

Previews of Works For Sale at Upcoming Shows

JANUARY 2017

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WESTERN ART

COLLECTOR



UPCOMING SHOW

Up to 12 works

January 26, 2017

The Legacy Gallery
7178 E. Main Street
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
(480) 945-1113

SHOW LOCATION SCOTTSDALE, AZ

KYLE POLZIN

Stories of stillness and time

Pick up an object. Any object. Before it found its way into your hands it was made somewhere else and spent a life on a desk, in a closet, on a shelf, perhaps in use outdoors. The object has a history, a past that has woven through time to be brought here to your hands right now. That's one story. Another story is your own thoughts on the object—what it means to you, what it symbolizes, how it's been used. Then there are what others think of the object, and how their own lives have shaped different ideas about the things they see and use—even more stories. Assemble an arrangement of items and suddenly the opportunities for storytelling grow exponentially.

For Kyle Polzin, whose still life images have imbued Western art with a sense of graceful reverence for many of the most iconic and overlooked objects, every item is a storytelling opportunity. The trouble is finding which story of hundreds, if not thousands, he wants to tell.

"I'll try to let the objects tell the story, and then I just paint that picture," Polzin says in his studio in Austin, Texas. "It involves a certain level of nostalgia, of showing people what I'm trying to get across with just the items. There is a story there, but is it the right story? Is there enough there to tell it? These are some of the things I have to ask myself as I'm narrowing my choices down to tell a great story."

Those great stories—of the objects, of the people they belong to and the people viewing them—will be in Polzin's long-awaited solo show opening January 26 at the Legacy Gallery in Scottsdale, Arizona. It's his first solo show in a year and a half, a delay caused by his family's recent move within Austin. The relocation had good and bad consequences: the good was that Polzin now has a new studio and more storage space for his growing collection of materials, and the bad was that he would be unable to paint on a regular basis while his studio was being moved. He did manage to turn in stunning pieces at the *Prix de West* and the *Masters of the American West*, where his by-draw bid boxes



Hired Hand, oil on canvas, 30 x 41"



Kyle Polzin paints on a drum he intends to paint into one of his works.



Long Soldier Ledger, oil on canvas, 19 x 18"

were stuffed so full of slips of paper they could have been piñatas. But now, with his own solo exhibition on the horizon, he's excited to push himself further and explore new kinds of imagery.

"With these Western museum shows, there's an urge to have a very Western piece or a sporting art piece, but a solo show like Legacy's enables me to show some pieces that I wouldn't necessarily put out there. It opens the door for me to explore other ideas," he says, adding

that new works include a flintlock pistol in *The Voyageur*, the floral image *Pink Daisies*, and a Civil War drum in *From Many, One*. Of course, he adds, he's still producing Western scenes, including *Hired Hand*, with its careful display of saddle, rope, leather work gloves and branding irons. And the unique arrangement, with the saddle lying forward in a horn-down position, shows he's very conscious of never repeating himself. "Painting different scenes

can be a challenge. That's where it gets taxing. There's an urge to follow a formula, but I push myself to try new things and always stay fresh."

It's dedication that makes his arrangements fresh, and it's dedication that also keeps him so grounded. Polzin is somewhat of a phenom in Western art, particularly after early record breakers at auction and astounding buyer interest at museum exhibitions, where collectors crowd around his work in a reverential shuffle. He



From Many, One, oil on canvas, 31 x 29"

admits he's flattered by the respect he's earned, but he's going to go at his own speed, even if it means his output is a slow trickle—"I want to have a long career," he says, "not a quick one."

The leisurely pace, though, allows him to fully research his subjects, which is one aspect of which he never tires. For a new World War II-themed piece, he based his early ideas on a vintage bomber jacket he purchased off eBay. "I'm careful to choose the right objects so there's continuity and they all fit together," he

says, adding that one wrong item, maybe a pair of gloves from a decade after the war, and the image might still look interesting but people who know better will see inconsistencies. So Polzin researches his pieces endlessly until he's happy with the story they tell. "The bomber jacket has a big wool collar on it, and a painted-on patch. I was thinking of setting it on top of an old foot locker with the old leather headgear and a classic early-1940s pinup behind it. I kept thinking of the Memphis Belle and that era."

Another new piece in the show is *Long Soldier Ledger*, a shadowy scene with a piece of Native American ledger art and a feather. Polzin will often buy old objects he wants to paint or, in other cases, he will simply make the objects himself, but for *Long Soldier Ledger* he commissioned the ledger artwork from Oglala Lakota artist Daniel Long Soldier, who is Polzin's go-to source when it comes to authentic Native American imagery. "He contacted me several years ago and we struck up a friendship. I will



The Voyageur, oil on canvas, 11 x 19"

often consult with him on the backstories of items or the significance of objects," Polzin says. "For this one, he did the ledger piece just perfect. Once I saw it I knew I could just hang it on a wall and let it be all by itself."

Brad Richardson, owner of Legacy Gallery, says Polzin thrives on his research. "Sometimes we won't see him for a while because he's out finding materials or, what is often the case, he's just making them himself. He's really quite skilled at everything he does," Richardson says. "His work really taps into this nostalgia we all feel for the items he paints. And his work is exceptional, which is why everyone wants one in their collection. They love his work, but they also see the quality he puts into it."

Polzin is just grateful at the opportunity he has to share stories, including stories about what the objects are and how they relate to each other, to what they mean to the people who used them, to what they mean to him as an artist. "Every piece is a new adventure," he says. "And each piece brings with it its own history and importance. It's like a treasure hunt finding them." 🐾

For a direct link to the
exhibiting gallery go to



www.westernartcollector.com



Pink Daisies, oil on canvas, 19 x 19"