

SEARS·PEYTON·GALLERY

NEW YORK·LOS ANGELES

Clay Wagstaff

CV

b. 1964, Kanab, Utah

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS & HONORS

- 2020 *Summer Selections*, Sears-Peyton Gallery, New York, NY
- 2012 *New Paintings*, Sears-Peyton Gallery, New York, NY
- 2010 *The Luscious Landscape*, Beth Urdang Gallery, MA
- 2009 *A Natural Order*, Sears-Peyton Gallery, New York, NY
- 2007 *Dynamic Symmetry*, Sears Peyton Gallery, New York, NY
- 2006 *Two Artist Show: Clay & Rebecca Wagstaff*, Finch Lane Gallery, Salt Lake City, UT
Color of the Land: Landscape Art Show, Deseret Morning News, SLC, UT, First Place
82nd Utah Spring Salon, Springville Museum of Art, Springville, UT, Merit Award
7th Int'l Exhibition, Church Museum of History & Art, Salt Lake City, UT, Merit Award
- 2005 *Visual Arts Grant Awardees Exhibition*, Rio Gallery, Utah Arts Council, SLC, UT
- 2005 *Utah Arts Council Individual Artist Project Grant*
Everett Ruess Days: 2nd Annual Plein Air Competition, Escalante, UT, First Place Purchase Award
Color of the Land: Landscape Art Show, Deseret Morning News, SLC, UT, First Place
81st Utah Spring Salon, Springville Museum of Art, Springville, UT, Merit Award
Clay F. Wagstaff & Rebecca Wetzel Wagstaff, Terzian Galleries, Park City, UT
Selections from the State Fine Art Collection, Museum of Utah Art & History, SLC, UT
Utah 2005 Painting & Sculpture, Shaw Gallery, Weber State University, UT, Travel Award
- 2004 *Familial Painters: Three Artist Painting Show*, St. George Art Museum, St. George, UT
Two Points of View: Clay & Rebecca Wagstaff, Springville Museum of Art, Springville, UT
Everett Ruess Days: First Annual Plein Air Competition, Escalante, UT, Third Place
61st Annual Cedar City Art Exhibition, Cedar City, UT, Award of Distinction
Color of the Land: Landscape Art Show, Deseret Morning News, SLC, UT
- 2003–2004 *The Utah Century: Art and Culture 1902–2002*, Utah Museum of Fine Arts, Salt Lake City, UT
- 2003 *The Regional—7th Annual Juried Exhibition*, St. George, UT, Best Oil Painting Award
America's Freedom Festival, Provo Arts Council, Provo, UT, First Place Award
E-Spousing Art: Utah Artist Couples, Springville Museum of Art, Springville, UT
6th International Art Competition, Museum of Church History & Art, Salt Lake City, UT
Trinidad Nat'l Fine Art Exhibition, A. R. Mitchell Museum, Trinidad, CO, 3 Merit Awards
79th Utah Spring Salon, Springville Museum of Art, Springville, UT, Director's Award
- 2002 *Utah Art 2002: An Exhibition of Critically Juried Contemporary Utah Art*, Salt Lake City, UT
Utah Art, Utah Artists: 150 Year Survey, Springville Museum of Art, Springville, UT
Utah 2002 Painting & Sculpture, Kimball Arts Center, Park City, UT, Travel Award
78th Utah Spring Salon, Springville Museum of Art, Springville, UT, Merit Award

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NEW YORK·LOS ANGELES

- Visions 2002*, Norman Building, Salt Lake City, UT
- 2001 *Home Sweet Habitat*, Red Butte Garden & Arboretum, Salt Lake City, UT
- 2000 *Dixie Invitational*, Sears Gallery at Dixie State College, St. George, UT
- 1999 *75th Utah Spring Salon*, Springville Museum of Art, Springville, UT, Merit Award
- 1998 *Landscape Group Show*, Church Museum of History & Art, Salt Lake City, UT
- 1996 *Utah '96 Painting & Sculpture*, Utah Museum of the Arts, SLC, UT, Travel Award
- Due South: Landscapes*, Salt Lake Art Center, Salt Lake City, UT
- As They See It: Contemporary Landscapes*, Salt Lake Arts Center, Salt Lake City, UT
- 1995 *Dreamscapes: Group Show*, Dolores Chase Fine Art, Salt Lake City, UT
- 1993 *Going Places*, Three-man Show, Repartee Gallery, Park City, UT
- 1992 *Noche Tropical*, Group Show, Gremillion & Co. Fine Arts, Houston, TX
- Art Feeds the Soul*, Dolores Chase Fine Art, Salt Lake City, UT
- North Dakota Print & Drawing Annual*, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, ND
- 1991 *46th National Exhibit*, Colorado Springs Art Gallery, Colorado Springs, CO
- 2nd International Art Competition*, Church Museum of History & Art, Salt Lake City, UT
- Greater Midwest International VI*, Warrensburg, MO
- 1990 *25th Annual San Bernardino County Museum of Art Exhibition*, Redlands, CA, Honorable Mention
- 84th Open Juried Exhibition*, Long Beach Art Association, Long Beach, CA
- 33rd Chautauqua Nat'l Exhibition of American Art*, Chautauqua, NY
- Poldi Hirsch Memorial Exhibition*, Havre de Grace, MD
- 1988 *82nd Open Juried Exhibition*, Long Beach Art Association, Long Beach, CA
- Western States Print Competition*, Eccles Community Art Center, Ogden, UT
- 1987 *17th National Works on Paper Exhibit*, Minot, ND
- Kansas Twelfth National Small Painting, Drawing & Print Exhibition*, Hays, KS
- National Drawing 1987*, Trenton, NJ, 1987, Purchase Award
- 17th National Fine Arts Exhibition*, Provo, UT, Purchase Award
- 22nd Annual San Bernardino County Museum of Art Exhibition*, Redlands, CA
- Cliff Lodge 1st Inaugural Exhibition*, Snowbird, UT, Purchase Award
- 1986 *Utah '86 Painting & Sculpture*, Utah Museum of The Arts, SLC, UT, Travel Award
- Invitational Exhibit*, Church Museum of History & Art, Salt Lake City, UT

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

State of New Mexico, Art in Public Places 2004 *Acclaimed Artists' Series*

State of Utah Fine Art Collection, Salt Lake City, UT

San Diego Hilton, Lobby, San Diego, CA

TimeWarner Corporate Collection

Delta Airlines Corporate Collection

Kalamazoo Center Hotel, Kalamazoo, MI

The Suites at Underground Atlanta, Atlanta, GA

Salt Lake County Art Collection, Salt Lake City, UT

Springville Museum of Fine Art, Springville, UT

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NEW YORK·LOS ANGELES

Continental Airlines Corporate Collection

Joan Allen, New York, NY

Mercer County Cultural and Heritage Commission, CT

Fidelity Investments Management, Boston, MA

Wellington Management, Boston, MA

Deloitte & Touche, Atlanta, GA

BIBLIOGRAPHY

2009 Sexton, Elaine, *Art in America* review, September 2009

2006 *American Art Collector*, "Clay Wagstaff," July 2006, pp. 226-229

SouthWest Art, "An Equitable Arrangement," July 2006, pp. 134-141

15 Bytes: Artists of Utah E-Zine, "On the Spot," March 2006, p.2

2004 *International Artist Magazine*, painting reproduced, issue #38, Aug/Sept 2004, p.8

How Did You Paint That: 100 Ways to Paint Seascapes, Rivers & Lakes, Vol. 1, p. 78

2003 *New American Paintings*, Vol. 48, No. 5, pp. 150-153, Open Studios Press, Boston, MA

2001 *Utah Art, Utah Artists: 150 Year Survey*, Swanson, Olpin, Poulton, Rogers, p. 154

1999 *Artists of Utah*, Swanson, Olpin, Seiffert, p. 261

1997 *Utah Painting & Sculpture*, Swanson, Olpin, Seiffert

1991 *Utah Art*, Vern Swanson

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Clay Wagstaff **Artist Statement**

Clay Wagstaff composes his pieces mathematically using the Fibonacci series and the principles of dynamic symmetry, an ideology Leonardo DaVinci immortalized with his Golden Section, to set the ideal proportions. Above his deliberate interpretation of nature, Wagstaff paints skies using wide layered brushstrokes of moody and emotive color. Below the sweeping skies one discovers his talent for painting minutiae. He pays meticulous attention to nature's details putting life and energy into every patch of moss, puff of sea foam, and tree branch.

Emotion and calmness, rigid formulation and energetic movement; the powerful dichotomies in Wagstaff's work reflect nature and the universe. He often allows the sketch lines to show in his finished paintings and explains, "I want to create the feeling of another dimension, that there is a design behind the physical world, that there's a blueprint or spiritual design behind everything." An ambiguity of scale and the occasional use of limited perspective add a sense of otherworldliness and curiosity to the list of emotions evoked by his work; knowing that there is more that could be seen adds tension and complexity to the pieces. Wagstaff reminds us of the limits inherent to our humanity and demonstrates that our inability to know everything can add beauty and interest to our existence.

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Clay Wagstaff's work has been shown at museums and galleries in California, Nevada, Texas and Utah. His work is part of permanent collections at the Utah Museum of Fine Arts, Time Warner, Delta and Continental Airlines, Fidelity Investments, Wellington Management, Deloitte and Touche, and the US Department of State. His paintings have been reviewed in Art in America. Wagstaff holds a BFA from Brigham Young University and MFA from California State University at Long Beach. Wagstaff lives and works in Tropic Utah, a remote town of less than 500 residents. He paints from sketches and refers to photographs he takes near his home and on his extensive travels.

Excerpt from *Painted Landscapes: Contemporary Views*

Book by Lauren Della Monica

2013

Clay Wagstaff paints the intimate places of his life, landscapes both of the familiar, physical world and of memory and intellect. Though painted with incredible detail and realistic in approach to rendering the natural landscape, Wagstaff's untouched places are imbued with soft light and washes of color that create environments at once peaceful and otherworldly, somehow unreal. There is a sense of detachment in the idealized beauty that also lends the paintings an air of the universal.

Though informed by experiences and real places where he has spent time out in the landscape, often quite close to home, Wagstaff's paintings transcend the physical space of Utah. He organizes his compositions, mostly straight-on views of flat, verdant landscapes with trees as protagonists at center, according to principles of Greek mathematical principles, thus creating visually balanced and harmonious formations. Earlier examples of seascapes, with tall rocks jutting from the grey-green waters in the middle of the compositions, are similarly grounded and ordered. The symmetry in the physical aspects of the paintings, such as the ring of exposed dirt encircling the central assembly of striking albino shade trees in *The Circle No. 6* (Fig. 11), underscores the importance of balance and ancient order in Wagstaff's compositions. In many of his works, the horizon line cuts across the center of the composition creating equal balance of land and sky between the upper and lower registers of the painting.

Wagstaff's landscapes are serene, cerebral places with vistas fading into the distance and trees populating the middle ground of the works. Capturing the soothing, more restful times of day, Wagstaff's paintings exist as daylight dawns or wanes, casting a soft light on a scene. There are no structures or evidence of man and population in his work, which enhances the feeling of the eternal and timelessness. The individual or clusters of trees, at the center of the canvases, become the focal point in the otherwise open views. The gnarled trunks or elaborate canopies of old-growth trees suggest that these are landscapes of the ancient world. The trees, though representative of the physical place, are also symbolic of an intellectual, emotional place as well. Wagstaff's spaces draw or pull the viewer into the space of the painting, enveloping us with a sense of well-being and of welcome solitude.

Wagstaff lives and works in Tropic, Utah. He received his MA in printmaking and MFA in painting and drawing from California State University, Long Beach, and his BFA in printmaking from Brigham Young University. His work is in the collection of the Springville Museum of Fine Art, Springville, Utah; the State of New Mexico's Art in Public Places collection; the State of Utah Fine Art collection, Salt Lake City; and the Salt Lake County art collection. He is represented by Selby Fleetwood Gallery, Santa Fe; David Erickson Fine Art, Salt Lake City; Terzian Galleries, Park City, Utah; Torrey Gallery, Torrey, Utah; and Sears Peyton Gallery, New York.

Art in America

Exhibition Review: Clay Wagstaff

By Elaine Sexton

Art in America

September 2009

Clay Wagstaff embeds his curious and compelling landscapes with self-conscious traces of his process. Exposed grids—lines sketched on the canvas that bleed through the oil paint—materialize in skies over seas, trees and shorelines. Evidence of an order underneath, this overt gesture on one hand telegraphs a desire to control and on the other acknowledges an almostness to Wagstaff's efforts to replicate nature. "A Natural Order" was this Utah-based artist's second exhibition at Sears Peyton. Like "Dynamic Symmetry," his last (2007), its title refers to theories of Leonardo da Vinci concerning laws of natural design.

Wagstaff often contrasts paired things in his paintings (here 2008 or '09), a duality apparent in his execution as well. His brushstrokes are rough and broad, uneven, in the skies, streaked in muted colors precisely selected to portray hazy days. At the same time, his focus on minutia is fierce, as in *Ocean No. 23* at 36 by 80 inches among the largest works on view, in which detailed ridges on the faces of two giant boulders make them look like embroidered tapestry. An almost paint-by-numbers quality isolates each pool of shade on the rocks and the dark spots in the light gray-green waves and foam breaking on the sand.

Some of the tension in this work stems from the contrast Wagstaff establishes between the paired elements. Which one is idealized, nearly perfect, and the other appears flawed and, perhaps, more realistic. Two treetops, alone, are rendered in vivid relief, as in a Japanese print, against a mustard yellow background in *Tree Silhouette No. 3*; one tree is whole and healthy while the other appears skeletal. In *Birds with Crescent Moon*, what looks like cultures rest on the uppermost branches of another pair of evergreens. Here, one treetop is symmetrical, crowned by an opened-wing culture, while the other is roughly shaped, with four stooped avians seemingly too big for their perches, a delicate menace.

Still, there's something soothing in Wagstaff's straightforward, undramatic settings, a sense that the world, as this artist depicts it, is quiet, calm and manageable—an effect that is heightened when we step away from the paintings. At a remove, the vultures are just birds, and you don't notice the grids keeping chaos at bay. Like a stoic cousin to the Hudson River School painters, Wagstaff, with his ideas of order, draws something spiritual out of the hush he creates in unpeopled, un sentimental landscapes.