

Jean Arnold

Coal mining has been an important part of Utah's economy, even as the burning of coal is a major contributor to greenhouse gases. Utah's mines are deep underground, and there are fewer coal mines now than ever — only 5 remaining. This is partly due to a turn away from coal burning, but also due to depletion. No operations remain in Carbon County, where this scene was painted. Thus, it is likely that this coal seam will remain an interesting feature of the landscape.

Nicknamed “Tuscan of America”, the Palouse area in the Pacific Northwest draws photographers and artists from all over to capture its curvaceous contours. Ironically, while this is one of the richest agricultural regions in the nation, the Palouse prairie ecosystems are among the most endangered. A variety of native wildflowers still bloom in isolated preserves and along roadsides. I sometimes portray these natural remnants juxtaposed with nearby monoculture fields. As another irony, the farmland itself is threatened by drought, erosion, and industrial projects. Landscape painters capture moments in time, depicting scenes they are now, but they may change in the future.

