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Helmuth Naumer

(1907-1989)

Known for his New Mexico landscape paintings, Helmuth Naumer worked in pastel, watercolor and oil but loved pastel the most because he didn't have to mix the paints nor worry about the color fading with time. For him, pastel was the most effective for catching the fleeting changes in atmosphere in the Southwest landscape. His paintings are generally composites of landscapes and not realistic depictions of a particular place.

Naumer grew up in the small town of Ruetlingen, Germany in the Black Forest and as a youngster loved the cowboy and Indian lore of the American West, inspired by writings of the author Karl May. In 1925, at age seventeen, he emigrated to New York City and from there went West, stopping briefly in Santa Fe on his way to California. He enrolled in the Frank Wiggins Art School, but needing steady income, joined the Merchant Marines.

After six years at sea, he returned to Santa Fe where in 1932, he settled permanently. He became friends with artist members of the community and began painting landscapes with them, achieving a good reputation in that area as well as in other parts of the country.