

Tom Howard, Artist Statement, September 2023

I've been pursuing this thing called ART for over four decades now. If there's one thing I've learned, it's that I feel only as successful, or not, as the most recent painting I've completed. Which makes for a bit of a roller coaster ride through my daily travail in life. It is said that your worst day painting is better than your best day in the office. What do you think?

I love to draw. Whether it be with paint or graphite, it's all drawing for me. Sometimes I try to ride that edge between representation (realism) and abstraction. But isn't any painting an abstraction anyway? I mean, after all, no painting is ever the real thing. Consequently it's automatically an abstraction of the real thing. I guess that leaves only the viewer's evaluation of just how successful the artist was in their depiction of the form.

Some of my paintings in this exhibit were completed "en plein air." Consequently, there were times when drawing did give way to expression of color, form, and gesture. Being in the moment, there in nature...well, there's no replacement for it. One thing that a painting can't do is communicate smell. Yet smell is the facilitator of one of my most memorable experiences, while plein air painting. It had just rained, and with everything being still wet on that Fall afternoon, the aromas were incredible. There's a word for it. They call it "Petrichor", the smell of rain. Even though my plein air study was a disaster, I was more than inspired. I even felt driven to complete the watercolor, "Hickman Canyon," in the studio, as a preservation of that experience.

Plein air studies work in the service of studio paintings. There is all too often something lost in translation when the artist tries to rely on photography only to make a painting. Cameras are not well adapted to recording the darks and the lights well in the same photograph. Often there is much more light and color in the shadows than one may know. Being there in person can help with that visual challenge, and show the artist what they might otherwise miss.

I paint for relaxation, yet I seek to be a professional. I paint for praise, yet I like to be alone when I work. I like to capture a likeness of my subject, yet I enjoy the abstract qualities of a painting when they occur. Four decades of painting, some dangerous moments, and some bouts with health have hopefully knocked a few chips off of my hard block of stubbornness and foolishness, and have made me a more fitting and humble specimen for the future. Painting will go on, and the end will come, hopefully with a brush in my hand.



Promotional video

Education

University of Utah, 1982 through 1984

Bachelor of Fine Art- painting and drawing emphasis

Brigham Young University, 1993 through 1995

Master of Fine Art- painting and drawing emphasis

Teaching

Salt Lake Community College – drawing, watercolor, design

Utah Valley University – drawing, watercolor

Brigham Young University, Idaho – drawing

Invited Workshops throughout Utah

Lectures and Presentations throughout Utah

Organizations

Utah Watercolor Society

Plein Air Painters of Utah

Select Exhibitions and Awards

- 2023 Plein Air Painters of Utah – Highway 89 Traveling Show
- 2022 Utah Watercolor Society Fall 2022 Show, Best of Show Award
- 2022 Phillips Gallery, two-person exhibit with Megan Gibbons
- 2019 Phillips Gallery, one-person watercolor exhibit, Dibble Gallery
- 2018 Spring City, UT Plein Air Competition, **Spring City Mayors Award**
- 2018 Phillips Gallery, two-person exhibit with Simone Simonian
- 2017 Signature/Two Star exhibition, Utah Watercolor Society
- 2016 Small Works exhibition, Utah Watercolor Society Award of Merit
- 2015 Phillips Gallery, two-person exhibit with Gerald Purdy
- 2015 Utah Watercolor Society Fall Show, **Past President's Award**
- 2015 Spring City, UT Plein Air Competition, **Award of Merit**
- 2014 Spring City, UT Plein Air Competition, **Award of Merit**
- 2014 Wasatch Plein Air Paradise, **Third Place, Studio Division**
- 2014 Utah Watercolor Society Small Works Show, **Jurors Award**
- 2014 Utah Watercolor Society Spring Show, **Jurors Award**

- 2013 Salt Lake Community College President's Art Show, SLC, UT
- 2013 Spring City, UT Plein Air Competition
- 2013 Utah Watercolor Society Fall Show, **Award of Merit**
- 2013 Wasatch Plein Air Paradise, **Third Place, Studio Division**
- 2013 Holladay Plein Air Exhibition, **Third Place**
- 2013 Phillips Gallery, two-person exhibit with Kathy Peterson
- 2013 Utah Watercolor Society Spring Show, **Award of Excellence**

- 2012 Wasatch Plein Air Competition, Heber, UT, **Award of Merit--Studio Art**
- 2012 Holladay Plein Air Competition, Holladay, UT, **Third Place**

- 2011 Spring City, UT Plein Air Competition, **Second Place**
- 2011 Wasatch Plein Air Paradise, Heber, UT

- 2010 Spring City, UT Plein Air Competition, **First Place**
- 2010 Phillips Gallery, Salt Lake City, UT, One Person show

- 2010 Springville Museum of Art "National Spring Salon"
- 2010 12th Black & White Statewide Competition, Eccles Community Art Center, Ogden, UT
- 2009 "Traces of the West," Ogden, UT
- 2009 Paint the Parks, "Celebrating America's National Parks"
- 2008 Eccles Community Art Center, Ogden, UT, One Person Show
- 2008 Phillips Gallery, Salt Lake City, UT, One Person Show
- 2008 Springville Museum of Art "National Spring Salon"
- 2007 Wasatch Plein Air Paradise, Heber, UT, **Award of Merit**
- 2007 Salt Lake Community College President's Art Show, SLC, UT, **President's Choice Award and Purchase Award**
- 2006 Phillips Gallery, Salt Lake City, UT, Two-Person Show