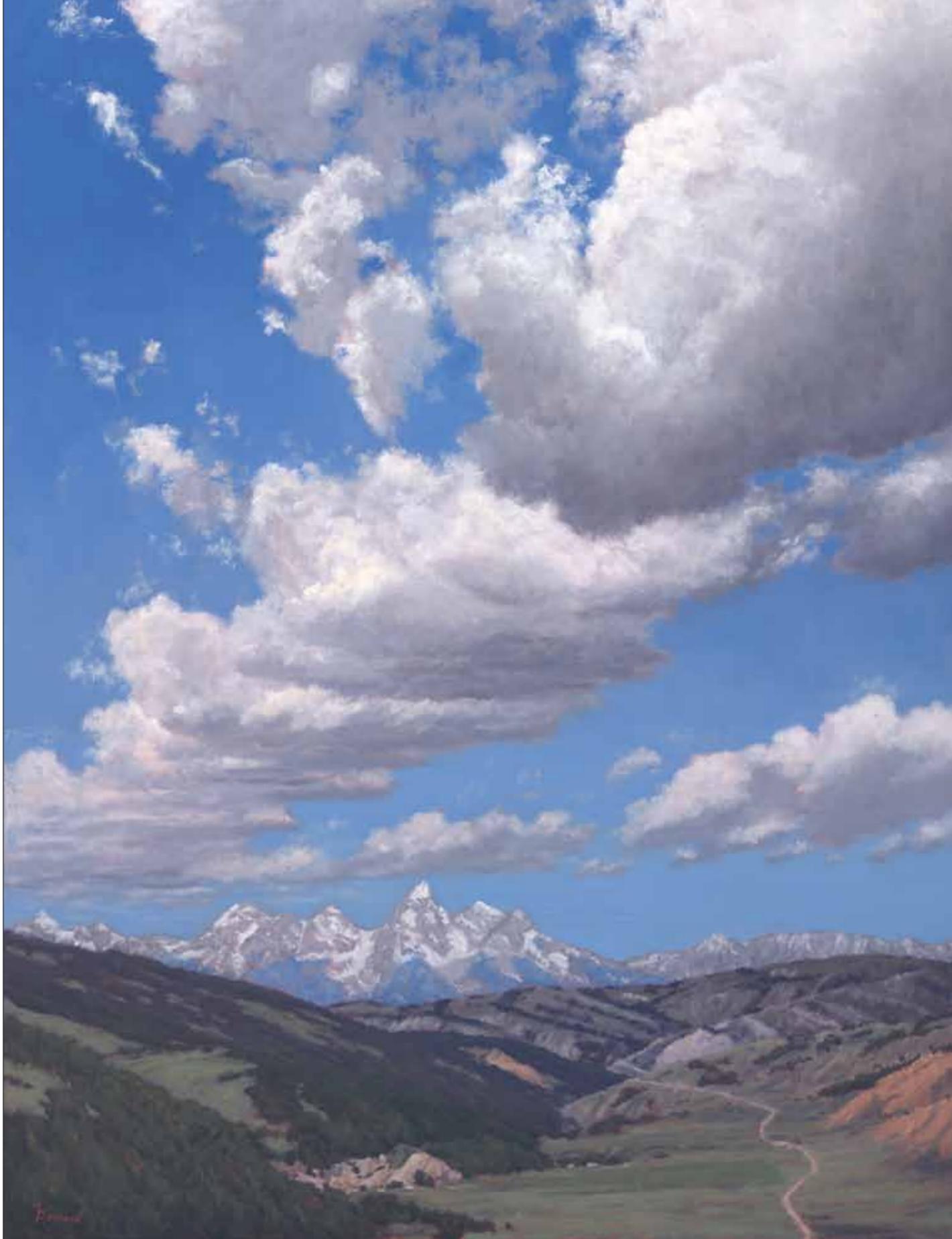
Born and raised in Texas, where his family has been ranching since the early 1900s, it was no surprise that Borman went on to work as a cowboy. He did so on ranches in Texas and New Mexico from the early '80s until about 10 years ago, when his interest in art overtook his love of the range.

"I did my first drawing when I was about five," he says. "Later, I drew on my sister's windowsill. There's a fine line between credit and blame, so I told my Dad that she did it." Borman went on to earn a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree,



Twilight's Crown, oil, 51" by 38"

"The beauty of light and the day's forces are revealed in this crown of light, which ushers in the coolness of color and temperature, as the nighttime sounds and life starts afresh."



Up the Gros Ventre, oil, 40" by 30"

"This brought to mind the fullness of the beauty of the Teton region, from canyons to peaks."

with a minor in animal science, from Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas, and began sculpting the working cowboy, something he did for the first 15 years of his career. He got a helping hand from fellow artist Mehl Lawson, who urged him to move to California, work in the foundry that did Lawson's work, and spend weekends sculpting together. Borman only lasted six months, however, before returning to Texas. "I had never been so lonely surrounded by so many people in my life," he says.

Borman, who also is an ordained minister and a musician—playing the harmonica, banjo, guitar, mandolin, and fiddle, as well as singing—then signed on as a government trapper with the Department of Agriculture. When he wasn't trapping mountain lions, bobcats, and coyotes, he was working at his art. "I would come home at night, fix a pot of beans, and sculpt until late," he says.

Later, he responded to a request from on high. "I started painting in 2005, when the Lord told me to," he says, adding that he quickly began to focus on clouds. "A friend asked me, 'What do you want out of life?' I said, 'To be honest, Bill, I want a gal to say I do, a doctor to say it's a boy, and to paint clouds like John Constable.'"

Borman realized the first two goals and continues his pursuit of the third. He married and had three sons, although that marriage didn't last. Two years ago, however, he married Deanna, and the couple now makes their home in Fredericksburg, Texas.

"I don't paint outside often," Borman says. "I do just enough to keep my eye trained to what colors are out there. A camera can only record so many colors; the eye sees many more. I do studies outside. I'll take photos, paint for a couple hours, and have enough information to bring back home and finish it out."

Borman recalls taking a workshop from Karen Vance in 2005, just as he was beginning to paint. When he returned home, he told his wife that Vance had said only 2 percent of artists would "make it." When his wife asked how that made him feel, he responded, "Well, there aren't going to be many of us!"



Magnificence, oil, 38" by 27"

"The way the Lord makes colors meander, wander, and waft across the sky, mingling and mixing with other colors, is nothing short of magnificent."

He began to sell his work through galleries in various parts of the country and has earned numerous awards for his paintings. The ultimate reward, he says, is the chance to convey "the glory of God. If you're painting paintings just to make money, people will see that. They can tell if you love what you're doing. What makes my day is when someone looks at one of my paintings and says, 'I feel God in this.'"

Looking to the future, Borman says he is on a constant pursuit of excellence. "It is not a where, it's a how," he says. "You can see farther than you can throw, so your vision is always farther than your ability. My only competition is yesterday; it's me in my pursuit of excellence. If you can make friends with frustration, you'll be a great artist. If you're not getting frustrated occasionally, it means you're not growing." ^{AW}

Vicki Stavig is editor of Art of the West.