



Peter Campbell Colorado, USA, *Rising*, oil, 32 x 48" (81 x 122 cm)

Finalist

My Inspiration

While I do a fair amount of traveling to seek new places to paint, I often find the best paintings are found quite close to home. *Rising* was inspired by a field only a couple of miles from my house. During monsoon season in Southwest Colorado the clouds will build in the afternoon, and while passing this field one late afternoon, a painting presented itself to me. The clouds rising with the golden hayfield were so dramatic I knew I had to try and capture it, so I did a small painting. I find water to be a fascinating subject in all its forms, as rivers, oceans, snow or, in this case, clouds. Water and how light reacts with it make for endless inspiration.

My Design Strategy

Really the design was dictated by the scene itself. I wanted to have the calmness of the field be contrasted with the upward, powerful movement of the clouds. With that in mind I chose a horizontal format and a low horizon line to express the sense of calm that is broken by the rising clouds. I used the road as a leading line into the picture plane and balanced the clouds on the right with the empty space of the sky on the left. The light on the field is used as a design element to bring the eye back to the foreground and give an emotional quality to the scene.

My Working Process

I did a small study of this painting before I made the larger piece. I felt if I could capture the drama on a small scale it would

translate well to a larger piece. Starting with a very light gray tone on the whole canvas, I painted in all of my design elements with a slightly darker gray using a #8 round brush. Then working from back to front, thinking of the canvas three dimensionally, I painted in a rough sky color. On top of that I painted a tonal version of the clouds and finally a soft version of the fields. Once those large shapes were defined I was free to paint back and forth with subsequent layers. I worked from large shapes to smaller shapes using soft and hard edges to imitate what the eye sees.