

William Lumpkins (1909 - 2000)

New Mexico's Transcendental Watercolorist: A Sixty Year Retrospective

For immediate release: June 22, 2010

Peyton Wright Gallery is pleased to announce "**New Mexico's Transcendental Watercolorist: A Sixty Year Retrospective**" an exhibition of art mostly from his estate. The exhibition opens on **Friday, July 9, 2010 and continues through Monday, August 30, 2010** in our main galleries. The opening reception will be **Friday, July 9, 2010 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.**



"Pass Thru"
Watercolor on paper, 1973
18" x 24"

William Lumpkins (1909-2000), was the sole artist among the early modernists who could rightly claim his connection to New Mexico and the inspiration from the high desert landscapes as a birthright. As a young boy, Lumpkins saw a man demonstrating painting techniques in the window of a hardware store, spurring his initial interest in becoming an artist. In 1929, he enrolled at the University of New Mexico where he took painting classes from artist Neil Hogner and architect

Irwin Parsons, markedly influencing his artistic development. Lumpkins subsequently met a network of other young modern artists, including Cady Wells and Andrew Dasburg. These

artists first introduced Lumpkins to the conceptual aspects underlined in non-representational painting; viewing art as a vehicle of personal expression through line and color. In 1930 his interest in abstraction was piqued after viewing an exhibition of New Mexico watercolors by the artist John Marin. Marin's deconstructed landscapes had a profound impact on Lumpkins,

whose style was already developing toward abstraction. These serendipitous events, paired with his internal creative drive, propelled Lumpkins to begin his prolific body of work. Lumpkins recalled that his passion for painting occurred early on, as he could always be found working ceaselessly on his watercolors through the New Mexican summers of his twenties "as if possessed". This early work already displays the

quintessential Lumpkins approach, in which the immediacy of watercolor is fully wielded and "the strokes are bold and energetic; white paper both a luminous



"Angstrom II"
Watercolor on paper, 1949
15" x 22"

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"First Date"
Oil on canvas, 1975
47 3/4" x 48 1/8"

ground and a compositional element".

In 1934, Lumpkins received his degree in architecture from the University of Southern California, and in the following years, worked as a junior architect for the Works Project Administration, returning to Santa Fe in 1938. Upon his return, he befriended many of the early New Mexico modernists, among them Jozef Bakos, Willard Nash, and B.J.O. Nordfeldt. He developed a particularly devoted friendship with the artist Raymond Jonson, who shared his passion for the expressive possibilities of abstract work. That same

year, Jonson and Emil Bisttram founded the Transcendental Painting Group, artists whose shared vision was "to carry painting

beyond the appearance of the physical world, through new concepts of space and color, light, and design, to imaginative realms that are idealistic and spiritual". Lumpkins soon became a member of this exclusive enclave which many consider the American heir to "Russian Constructivism, Futurism, and the Bauhaus". The Transcendental Painting Group included Agnes Pelton, Lawren Harris, Ed Garman, Robert Gribbroek, Florence Miller Pierce, Stuart Walker, Dane Rudhyar, and Horace Towner Pierce.

Lumpkins, well-known in Santa Fe for not only his participation in several of the most prominent artistic movements in New Mexico, is also renowned for his innovation in architecture and solar technology. In 1935, he constructed the first passive solar house in New Mexico in Capitan. After World War II, he lived and worked as an architect and painter in La Jolla, California, before returning with his wife and children to Santa Fe in 1967. In 1985, he founded the prestigious Santa Fe Institute of Fine Arts, and continued to live and work in Santa Fe until his death in 2000.

The Peyton Wright Gallery is located in the historic Spiegelberg House at 237 East Palace Avenue. This remarkable setting speaks of Peyton Wright's commitment to exhibiting regional and historically significant art work of the highest quality.

Peyton Wright Gallery is the exclusive representative of the William Lumpkins Estate.

Currently on Exhibit at the Greenville County Museum of Art through August 15, 2010.
Upcoming exhibition at the Regency Club of Los Angeles November 10th through the 13th.

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