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Tempo

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PEOPLE AND PLACES

Portrait artist and landscape painter
featured at Parsons Gallery West



PEOPLE *and* PLACES

*Portrait artist Allen Polt and
landscape painter Don Brackett at Parsons Gallery*

By Rick Romancito



One looks for the depth of character in a person's face or mannerisms. The other in the peaks and valleys and sagebrush-covered mesas of Northern New Mexico. Both are masters of their craft and art lovers will have an opportunity to see them together in one place.

A special exhibition featuring works by portrait artist Allen Polt and landscape painter Don Brackett is slated to open with a reception Friday (Aug. 27) from 4-7 p.m. at Robert Parsons Gallery of the West, 122 Kit Carson Road.

Polt says he earned his degree in Illustrating Arts from the Newark School of Fine and Industrial Art. "Wanting to escape the hustle of New York City where he drew

black and white portraits for the Wall Street Journal, Polt moved to Taos in 1974 where he found a change of pace and visual inspiration," a press release says. "He began doing landscapes of local subjects, all of which quickly sold to important collectors."

In 1976, he began focusing on portraiture. Locals who regularly patronized the much-lamented Bravo! Restaurant may remember his portraits that lined the walls of the dining area.

Brackett says he is a third generation New Mexican who has lived and painted in Taos for nearly 30 years. His work is in the loose painterly style of the Impressionists.

He began his career in watercolors and then moved to oils after finding a strong affinity with the texture of the medium. He has excelled, so much so that he has received many national and regional awards including the distinguished Ford Times Award in New York City at the National Academy.

Brackett is a member of the American Watercolor Society and the Society of American Impressionists through which he won the "Best of the Sangres" show in Pueblo, Colo., with a cash prize of \$10,000, a press release states. He has also had many one-man shows at galleries in New Mexico, Colorado, Oklahoma, Texas and Arizona and is in many permanent and private collections throughout the Southwest. He shows in galleries in Vail, Colorado Springs,



Courtesy of the artist

'Summer Storm' by Brackett

Left: 'Flower Market' painting by Allen Polt

Courtesy of the artist

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'Old Convent'
painting by Don
Brackett

Courtesy of the artist

Parsons

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Santa Fe and Taos.

Not long ago, we sat down for a chat with both men ...

TEMPO: What's new about this show?

ALLEN POLT: The subject is new to me. I'm painting Mexico now. I was a portrait painter, and I still am, but this is a way I can paint people instead of landscapes. I can put lots of people in one painting.

TEMPO: What have you been painting in Mexico?

POLT: Market scenes. They're so busy and so colorful. It excites me.

TEMPO: Do you take photographs of them?

POLT: More like a thousand. No one there is going to pose for you, so, of course, you have to.

TEMPO: And then you can also get that spontaneous quality.

POLT: Well, I do. You can catch them doing things that they couldn't pose doing, and that's an element that I enjoy.

TEMPO: And Don, what will you be showing?

DON BRACKETT: New Mexican landscapes mostly. I've been doing that for almost 50 years. I'm a native New Mexican, grew up here; love the scenery. For this show

I've done quite a few larger pieces. It's a chance to show some of my larger works. Looking forward to the show and working with Allen. We've known each other for 30 years and have never done a show together. It's a first for both of us. Our work is so different. It's kind of complementary.

TEMPO: Where did you do a lot of the paintings for the show?

BRACKETT: Mostly right around this area, within a 30- to 40-mile radius. The scenery here is like nowhere else. I love the Pueblo, the streams, the mountains, aspens, whatever. That's what the whole show's about.

TEMPO: Allen, in your work you focus so much on faces. What do you look for when you're doing portraits?

POLT: Character. I look for character. It's hard to



'The Sugar Cane Tepee' by Allen Polt

Courtesy of the artist

contact Robert Parsons Gallery at (575) 737-9200 or visit its website at www.parsonswest.com.

explain. I might 'modify' (an image). You almost have to when you get a marketplace where there might be 40 people. They're not all pretty. They're not all people that you'd like to hang on your wall. So, I could modify those that — this is going to sound bad — that need it, y'know? It's like a façelift (laughs). Maybe you shouldn't put this in.

TEMPO: It's part of your work though, right?

POLT: It's to bring out the character, a pleasing character. That's what I do.

TEMPO: Would you say that you romanticize?

POLT: I would say, I think. Through the composition and the people that are in it, I do.

The show continues through the end of September. For more information,