

Whitney Gardner

Desert light



Valley of Shadows, oil, 24 x 30.

CALIFORNIA PAINTER and printmaker Whitney Gardner is going places, both literally and figuratively. In her depictions of the Southwest desert, Gardner creates both visual and vicarious experiences for viewers, in which scenes featuring rugged terrain are accompanied by a sense of the heat, wind, dust, and aridity present in those moments. Expanding the boundaries of western art to include the California deserts she knows so well is one of her primary goals as an artist.

Living in Twentynine Palms, CA, for the last decade has given Gardner the firsthand experience from which to create these scenes. “I paint mostly from the Mojave desert, where I live, which supplies infinite variations of dry, rugged

landscape,” she says. “But what makes the terrain truly intriguing is the light. The sun here is intense, saturating every living and nonliving shape in sight. It creates bold values and unusual colors that I absolutely love to capture in paint. I watch and study the light changing on this landscape hour to hour, year after year, right from my front door. The light is always different, always surprising.”

Gardner’s ability to capture this light in her work is growing, and her desert scenes are becoming increasingly popular with collectors. In fact, her Calico series sold out in less than a month after first being offered through Western Gallery this past May. She is becoming known through museum shows and events throughout the West as well, and



Transition, oil, 18 x 11.

her Best of Show award at the 2019 Joshua Tree National Park Art Exposition was a particularly important acknowledgment for this California native.

Gardner appreciates many aspects of being a professional artist but truly values the connection an artist’s work can create with viewers. “This connection may bring joy, perspective, beauty, or something unspoken like a deep emotional resonance,” she says. “I have personally connected with works from artists past and present that have changed my life and helped me see the world differently. To bring joy to another through creative efforts is the ultimate gift.”

—Allison Malafrente

representation

Western Gallery, www.western.gallery;
www.whitofthewest.com.

upcoming shows

A Women’s Art Expo, The Marshall Gallery of Fine Arts, Scottsdale, AZ, October 14-15.

Small Works, Great Wonders, National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, Oklahoma City, OK, November 6-28.