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SPOTLIGHT

Pastel Society honors Mesa artist's painting

Tribune News Staff Oct 13, 2019



Mesa artist Allen Garnes, who also teaches art at Mesa Community College, is known for his work in pastels and recently the Pastel Society of America honored his work.

Special to the Tribune

Mesa artist Allen Garnes has won a prestigious honor from the Pastel Society of America.

Garns, who also is a Mesa Community College art instructor, won the Kenneth Wellner Memorial Award at the society's exhibit at the National Arts Club in New York City.

His portrait, "Aware," was chosen from 176 artists' works selected from over 1,600 worldwide applicants.

"This was a small and rather quiet piece. Each year, many of the paintings in this show are often large and much more intense color – a common quality in pastel painting. So, I was especially surprised and honored to be chosen for this award," said Garns.

Garns on his website quotes the American poet Walt Whitman, who said, "To me, every hour of the light and dark is a miracle. Every cubic inch of space is a miracle."

The artist said, "Finding that miracle is why I paint, no matter if it's a figure, a landscape or an illustration for a children's book."

He said his work over 30 years "covers a range of experiences from illustrating movie posters and children's books to painting en plein aire in the hill towns of Europe.

Gingher Leyendecker, chair of the MCC Art Department, applauded the honor Garns received, stating, "We are proud that he has been recognized for his talents and look forward to celebrating more successes in the future."

Mesa Mayor John Giles invited Garns to display nine new paintings in his City Hall office for the next few months.

They include iconic Mesa landscapes and can be viewed on Instagram.

Garns graduated with a bachelor's degree in fine arts from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California.

The Pastel Society of America was founded in 1972 and is the oldest of its kind in America. It is largely responsible for the current renaissance of pastels in American art.