

INSIDE Morgan Weistling • Winter Lands • Masters of the American West

Previews of Works For Sale at Upcoming Shows

WESTERN ART

FEBRUARY 2017

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C O L L E C T O R



UPCOMING SHOW

Up to 16 works

Feb. 23-March 5, 2017

The Legacy Gallery
7178 E. Main Street
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
(480) 945-1113

SHOW LOCATION SCOTTSDALE, AZ

DEAN MITCHELL

Realistic views

There's a gritty realism to the artwork of Dean Mitchell. Where other artists like to romanticize the West—the lofty spires of Monument Valley, heroic cowboys battling nature atop a horse, cattle funneling into flower-dotted meadows—Mitchell turns to the authentic West, the West that never

made it onto Fred Harvey postcards or Leanin' Tree greeting cards.

"I just like to do my thing," he says from his studio in Tampa, Florida. "I want my work to be all over the place, which is kind of how I create these pieces—never one at a time, but 30 all at once in the studio. I like

to do all kinds of different things, from urban landscapes to portraits. I enjoy moving around and really focusing on these places that other painters aren't painting. These are places that a lot of people call home."

Houses ringed by dirt yards, clothes drying from lines on leaning posts, sheds in sad states



Zions Mountain, watercolor, 22 x 30"



Jerome Relic, watercolor, 20 x 30"



Sunlit, watercolor, 11¾ x 30"

of disrepair, and sighing and slumped fences made of four different materials—splintered wood, metal siding, chain link and torn blue tarps—are the subjects of Mitchell's works that will be appearing in a new solo show beginning February 23 at The Legacy Gallery in

Scottsdale, Arizona. He paints beautiful scenery also, as well as magnificent portraits, but it's these honest scenes of homes and ranches on reservations and in forgotten communities of the West that have come to define Mitchell's career. He's tapped into something that few

artists have thought to paint, or even look at with an open heart.

Mitchell traces some of this interest back to his own history growing up in Quincy, Florida. The city had a lot of poor families, and his family was one of them. An outsider

Mr. Bob Ragland, watercolor, 15 x 10"

might drive through and see poverty, but to the artist it was home. It was his community, where people lived and worked and made their way through life. "I have a true affinity for things that are slightly dilapidated or discarded," Mitchell says. "Whether that's in the South, where I grew up, or on the reservations in the West, these places are reality for a lot of people. This underbelly is people's daily life, because not every location is so romantic. Not every person who lives in the West is a rancher. Real life has a grittiness to it, and that's what I'm after, not romantic views, which have been done so much."

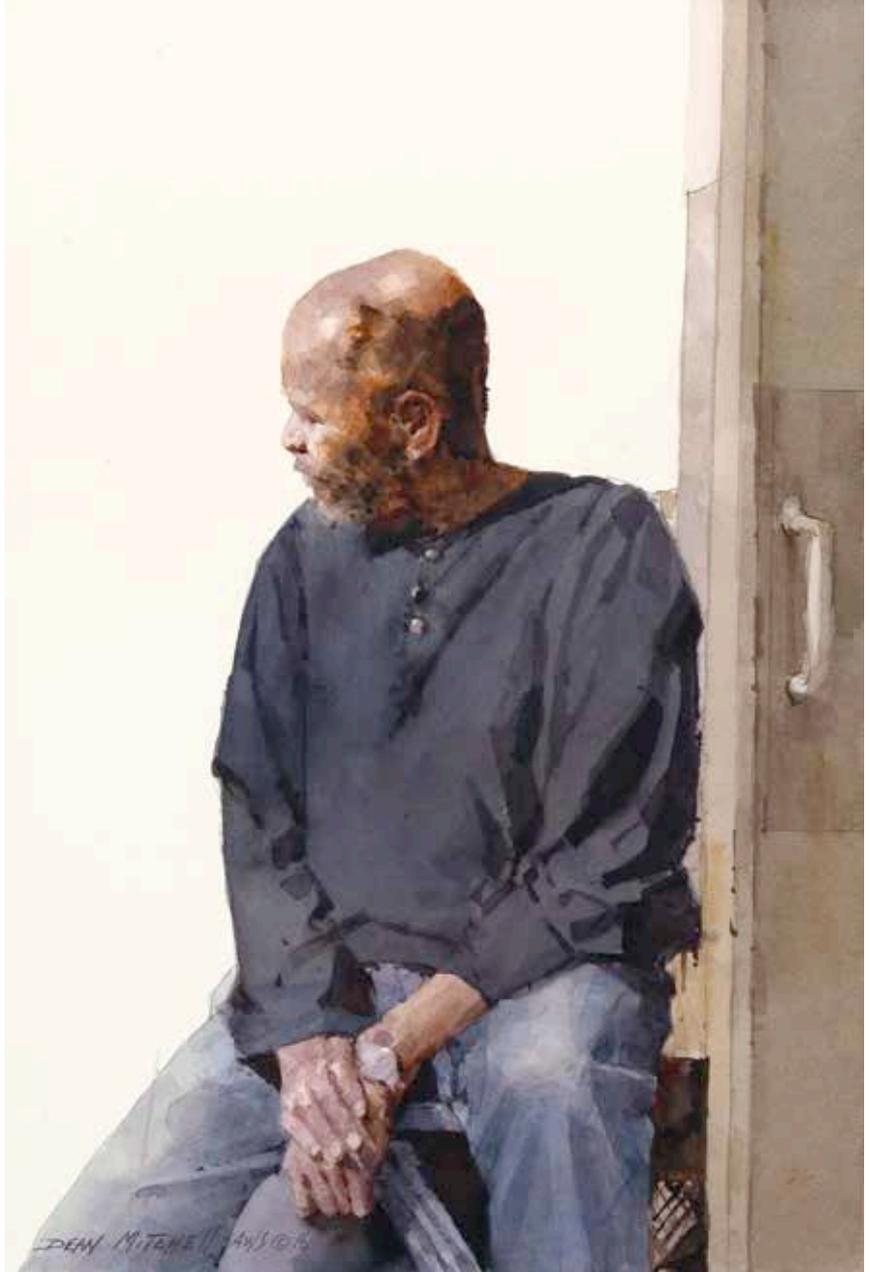
Sometimes finding these places is easier than one would think. Certainly, some locations are found down long dirt roads in out-of-the-way places, but other times it's just a matter of turning around. For a recent work, he recalls, there was a beautiful church, but all someone had to do was turn their back to the church to see that across the street were homes with mismatched paint, uneven roofs and overgrown vegetation. "It was fascinating to see this kind of home across the street from what was essentially a tourist destination," he says.

Occasionally these locations look less like occupied ruins and more like modest structures at one with nature. In the watercolor panorama *Sunlit*, a small home finds balance amid a plateau and distant hills, and in *Jerome Relic*, a deteriorating house stands proudly with a large and expansive porch that remains intact.

In other works in the Legacy show, Mitchell doesn't paint poor locations, but rather mundane details that people see every day, but fail to notice. In *Hay Stack*, an acrylic work, the artist paints a perfect stack of hay illuminated on one side by late-afternoon sunlight, and next to it a small horse trailer. The piece has an abstract element to it with the rectangular shapes balanced by the gently sloped mountain in the far background and the round tires on the trailer. In *KC Quality Hill* he paints an upward-looking view of two houses and how their windows and opposing angles complement each other with a slit of sky between them.

"I want the show to reflect the diversity of my work," Mitchell says, adding that the Legacy show "is really one of my first solo shows in the West, outside of the annual show at the Autry [Museum of the American West]."

One thing that is a constant in Mitchell's work is his profound technical mastery of his mediums,



Reservation Mail Box, acrylic, 22 x 30"



Hay Stack, acrylic, 22 x 30"



KC Quality Hill, watercolor, 22 x 30"

particularly watercolor—he's regarded as one of the best watercolorists in the country across all genres. He says that one misconception about watercolor as a medium is that many collectors think watercolor works are fragile. And while paper is certainly more susceptible to sunlight and moisture than an oil on canvas, Mitchell says watercolors still hold up very well. "There are some people who won't touch a watercolor. There's simply a level of education that needs to happen to teach people that watercolor works are durable and they last. It's also a difficult medium, and a beautiful medium," he says.

"I'm just grateful that collectors allow me to lead them on my vision of the West, one where I don't just regurgitate the same things people are comfortable with, but really look at the people and places of the West," he says. "It's a different perspective, and it's one that is important to the whole picture." 🍷

For a direct link to the exhibiting gallery go to



www.westernartcollector.com