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Persimmon Hill



Prix de West



Wilson Hurley, with wife Roz at his side, happily accepts the 1984 Prix de West check for \$100,000.

With thunder claps, raging winds and flashes of summer lightning playing against the museum's window walls, nature provided an impromptu but appropriate staging for the announcement that *Los Alamos Country*, [see cover] Wilson Hurley's tribute to the awesome works of the natural world, was declared the Prix de West painting for 1984. Thus Hurley, though the twelfth

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..NATIONAL ACADEMY OF WESTERN ART



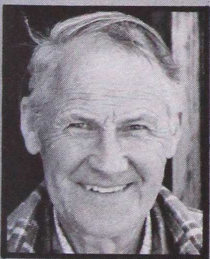
*Silver Medal, Oil:
AT SUNDOWN by VaLoy Eaton
(39½ × 48 inches)*



artist to receive the honor, became the first to collect the \$100,000 prize which this year is five times greater than before. Actually, Hurley's winnings included an additional \$1000, as his 40 × 76-inch painting earned the gold medal in the oil category also. His horizontal view of Culebra Canyon, softly colored and playing light against shadow to recede a distance of thirty miles, recalls a scene that has been stored in his artistic soul since childhood when he first visited the area. Look carefully and you'll even find the very mountain lion he spotted there at age fourteen.

The other winning works, pictured on these pages, included gold medals for Paul Strisik's peaceful ranch house scene in watercolor, *November Moonrise*; *Fishing Tackle*, Dennis

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Anderson's powerful thrust of bronze; and Bettina Steinke's rich charcoal drawing, *Navaho Shepherd*.

A silver medal went to VaLoy Eaton for his oil, *At Sundown*, a wonderful landscape bathed in winter's golden late-day sunlight and executed with this Utah artist's quiet competency. Other second-place winners were Thomas William Jones for *Time Passes*, his watercolor study in browns and grays of two weathered milk cans; John Free for his bronze, *The Wild Ones*; and Tom Lovell for *The Image Maker*, a charcoal drawing.

Patricia Janis Broder became the first woman to receive the NAWA Trustees Gold Medal for her contributions to Western art as an author.

The exhibition of ninety-four works of art from forty-three artists has great strength and variety, ranging from a flight of plovers carved in alabaster (Tony Angell) to Fred Machetanz's painting of a polar bear climbing onto an ice floe in the blazing color of an Arctic midnight sun. Spurred on by the increased grand prize, the artists reached very high in 1984.

The twelfth annual NAWA weekend began early Friday morning, June 8, 1984, when Duane Bryers stated that becoming an artist was really no problem for him. "I couldn't help it," he confessed, "it was something I was stuck with," as he led the seminar audience through a family-album slide lecture to prove his point. There were talks by Danish-born Olaf Wieghorst, relating a few incidents that happened along his way to preeminence as a Western artist, and by Rosina Florio, director of the Art Students League in New York. "You take good care of your artists out here in the West; you honor them—that's wonderful," she said on the occasion of her first visit to Cowboy Hall of Fame country. There were demonstrations in stone carving, watercolor and oil painting by Lowell Ellsworth Smith, Tony Angell, Tom Hill and VaLoy Eaton, complete with off-the-cuff remarks by each artist as he worked (Smith muttering he wasn't worried about winning the 1984 Prix de West because "lightning never strikes twice in the same spot"). Donald Teague provided a rare retrospective slide show of his work; Eya Fechin explained how her father, Nicolai Fechin, worked. Using slides of jewel-like fragments from his paintings, she magnified his extraordinary command of color and technique for the audience.

Throughout the weekend there ran a current of fresh excitement, a pride in past achievement but with a bold new look to the future. "An epochal occasion," Dean Krakel called it, "the Olympiad of Western art."