

Richard Scott Morgan

From Bears to Brushes

By Aurora Irene Morgan

What would you do if the company you worked for over ten years suddenly decided to shut the doors on your dream career? "I packed up, took a leap of faith, and escaped to Montana to pursue a career in landscape painting, Richard Scott Morgan said with a grin. "Most everyone thought I was crazy, but God obviously provided a time for change." Richard went from "bears to brushes" after working on Disney's last traditionally animated feature film, *Brother Bear*, in Orlando, Florida. The studio closed film production there in 2004. After years of creating beautiful art for the big screen, he found the time to focus on his passion to paint independently.

A fresh start in the peacefulness of Montana was a welcome trade from theme parks to national parks. Richard found the scenic Seeley-Swan Valley a captivating location for his goal to create fine art inspired by the beauty of natural surroundings. "The scenery here seems to capture your soul and ignite inspirational ideas," Richard mused. His focus is on Plein Air (outdoor) landscape painting. This technique of painting from life was inspired by Richard's favorite influences, Claude Monet, Joaquin Sorolla, Carl Rungius, and John Singer Sargent. He also admires contemporary artists such as Clyde Aspevig, Scott Christensen, Bob Kuhn, Josh Elliott, Bob Barlow and Brent Cotton- who all paint outdoors. Richard participated in the Third and Fourth Annual Dana Gallery Paint Outs allowing him the opportunity to paint with a select group of plein air artists. "I was honored to be invited by such a presti-

gious gallery and the caliber of talent associated there," he said.

In the wild, he'll persevere all the relentless elements including- extreme cold and hot temperatures, wind, bugs, and bears to capture the essence of a scene. "I'll stay in a spot all day, and hopefully the wind won't blow my painting into the river before it's finished!" He recalled one time painting on the Yellowstone River- it was really hot and a whole swarm of bugs landed on his wet canvas, then the wind folded back his umbrella, and finally the painting fell face down onto his palette covering the study with splattered paint- ruining it! These smaller paintings done on location- are a necessity and serve as the catalyst to his larger studio pieces. "It is so important to study first hand, from nature, to give your work truth and believability, the artist stated. "I treasure exploring and sharing the wilds of Montana and rejoice in the beauty of our natural surroundings...what I affectionately call, God's Country."

Richard earned his BFA at the Ringling School of Art and his award winning work has been exhibited extensively. For more information on Richard Scott Morgan see his website at: www.richardscottmorgan.com or call 677-0025 for an appointment to visit his art studio/gallery, Aspen Sienna Art Studio, at 11560 Boy Scout Road in Seeley Lake, MT.

Upcoming exhibitions include: The Alpine Artisans' Wine and Chocolate Art Benefit, February 11th at 1pm, and the Made in Montana Marketplace March 2 & 3rd. See his website for details.



Richard painting in Canada



Clear Water Willows



Old Days Remembered

Aspen
Sienna
Art Studio