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Jozef Gabriel Bakós

(American Painter, 1891-1977)



Jozef Bakós was a significant contributor to the growth and spread of American modernism in the Southwest. The son of Polish immigrants, Bakós was born in 1891 in Buffalo, New York. He began his study of art at the Art School of the Albright Art Gallery under the tutelage of the artist and cartoonist, John E. Thompson. Here, Bakós encountered the work of Cézanne, whose work remained a profound influence on Bakós' work throughout his lifetime. In 1921, Bakós moved to Santa Fe, where he opened a studio on Camino del Monte Sol and became one of Los Cinco Pintores (The Five Painters), a group of avant-garde artists who devoted themselves to bringing modernism to Santa Fe. In addition to Bakós, Los Cinco Pintores included Fremont Ellis, Walter Mruk, Willard Nash, and Will Shuster. The five artists focused on uniquely American and Southwestern subject matter, such as architecture, and Native American dances and ceremonies. In addition to painting and exhibiting, Bakós supported himself with carpentry and furniture-making. He also worked as an art instructor at the University of Denver from 1931-1933 and at Santa Fe High School in the 1940s. He continued to live and work in Santa Fe until his death in 1977.

Bakós' paintings are strongly reminiscent of the work of Cézanne, and are most notable for their plein-air style and their use of bright, vibrant colors.

Museum Collections

Denver Art Museum
Jonson Gallery of University of New Mexico
Museum of New Mexico
Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum
Roswell Museum and Art Center
Stark Museum of Art
The Brooklyn Museum of Art
The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art
The Old Jail Art Center
Whitney Museum of American Art