



"Among the Aspens" • 30" x 30" • Oil

JOSEPH LORUSSO

Opening Reception • Friday, June 30, 2017 • 5 to 7pm



McLARRY
FINE ART

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Joseph Lorusso

McLarry Fine Art, June 30-July 14

SINCE JOSEPH Lorusso took the leap into a full-time painting career nearly 20 years ago, collectors have come to recognize and love his poignant, painterly portrayals of people in intimate, everyday settings. This month, in his first solo show at McLarry Fine Art in Santa Fe, NM, Lorusso introduces as many as 14 new oil paintings that reveal an expressive departure from his traditionally subtle palette. In several pieces, he explores contemporary western life in

portrayals of the figure, animals, and the landscape. The show opens on Friday, June 30, with an artist's reception at 5 p.m.

"Viewers can expect to see work that's a little different than what they're used to," says Lorusso, "but hopefully it still maintains an emotional impact, whether it's narrative or not." The Kansas City, MO, artist has always felt an inclination to tell stories in his figurative paintings, he says, and it was part and parcel of

his career as an illustrator at Hallmark Cards in the late 1980s and '90s. But lately he's been dabbling in doses of spirited self-expression and a little western subject matter, too. "As much as your collectors know you for a certain thing, you really have to find it within you to break out of that—to push the envelope and try things that are uncomfortable, just for that growth process," he reflects. "Every time I do that, I have fun."

Subdued tonalist colors have defined



A Girl and Her Horse, oil, 30 x 40.



▲ **At Day's End, oil, 34 x 34.**



Lorusso's palette over the years, but in his latest oils, the artist opted for bolder color trends—green tones, earthy pastels, and fuchsia, for example—while preserving his emphasis on color harmony. “I’m opening myself up, even in my traditional figurative work, to pushing color more and more,” he says, “to be fresher and more up-to-date.” While intrepid color choices allowed him to reinvent his creative approach, he also discovered new methods of expression through the use of brayers, scrapers, and paint splattering. As a result, some paintings, including Lorusso’s portrayal of a horse in full gallop, are noticeably looser, contemporary, and “splashy,” he says.

Aesthetic departures aside, the tried-and-true technical requirements of the artist’s process—from draftsmanship skills to design-driven compositions—are applied across all his new works. And in figurative paintings like that of a pensive cowboy looking off into the sunset, viewers can still find Lorusso’s classic narratives. “We’ve all looked out into the sunset and wondered those bigger questions,” he says. “A picture paints a thousand words.”

Someday he may do an entire show of more expressive paintings, notes Lorusso, but he continues to find fulfillment in painting the reflective figurative scenes that viewers seem to connect with most. For the artist, reaching viewers on an



▲ **Sentinel II, oil, 16 x 14.**

◀ **Daydream, oil, 10 x 16.**

ever-deeper, more powerful level will always be the “dangling carrot,” he says. “That is the dilemma of an artist, to try to achieve that unattainable goal—the deeper, sublime effect you’re looking for that has an indescribable effect on people. It’s a continual process of becoming, and you never really get there.”
—Kim Agricola

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www.mclarryfineart.com

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