



Tom
Inner Light: The Art of
Gilleon

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Tom Gilleon

Inner Light: The Art of

Exhibitions

January 16 - August 16, 2024

Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West
Todd Bankofier, Executive Director
Scottsdale, Arizona

November 15, 2024 - March 31, 2025

C.M. Russell Museum
Jessica Nebel, Acting Executive Director
Great Falls, Montana

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Immediately Recognizable. One of the defining elements of any great artist is that you can stand 20, 50, or 100 feet away from one of their paintings and immediately know who painted it. You can tell when it's a Frederic Remington, or a Charlie Russell, or a Howard Terpning. Tom Gilleon is one of those greats. People will always be able to look at his work and say, "That's a Tom Gilleon."

He has always been an innovator. From illustrating for NASA to working at Walt Disney Imagineering to creating fine art oil paintings of the West to now being at the forefront of digital art, Tom's career has spanned so many interesting phases that I felt it would draw a unique, broad audience. That's why I first talked to Tom almost seven years ago about putting on this major retrospective.

Beyond his artwork, though, one thing about Tom that isn't talked about much is that he is just incredibly nice. He genuinely appreciates the people around him who have helped his career, whether it's collectors; the Disney greats he worked alongside; the galleries that helped him build his fine art career; Marshall Monroe, his brilliant digital art collaborator; or Richard King, Tom's exclusive agent and co-curator for this exhibition. Tom is a good man, with a good heart, and we are honored to share his work with the public.

Tim Peterson

Museum Trustee and "Inner Light" Co-curator, Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West

Telling Stories

My Early Life

TOM GILLEON
Artist
Cascade, Montana

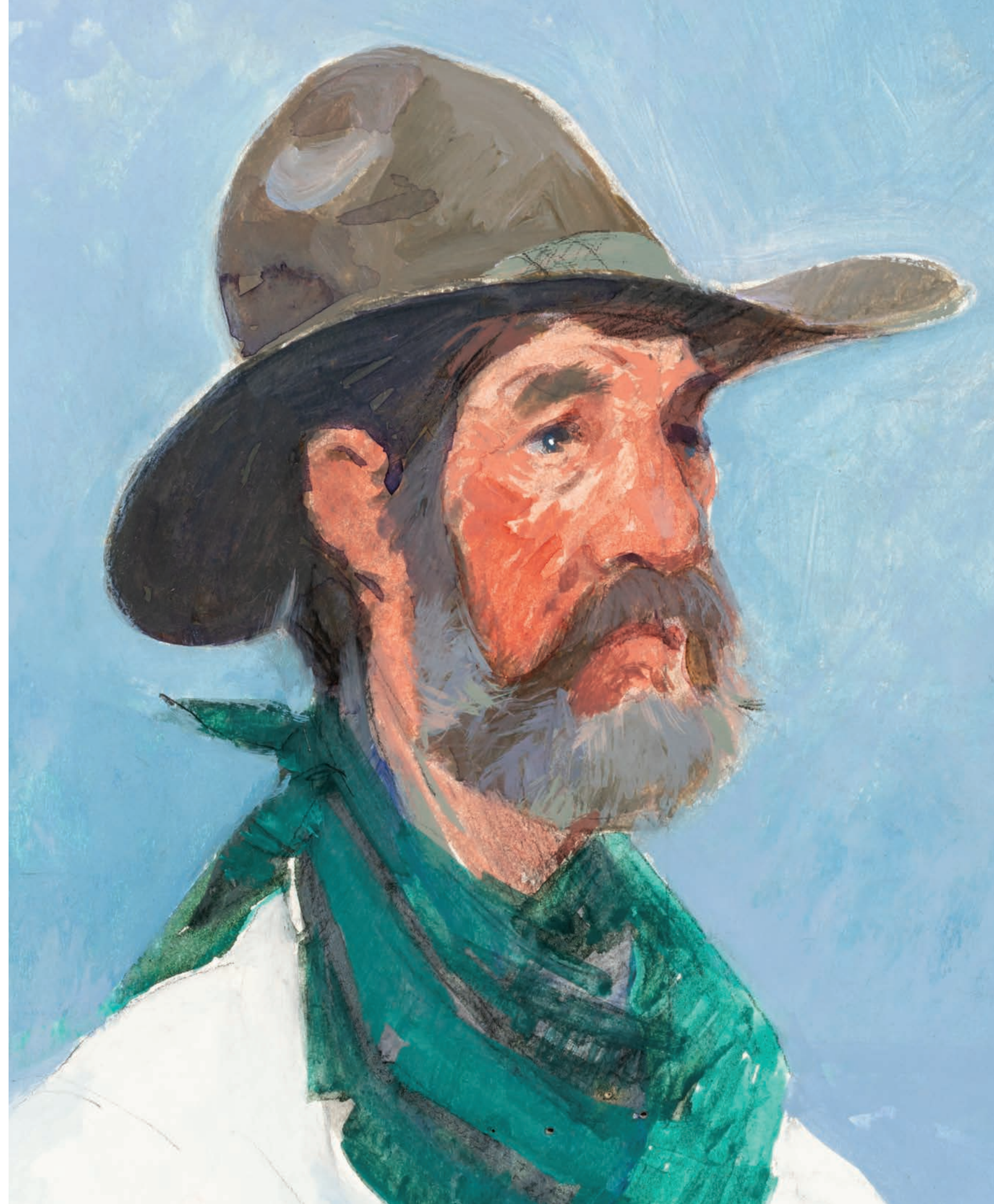
As a five-year-old growing up in my grandparents' little house in Starke, Florida, I would sit at our table at night by kerosene lamp while my grandpa told me stories. When he talked, he drew pictures of his enthralling tales of ships and whales and his own childhood back in Scotland. We didn't have many picture books. I thought this was what every family did. My grandma, who was Cherokee, taught me self-reliance and resourcefulness, making the most of what I had, which expressed itself early on when I drew my own pictures using a stick in the white sand of our front yard.

Art became my own special way to tell a story. I studied it for a time in college, and then off and on for four years at the Art Students League of Brevard, founded by Elliot McMurrugh, a former chief instructor at Sarasota's Ringling School of Art and Design. The skills I honed eventually led to illustration assignments for clients including Pan Am and NASA before I landed first with Disney and then Walt Disney Imagineering, where working alongside legendary artists proved the best education of all.

Now, these past three decades, I've been painting my own visions of the West from my ranch in Montana, on land where Charlie Russell wintered his horse in the same barn where I now keep mine. Looking back at everything I've created, it's been a great ride so far – and I'm still looking forward to the next stories I get to share through my art.

Seaman Gilleon
1960

“Early on, I drew my own pictures using a stick in the white sand of our front yard. Art became my own special way to tell a story.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tommy Hill', located below the main text.

Imagineering New Worlds

The Illuminator

BOB WEIS

Former President
Walt Disney Imagineering

In his years with Walt Disney Imagineering, Tom Gilleon was not only the finest person with whom you could have a collaborative conversation, but he also had the ability to create this moment of illuminant tension that made our concepts come off the pages with emotion and spiritual energy. He was always a wonderful collaborator, always modest, describing himself as a protégé of Herb Ryman, who had worked directly with Walt Disney and was one of the people without whom many of the early Disney projects would not have happened.

Tom had the genius to encapsulate in one image the entirety of an imagined world. Working with brush or pencil on paper, he could distill everything we'd been talking about over a two- or three-year period, to capture everyone's imagination and – humbly, quietly, and collaboratively – make the difference between whether or not a project would move forward. Tom never compromised the quality of his work. And I don't think he ever had any sense of ego about it.

He was also incredibly generous with his abilities and his time. Tom used to hold workshops up at his ranch in Montana for the other Disney artists. And he taught them about his approach to storytelling and how he created such luminance in his paintings. He was never guarded about it, and always an incredible mentor.

Sleeping Beauty Castle - Commissioned Art
Disney Gallery
Disneyland® Park - Disneyland® Resort
Oil on Board
32 x 24 inches
1991 ©Disney



**China Pavilion – World Showcase
Epcot® – Walt Disney World® Resort**
Acrylic on Board
21 x 40 inches
1981 ©Disney



**Mexico Pavilion – World Showcase
Epcot® – Walt Disney World® Resort**
Acrylic on Board
25 x 38 inches
1980 ©Disney



**Tree of Life®
Disney's Animal Kingdom® Theme Park**
Acrylic on Board
45 x 40 inches
1994 ©Disney



**Morocco Pavilion – World Showcase
Epcot® – Walt Disney World® Resort**
Watercolor
15 x 11 inches
1980 ©Disney



Enchanted Storybook Castle
Shanghai Disneyland® Resort
Digital Art
2010 ©Disney



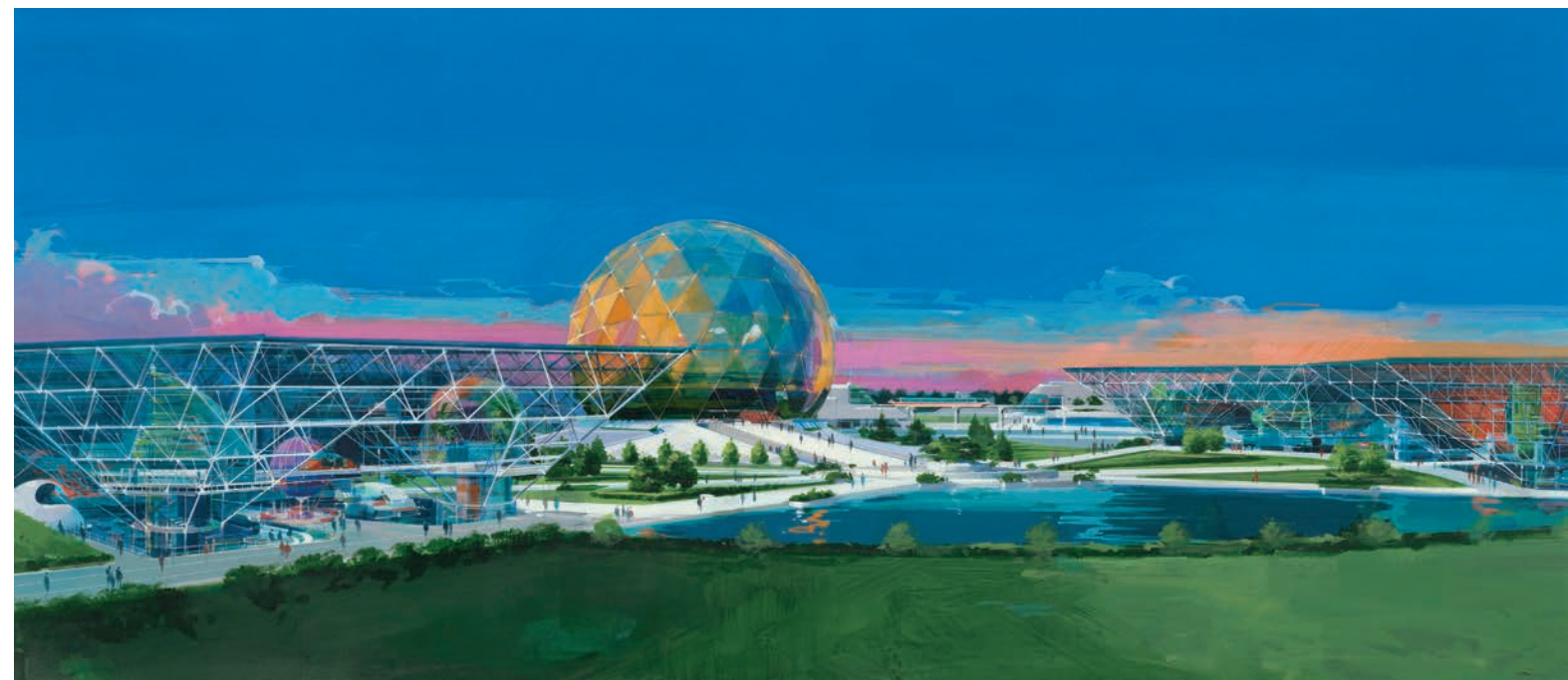
France Pavilion - World Showcase
Epcot® - Walt Disney World® Resort
Acrylic on Board
30 x 40
1979 ©Disney



Pirate Ship – Commissioned Art
 Disney Gallery
Disneyland® Park – Disneyland® Resort
 Oil on Board
 24 x 31 inches
 1991 ©Disney



Hollywood Boulevard
Walt Disney Studios Park – Disneyland® Paris
 Acrylic, Colored Pencil on Board
 30 x 40.25 inches
 1979 ©Disney



Epcot World Showcase – France Pavilion
Epcot® – Walt Disney World® Resort
 Acrylic on Board
 26 x 29 inches
 1979 ©Disney

Epcot Future World
Epcot® – Walt Disney World® Resort
 Acrylic on Board
 22 x 40 inches
 1978 ©Disney



Route 66 Café
Walt Disney Studios Park - Disneyland® Paris
 Gouache, Acrylic, Pencil on Board
 30 x 40 inches
 1992 ©Disney

Harambe
Disney's Animal Kingdom® Theme Park
 Acrylic on Board
 40 x 60 inches
 1993 ©Disney

American Waterfront
Tokyo DisneySea Park
 Acrylic, Gouache, Pencil on Board
 30 x 40 inches
 1996 ©Disney



Mexico Pavilion - World Showcase
Epcot® - Walt Disney World® Resort
 Acrylic on Board
 21 x 25 inches
 1980 ©Disney

Russell & Gilleon

Artists Who Inspire

TOM PETRIE

Board Member & Former Chairman
C.M. Russell Museum
Great Falls, Montana

What do we look for in a great artist? We look for positive individuality and the ability to engage us. The most successful artists have also developed a high degree of professionalism in their technique, coupled with a sensitivity to their environment. They make us think more broadly about the world we live in. For their art to have enduring value, it also must have sufficient scope to engage a broad spectrum of humanity.

Charlie Russell had that quality. When we look at the approximately 4,000 drawings, paintings, and sculptures he created, we can appreciate the stories that Charlie had to tell about the West, because they continue to inspire people to think about their own human values.

Tom Gilleon's art also achieves that goal. I first became aware of him through the Russell Museum and was drawn to him because he was willing to experiment and develop a style all his own. Tom has the ability to think about his art on multiple levels and tell a story through it. For example, he is pushing the envelope with his digital paintings, which bring a level of subtle authority to his subjects, compressing time and causing people to become ever more sensitive to the wonder of nature and the West. Charlie Russell, who was curious to the day he died, would have been absolutely fascinated and engaged by that.



Montana Gold
Oil on Canvas
28 x 24 inches
2019



Red Bush
Oil on Canvas
36 x 36 inches
2016



Jake Hoover's Cabin
Oil on Canvas
15 x 19 inches
2017



Missouri River Winter
Oil on Canvas
48 x 72 inches
2001



Over the Rainbows
Oil on Canvas
50 x 50 inches
2013



Moonlight Rainbows
Oil on Canvas
36 x 36 inches
2020



“Lewis and Clarke gave the name ‘Fort Mountain’ to the 1,000-foot-tall monolith I can see from my ranch today. Rising from the prairie, it looks magical. I’ve painted that butte – as Charlie Russell did, too – many times in my studio, which looks out at the rimrocks where Russell corralled his horse in winter. I’m literally walking in Charlie’s footprints, seeing the same things he saw.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Tommy' followed by a stylized flourish.



Packing to the Cap
Oil on Canvas
18 x 24 inches
2012



Charles M. Russell and His Friends
Charles M. Russell, 1922
Oil on Canvas
42 x 81 inches
Collection of Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana



The Mission
Oil on Canvas
60 x 60 inches
2022



Ah Wah Cous
Oil on Canvas
60 x 60 inches
2012



Fort Mountain (Under Attack)
Oil on Canvas
39 x 39 inches
2017



Fort Mountain (Cloud Shadows)
Oil on Canvas
39 x 39 inches
2017



Fort Mountain (Heat of August)
Oil on Canvas
39 x 39 inches
2017



Fort Mountain (More Snow)
Oil on Canvas
39 x 39 inches
2017



Northern Plains Stop Sign
Oil on Canvas
60 x 72 inches
2008



Stars Snow & Silver
Oil on Canvas
36 x 36 inches
2004



**Muckle Flugga
to Belle Fourche**
Oil on Canvas
48 x 36 inches
2010

Prairie Dare
Oil on Canvas
48 x 36 inches
2009

January Ranch
Oil on Canvas
30 x 30 inches
2016



Fine Artist of the West

Elegance & Spirit

SETH HOPKINS

Executive Director
Booth Western Art Museum
Cartersville, Georgia

I first discovered Tom Gilleon's work more than two decades ago when I was walking down the street in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and spied one of his paintings in the window of Altamira Fine Art. It just glowed. I stumbled into the gallery and said, "I don't think I've ever seen this artist before, but I like what he's doing." Since then, Tom has become a very important person in my life, in the Booth Western Art Museum (where we gave him a solo show in 2012), and in the contemporary Western art world.

As early as 1980, you could read predictions that contemporary Western art was eventually going to be as big as or even bigger than traditional Western art. Slowly, that has been happening, in part through younger collectors who say they're not going to collect their grandfathers' and fathers' Western art. And Tom is among the artists who have helped it make great leaps forward as one of the leading contemporary Western artists of our time.

Tom has achieved that reputation in such an elegant, powerful way. Of course, his success has drawn imitators; but they can't do it with the same power or spirit. And Tom doesn't worry about it. He just keeps painting – and innovating, and challenging himself at every turn to break out of the box – and lets the chips fall where they may. And the old guard and new younger collectors alike agree that his work is exciting, and they want to own it.



**Vues Contradictories
(Confluence of Culture)**
Oil on Canvas
60 x 60 inches
2008



In the Shadow of the Sixth
Oil on Canvas
60 x 120 inches
2009

Big Dogs
Oil on Canvas
30 x 30 inches
2009

In the Shadow of the Sixth (Study)
Oil on Canvas
8 x 16 inches
2009





Paha Sapa
Oil on Canvas
60 x 60 inches
2008

Four Bears (Study)
Oil on Canvas
12 x 12 inches
2012

Standing Bear at Paha Sapa
Oil on Canvas
36 x 30 inches
2017

Dirge With Black Feet
Oil on Canvas
50 x 80 inches
2022



Bloodlines
Oil on Canvas
60 x 72 inches
2008



Moment Du Passe
Oil on Canvas
30 x 30 inches
2016



Tres Buhos
Oil on Canvas
52 x 84 inches
2014



Moon Goes Down
Oil on Canvas
48 x 48 inches
2014



Moon Shadows
Oil on Canvas
48 x 48 inches
2015



Hair Apparent
Oil on Canvas
50 x 50 inches
2013



Yellow Feather
Oil on Canvas
50 x 40 inches
2019



Kola
Oil on Canvas
16 x 16 inches
2019



Teebow Tipi
Oil on Canvas
20 x 30 inches
2008



Winter is a Birch (Study)
Oil on Canvas
12 x 12 inches
2014



Winter is a Birch
Oil on Canvas
40 x 48 inches
2014



Two Star Lodgings
Oil on Canvas
12 x 12 inches
2012

Snow Shadows
Oil on Canvas
22 x 22 inches
2020

Red Bull III
Oil on Canvas
12 x 12 inches
2012

Indian Camp
Oil on Canvas
12 x 12 inches
2012



Bulls and Bears
Oil on Canvas
60 x 60 inches
2012



Innovator

Digital Magic

MARSHALL MONROE

Digital Painting Collaborator
Marshall Monroe Magic
Corrales, New Mexico

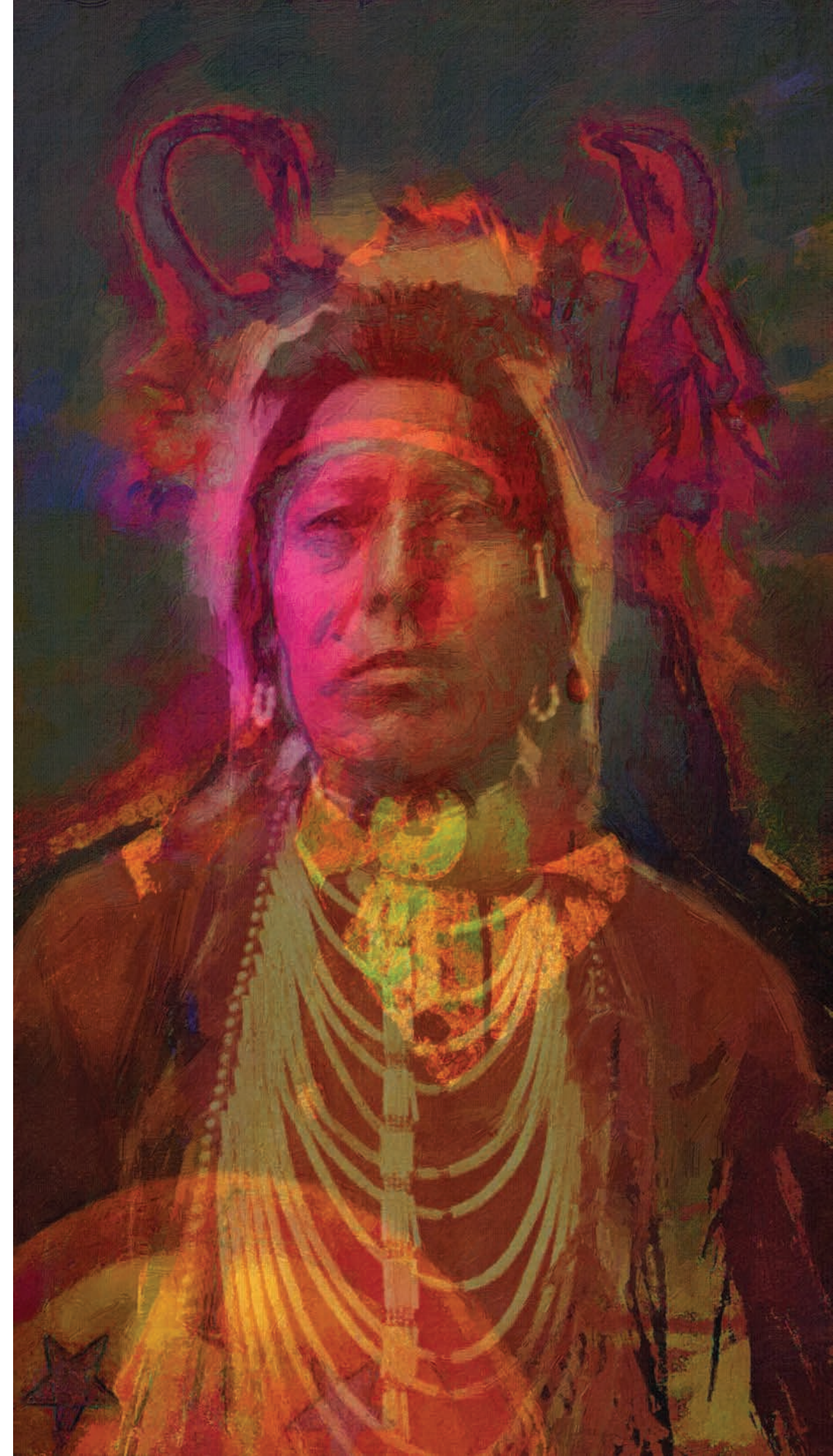
Tom Gilleon and I first met around 1986 at Walt Disney Imagineering, while I was working on the technologies for Splash Mountain, Captain EO, and Star Tours at Disneyland. Tom was busy painting concept images for the upcoming Disney-MGM Studio Tour theme park. I invited him to come have a look at a proprietary system I was developing to help animators draw electronically for Disney's *The Little Mermaid* and *Beauty and the Beast*. That, as they say, was the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

At the time, it surprised me, and it still does, that the fine art community wasn't embracing what technology could achieve. But Tom, always a pioneer at heart, was excited from the start about trying something new. As both of our careers gradually evolved – his into fine art and mine into what I call Applied Imagination, at the intersection of technology and creativity – we occasionally collaborated on projects that were always exciting and a pleasure for us both.

When we began working on our digital paintings ten years ago, we knew there was a new frontier of fine art just waiting to be realized. Even though the technology didn't yet exist, we knew we could achieve something like *Fort Mountain* and *Spirit Catcher* – where the scene looks like an oil painting but evolves over time. So, we kept asking, "What would Rembrandt do if he had a supercomputer?" Our answer is these digital paintings.



Spirit Catcher
Digital Painting
(Single-Screen Excerpt)
66 x 38 inches
2023



Spirit Catcher
Digital Painting
(Single-Screen Excerpt)
66 x 38 inches
2023



Spirit Catcher
Digital Painting
(Three-Screen Transition Excerpts)
66 x 124 inches
2023

Spirit Catcher
Digital Painting
(Three-Screen Transition Excerpts)
66 x 124 inches
2023



“What would Rembrandt do if he had a supercomputer? That’s the question my friend and collaborator Marshall Monroe and I asked ourselves when we set out to explore the fine art frontier of digital painting, in which a scene that looks like it was created in oils on canvas magically evolves before the viewer’s eyes.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'T. K. Gill'.



**Fort Mountain
Mountain Owl**
Digital Painting
43 x 75 inches
2017



**Fort Mountain
Summer**
Digital Painting
43 x 75 inches
2017

**Fort Mountain
Summer Thunderstorm**
Digital Painting
43 x 75 inches
2017

**Fort Mountain
Sunset Camp**
Digital Painting
43 x 75 inches
2017

**Fort Mountain
Summer Night**
Digital Painting
43 x 75 inches
2017



Hungry Fox Equinox
Digital Painting
(Excerpts)
38 x 66 inches
2014



Hungry Fox Equinox
Digital Painting
38 x 66 inches
2014



Flute of the Loon
Digital Painting
38 x 66 inches
2015



Flute of the Loon
Digital Painting
(Excerpts)
38 x 66 inches
2015



MMXX

Tom's "20-20 Vision"

RICHARD KING
Exhibition Organizer & Co-curator
KingArts
Jackson, Wyoming

In September 2013, during Jackson Hole's Fall Arts Festival, a glimpse of a painting across a crowded art gallery stopped me in my tracks. The crush of people prevented me from getting the closer look I needed. I returned the next day, Sunday, at 10 am so I could "go to church" with Tom Gilleon's *Native Trilogy*, experiencing all by myself the mammoth oil-on-canvas of three tipis. It brought me endless fascination, filled me with wonder, and elevated my spirit in a way I had never experienced. I needed this artist's work in my life.

Now, a decade later, I am honored not only to have co-curated this exhibition and to represent Tom Gilleon, but most importantly to call him my friend. We – Tom, co-curator Tim Peterson and I, and many dedicated art lovers – have spent more than four years assembling this gathering of works by an American master.

I use that last word aware that Tom, a model of humility, might balk. Yet, here he is, having received major art world accolades and in the permanent collections of seven top museums nationwide. Indeed, since 2020, much of Tom's efforts have focused on museum-caliber large canvases – distinguished by bronze "MMXX" plaques affixed to their sides – and digital paintings, fulfilling a goal he himself wryly refers to as his "20-20 vision" for a career that continues to know no limits.



Indian Sunset
Oil on Canvas
12 x 12 inches
2023



Brulé
Oil on Canvas
60 x 60 inches
2021

Gary Owen Blues
Oil on Canvas
48 x 36 inches
2021



Shadow Catcher
Oil on Canvas
60 x 60 inches
2023



Slow Bull's Eye
Oil on Canvas
50 x 40 inches
2020



Weasel Tail
Oil on Canvas
50 x 50 inches
2021



Magpie
Oil on Canvas
50 x 50 inches
2020



R. T. Wilson 2021



Wings of Man
Oil on Canvas
80 x 60 inches
2021

Mourning Star
Oil on Canvas
72 x 60 inches
2021

Lodgepole Noir
Oil on Canvas
60 x 60 inches
2021



Black Wolf
Oil on Canvas
80 x 50 inches
2021



Evolving Evolution
Oil on Canvas
60 x 120 inches
2021

Bouquets of Thanks

Fragrance always lingers in the hand that gives flowers.

– Chinese proverb

When I began organizing this retrospective four years ago, I had no idea how much effort it would take to coordinate, curate, and present an art exhibition. Most art shows display about 20 works created by an artist over the previous year, all of which are packed up, shipped, insured, hung, lit, and then debuted to a glittering audience at an opening party. This exhibition, however, is that rare event for a living artist: a true career retrospective.

Spanning a six decade art career, *Inner Light: The Art of Tom Gilleon* presents 90 oil and digital paintings on loan from 26 different collectors in 12 states. Together, they have been curated to tell a story with 11 themes explained in some 20 information panels. An event of such scale and scope calls for major contributions from many generous people.

With such wholehearted support in mind, I wish to offer bouquets of thanks to everyone who has brought such sweet fragrance to the Grand Salon of Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West – a beautiful scent that will linger on at the C.M. Russell Museum in Great Falls, Montana, where the exhibition will continue from Fall 2024 until Spring 2025.

This show simply would not have happened without Tom Figarelle, Geoff Stocking, and Ross Thomas of the C.M. Russell Museum. They took on the responsibilities of exhibit organizer with KingArts, executing loan agreements and complex shipping arrangements with calm confidence and professional excellence in an impossibly short time frame. The C.M Russell Museum is a second home to Tom Gilleon. Their entire staff's commitment and passion for Tom and his art is a blessing. We are eternally thankful.

Thanks also to the collectors who, by loaning their treasured paintings, enabled us to assemble this grand show. It is a compliment to Tom Gilleon that many of his collectors, when asked to make a painting available, replied, "No, I'm sorry. We just can't live without it."

We give special recognition and express our warmest gratitude to our financial sponsors and donors, who have provided us with this opportunity to enjoy and learn about one of the most revered masters in the Contemporary Western art movement. Thank you to Walt Disney Imagineering, Elaine and Tim Peterson, Sue and Mike McCloskey, Zach Stern, Lou Cushman, and Andrew Schoening for your support.

I especially wish to thank our Director of Operations at KingArts, Camille Trevor. We could not have organized and curated this show without her operational support and positive attitude. And to our content czar, Cole Jarvis, and long time Gilleon associate, Dean Munn – thank you for


exemplifying "The Royal Treatment." Sincerest thanks go to Norman Kolpas and Derrit DeRouen, respectively the editor and designer of the retrospective's brochure and upcoming hardback book. When I recently read Norman's draft for information panels in the exhibition and saw Derrit's design for this brochure, the magnitude of our four years of hard work suddenly hit me, and a great relief washed over me as I absorbed the realization that we are truly creating a presentation worthy of Tom's art. Every one of our weekly planning meetings was so much fun that it was always a wonder to us when, after an hour of enjoyable visiting, we realized we'd effortlessly accomplished our agenda.

I also wish to thank Marshall Monroe and his daughter Hannah Monroe for their can-do spirit in creating their endlessly fascinating digital paintings with Tom. As concept designer of the triptych *Spirit Catcher*, Marshall astounds me with his poetic, shimmering effects in compositing and sequencing Tom's paintings, colors, and textures in one melodic flow – arranging the transitions of visual images on three screens like a composer of musical phrases with cadence, tension, release, silence, and story – all adding up to a wondrous new language and experience of artistic beauty.

And I cannot say enough about, nor give sufficient thanks to, Tim Peterson for his wise counsel, his knowledge of art, and his talent as a world-class curator. Every aspect of his curation of *Light and Legacy: The Art and Techniques*

of Edward S. Curtis was brilliant. We talked every week for four years while co-curating *Inner Light: The Art of Tom Gilleon*. Tim's passion for the American West, for Lewis and Clark, and for the selfless photographer Edward Curtis – who committed his entire life to documenting the cultures of some 80 Native American tribes – reflects Tim's own values for the brave pioneer, the underdog, and the selfless, steady worker who highlights others, not himself. And that also describes Tim to a T – the selfless, steady worker who highlights others. This retrospective is Tim's gift to us all. I always learn from Tim and benefit from his counsel, and I prize his friendship. Thank you, Tim, for providing us with this prestigious showcase and a master lesson in curating.

One last special thank you is deserved by a humble man who overcame large obstacles in life and rose to great heights by taking risks and thinking big, to become one of our country's greatest artists: Tom Gilleon. I could go on – but please enjoy this exhibition and see for yourself.


RICHARD KING
Organizer and Co-Curator
Inner Light: The Art of Tom Gilleon

View the full gallery of available Tom Gilleon Oil Paintings, Digital Paintings, Canvas Prints, and Home Décor Wall Coverings & Fabrics.



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Todd Bankofier, Executive Director
Scottsdale, Arizona
scottsdalemuseumwest.org

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C.M. Russell Museum
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cmrussell.org

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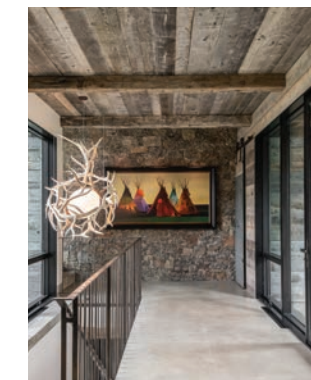
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Cover Image:
Magpie, Tom Gilleon, Oil on Canvas, 50 x 50 inches, 2020
From the Collection of Sue and Mike McCloskey, Demotte, Indiana

Back Cover Image:
Weasel Tail, Tom Gilleon, Oil on Canvas, 50 x 50 inches, 2021
From the Collection of the Artist, Cascade, Montana



www.tomgilleon.art/retrospective2

