

Previews of Works For Sale at Upcoming Shows

OCTOBER 2007

2

# WESTERN ART

## COLLECTOR



**UPCOMING SHOW**

Up to 30 pieces on show  
Oct. 26–Nov. 10, 2007

McLary Gallery  
225 Canyon Road  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
(505) 988-1161

**SHOW LOCATION SANTA FE, NM**

**XIANG ZHANG**

*A marriage of cultures*



XIANG ZHANG © DPA

*"Once I moved down here I discovered the ranch business and the culture of Texas. I immediately started to visit the ranches to watch the cowboys' work, eat lunch with them, and get to know them. Then I started to paint the cowboys."*



Although he didn't start painting cowboys until he moved his family to Texas from Louisiana in 1993, artist Xiang Zhang feels that he was destined to paint the Western scene from the time he was a young child growing up in China.

"I've loved horses since I was a boy," says Zhang. "I started to paint when I was young. I was born in 1954, the year of the horse. So that's kind of interesting."

Zhang is hardly a newcomer to the United States. He immigrated to the United States in 1986, attained a Master of Fine Arts from Tulane University in New Orleans, and worked as a set designer for the New Orleans Opera House before moving to Texas and discovering cowboys.

"Once I moved down here I discovered the ranch business and the culture of Texas," says Zhang. "I didn't see real cowboys until I moved to Texas. I immediately started to visit the ranches to watch the cowboys' work, eat lunch with them, and get to know them. Then I started to paint the cowboys."

Zhang says that after a while, some of the ranch owners began to collect his work and invite him to visit their ranches to see their activities.

"I needed to stay there for several days with them and watch their everyday life," says Zhang. "I would go to the chuck wagon to have breakfast with the cowboys at 4:30 a.m. We ate together and I went through their day. I got to know the changes in their lives, and they would tell me about their parents, the older generation of cowboys. This is my study. I always love to focus on people, whether they are cowboys, portraits or ballerinas. Cowboys are like people plus horses."

Zhang now lives on a ranch next to cowboys.

"My neighbor has horses," says Xhang, "And when I take a break I step out of my studio and whistle and the horses come to me."

Zhang says he is a contemporary cowboy painter, but has not forgotten his roots.

"It's not only the technical or angle to look at a cowboy's life, but all the images are contemporary

**They Are Coming**, oil on canvas, 36 x 54"



XIANG ZHANG © CPA 2007

*Tastes Good*, oil on canvas, 40 x 30"



*Flying Lariats*, oil on canvas, 25 x 36"

cowboy's life, with the two cultures combined together," explains Zhang. "In Chinese calligraphy, when you write those characters, you could do it the fast way, or very slow and formal. I like the quick way, which is more simplified lines, more emotion. I got a lot of influence from there to create paintings. I have that kind of spirit in my mind to execute the image with brush strokes."

Zhang describes himself as West meets East and aims to create the cowboy life with this combination of cultures.

"My background of the Chinese culture is of the calligrapher who uses the brush, which is a form of art," says Zhang. "That kind of influence is what I use to translate that kind of brush stroke to my painting. I try to make the shape as everybody sees it. My painting is not objective. When I paint with my brush or my palette knife,

I have a Chinese calligrapher way to apply the brush to the canvas. It gives me more freedom on the canvas to create the shape and the color instead of my brush having to paint the shape you'd see in a photograph or in life."

Zhang explains that his painting philosophy is less is more and his style is about today's cowboys.

"To paint a horse very realistically you have to paint many strokes," says Zhang. "My way I can use much fewer strokes to get that effect. My strong broad brush stroke is good to express the impression I get from cowboy life. It's more about the emotion and I try to avoid rendering every detail of the subject. The more I paint, the wilder the brush strokes come out. Now I'm using the knife, which gives me more freedom from detail."

Zhang says he simplifies everything, but detail is not lost.

"To create that part with a brush it would take 10 to 20 strokes to render that part, but with my understanding of the anatomy and the palette knife, I can create that subject matter just with 3 or 4 strokes," says Zhang. "I've just done one of 3 young cowboys sitting on horseback. The palette knife creates larger strokes so that it's almost abstract. But when you look from a distance you can feel that the form, light, structure and color all go together. The shape of the bone and muscles on the horse are clear. But when you're close it almost looks abstract. I simplified every shape and the subject matter."

Zhang is always looking for new and different ways to create and never wants to lose the freedom to do what he sees.

"From my angle, my feelings, I put everything honestly on the canvas," states Zhang. "Every painting I create always



*Got Ya!*, oil on canvas, 18 x 24"



*Lunch Hour*, oil on canvas, 36 x 54"



**Speeding**, oil on canvas, 36 x 60"

*“When I paint with my brush or my palette knife, I have a Chinese calligrapher way to apply the brush to the canvas. It gives me more freedom on the canvas to create the shape and the color instead of my brush having to paint the shape you’d see in a photograph or in life.”*

has ideas for different composition. I always do some experiment because I think it's fun. The composition is always different, so I try to get something new in terms of subject matter and technique—use a new language to create it.”

Zhang hopes that it isn't only his painting style that merges Far East with Southwest.

“I would like to introduce the Southwestern art to Chinese viewers,” says Zhang. “They don't know much, but one thing I know is that people are the same, whether in China or America. They should know each other's culture, which eliminates a lot of misunderstanding. Through my painting it will be easier for

them to get a feeling of Western culture or art. To them they only know a little bit and that's from Western movies.”

Xiang Zhang's work seems like the perfect cultural bridge.

For a direct link to the exhibiting gallery go to



[www.westernartcollector.com](http://www.westernartcollector.com)

### Price Range Indicator

Our at-a-glance Price Range Indicator shows what you can expect to pay for this artist's work.

	Small	Medium	Large
1997	\$1,800	\$5,000	\$25,000
2002	\$3,000	\$8,000	\$26,000
2007	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$36,000