

# New Mexico MAGIC

Six artists from the Land of Enchantment pursue their passion for painting



▲ Roundup Along the Cumbres and Toltec III, oil, 50 x 50.

► Chama Bend, oil, 50 x 38.



## Kathleen Frank

IN ONE FORM or another, art has always been a prominent aspect of Kathleen Frank's life. It began during her childhood in California, where she had the good fortune of being surrounded by teachers and artists. Over the years, it manifested in various artistic pursuits and occupations, including teaching, design, woodcarving, and printmaking.

It wasn't until Frank moved with her husband to his home state of New Mexico that the painter within her emerged. "I took some classes, but for the most part I just allowed

my painting to develop on its own," she says. As a result, her artistic style naturally grew out of her experience with other media. "My earliest paintings almost look like woodcuts," she muses. Even today, that influence can be seen in her large oils, which often exhibit textural, design, and color qualities evocative of woodcarvings and prints.

As for subject matter, Frank draws limitless inspiration from the landscapes of New Mexico and the Southwest. "My husband and I love to travel and hike all over, and I always

come home with tons of photos, excited to get to work in my studio," she says.

Frank hopes to evoke a similar sense of excitement in the viewer. "I look for the brilliance and gaiety of life around me; I try to catch the light and design in all its strangeness and beauty," she says. "There is so much joy and adventure to paint in one lifetime, and it is fleeting, so I'm always ready to get back to work." Frank is represented by La Posada de Santa Fe, Santa Fe, NM; Jane Hamilton Fine Art, Tucson, AZ; and [www.kathleenfrankart.com](http://www.kathleenfrankart.com).

## Nancy Silvia

NANCY SILVIA has been “simply infatuated” with the New Mexico landscape for many years. Growing up in Connecticut, her earliest artistic influences were marine paintings of New England. She went on to work as an abstract artist in New York for a time, before finally pursuing her dream of moving to Santa Fe in 2003. “After I came to New Mexico, I just couldn’t resist painting the landscape,” she says.

As a plein-air painter, Silvia soon fell in love with the pastel medium for its flexibility and intense pigmentation. “I used to paint primarily in oil but switched to pastel when I started plein-air painting because I found it a very easy medium to work in outdoors,” she says. “Not everyone feels that way about pastel, but I love that it allows me to draw and make marks while still having such vibrant color.” Silvia’s plein-air sketches are fundamental to recording the natural splendor she observes and serve as the basis for larger paintings she creates in her studio.

Like most landscape painters, Silvia enjoys exploring new places. But at the end of the day, “New Mexico is just *it* for me,” she says. “Being out here is so compelling. The landforms, light, and all-encompassing sky—not to mention the spectacular sunsets—are so special here.”

Silvia hopes her representations of the natural world evoke a sense of place and the ephemeral effects of light. “For me, honoring the beauty of nature in a painting is a meditation, a poem, and a gift to the viewer,” she says. “It truly is a calling.” Silvia’s work can be found at Canyon at Palace Fine Art, Santa Fe, NM, and [www.nancysilvia.com](http://www.nancysilvia.com).



**Gorge at Evening, pastel, 16 x 20.**



**Near the White Place, pastel, 18 x 24.**



▲ **Butterfly Wings II**, mixed media, 30 x 30.  
◀ **Just One of Those Glorious Days**, oil, 48 x 36.

## Aleta Pippin

EXPERIMENTATION, intuition, and spontaneity are important foundations in the life and work of Aleta Pippin. Even her path to becoming an artist “began quite serendipitously,” she says, after a move to Santa Fe in the early 1990s inspired her to take a painting class and begin experimenting with all types of art.

Since becoming a full-time abstract painter in 2003, Pippin has continued to explore different media and processes, and it’s the ever-evolving nature of her work that keeps many collectors engaged and wanting more.

Recently Pippin began experimenting with spinning, which inspired a series of vibrant and earthy mixed-media circular paintings. “I don’t plan, I just start putting color on, layering paint and other media until interesting colors and designs come together. It’s as if the piece takes on a life of its own,” she says. Indeed, there’s something almost magical about works created in such a whimsical and spontaneous manner.

If there is one constant throughout Pippin’s work, it’s her use of color. Her paintings often feature vibrant, bold reds and blues—

perhaps an intuitive homage to the spectacular Santa Fe sunsets. Pippin describes color as the “driving force” behind her work. Color also tends to be what first draws people into her paintings, often evoking strong emotional reactions in viewers. “When I hear someone say that looking at one of my pieces makes them smile, or brings joy into their daily life at home, then I know I’ve done something right,” she says. Find her work at Pippin Contemporary, Santa Fe, NM; Syd Entel Galleries, Safety Harbor, FL; and Galleria Silecchia, Sarasota, FL.

## Peggy Trigg

GROWING UP on cattle ranches in northern New Mexico, Peggy Trigg developed a profound appreciation for the natural world. “Being raised on a ranch tied me to the land, so I’ve always loved nature and being outside,” she says, adding, “I’ve also always enjoyed being creative.”

It makes sense, then, that she eventually combined her passions to become a landscape painter. Today the artist lives in the rural town of Questa, north of Taos, where she is surrounded by inspiring subject matter, including the Rio Grande Del Norte National Monument and Carson National Forest.

While “the quiet and peacefulness of the country” inspires her, she also relates to the harsher side of nature. “As a rancher’s daughter, I was always praying for rain,” she says. “But we can’t control Mother Nature, so we have to just adapt and learn to appreciate its mystique.” Striking that compelling balance of an environment that is both peaceful and turbulent, picturesque and rugged, is something Trigg continuously aims for in her work. “I’m always trying to express the intensity, beauty, and harshness of the New Mexico landscape,” she says.

Yet Trigg’s artistic expressions are rooted in much more than her love of the subject matter itself. “I enjoy exploring contrast, color relationships, and texture—and I’m always trying to look at things in different ways,” she says. Her goal is to convey the essence of a scene, rather than an exact representation. “I want viewers to not only *see* the beauty of the place, but to actually *feel* it.” Find Trigg’s work at La Mesa, Santa Fe, NM; Wilder Nightingale Fine Art, Taos, NM; Weyrich Gallery, Albuquerque, NM; Tracy Miller Gallery, Manitou Springs, CO; and Métier Studio Gallery, Dixon, NM.



The Hay Barn, oil, 11 x 14.



Conversations, oil, 12 x 16.



▲ View to the Mountain, pastel, 8 x 10.

▶ Lavender Fields and Yellow Flowers, oil, 20 x 16.



## Lee McVey

LEE MCVEY has always considered herself an artist. Raised in upstate New York, she traces her love of nature back to her childhood, when she would often go on long walks with her grandparents in the woods.

In adulthood, McVey continued to create art and inspired other budding artists as an elementary- and middle-school art teacher. Then, in 1992, she traveled to New Mexico to see where Georgia O'Keeffe had painted. "I immediately fell in love with New Mexico, so much so that when I returned home to New York, I actually felt homesick," McVey says.

A little over 10 years later, she retired from teaching and moved to Albuquerque. "Even though I didn't know anyone when I arrived, I still felt like I was home," she says. "The artist community here is so welcoming and supportive."

Today McVey is a full-time artist focusing on plein-air and studio landscapes in pastel and oil. "There's just something about this area that feels grounding to me," she says. "From the mountains, arroyos, and canyons to the interplay of color, reflected light, shadows, and shapes—the New Mexico

landscape just resonates with me in ways I never felt before."

McVey's deep connection to the scenes she depicts is not lost on viewers, who often say they feel they could step right into her landscape paintings. Many even feel a sense that they've visited the scene, even though they haven't. Perhaps this is what happens when a lifelong artist finally "comes home." McVey is represented by Purple Sage Gallery, Albuquerque, NM.

## Krysteen Waszak

GROWING UP in Cleveland, OH, Krysteen Waszak often drew and dreamed about horses, adobe houses, and wide-open spaces. She felt misplaced. Then, when she was 15 years old, her family moved to New Mexico, and she finally felt like she was right where she belonged.

Waszak moved to Taos in the 1980s and began painting furniture. It was also around this time that she fell in love with plein-air painting, but she eventually chose to pursue the more “practical” path of graphic design instead. Her career afforded her time to raise her daughter but less time to paint. As her daughter grew older, however, Waszak decided it was time to get back to her true passion.

Today the artist spends much of her time reveling in and reckoning with the New Mexico landscape and the artistic process of painting *en plein air*. Because she prefers to work on large canvases, she has to paint fast—a skill she first learned as a designer. “My goal is usually to get about 60 to 80 percent of the painting done on location, and then I finish back in the studio when necessary,” she explains. Waszak also brings the same free-spirited use of color she honed as a graphic designer to her oil paintings.

When it comes to inspiration, it is never in short supply. “From the huge sky and glowing light to the stunning landforms to the rich Native American and Hispanic culture—New Mexico is such an enchanting place,” she says. “I want to paint it all.” See her work at [www.krysteenwaszak.com](http://www.krysteenwaszak.com). ❖

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Winter, Rio Grande, oil, 30 x 48.



In the Field, oil, 30 x 36.