



SERENADE, OIL, 48 X 48.



Don Sahli

Don Sahli began his formal art education at the University of Texas in 1981, but one year later a meeting with renowned Russian colorist Sergei Bongart proved life-changing. At Bongart's invitation, Sahli moved to California and became the master artist's last apprentice. Today, the Colorado-based artist doesn't hesitate in saying that the Bongart experience has been a major influence on his work. Like his mentor, Sahli relishes bringing emotion and color to the canvas. Since *Southwest Art* profiled Sahli in 1989, his body of work has expanded from plein-air painting to a broad array of subject matter. But his artistic goal remains the same—to convey the drama that first captured his attention, whether it emanates from a vase of peonies, a tray of oranges, or a stand of aspen trees.

Has your style or approach to your art changed since you first appeared in *Southwest Art*? In 1989, when I worked *en plein air*, I struggled to complete a 16-by-20 painting. Now, I work much larger, up to 30-by-40, and can paint several pieces a day when I'm focused and in the groove. My range of subject matter has also expanded. Today I have the confidence to approach any subject that moves me.

What is your proudest accomplishment so far? Being in the forest and painting in harmony with the scene.

Would you have done anything differently? Early on in my career, I had a 1977 Ford Bronco. It was the finest painting vehicle that I have ever owned. Stupidly, I sold it.

What advice do you give to artists just starting out in their careers? Learn to draw, and study what the masters studied. Don't paint to sell. Stop talking about self-

promotion and gallery sales, advertisements, and public relations. Work hard and paint miles and miles of canvas.

What motto do you live by? Shut up and fly. My son, Sam, told me this. To me this means just be who you are and paint.

What artists have influenced you? Sergei Bongart, Fiodor Sakharov, Nicolai Fechin, Isaac Levitan, Winslow Homer, and James McNeill Whistler.

What are you working on now? I'm writing an art instruction book and looking for a publisher. In my painting, I'm taking color, value, and texture to the limit—much further than ever before.

What's your next big goal? I'm developing a large body of work on the magnificent scenery in the Jackson Hole area. Once done, I will look for a gallery there. Also, I'm taking on an apprentice to help me work on large-scale paintings in the studio.

REPRESENTATION

Saks Galleries, Denver, CO; Breckenridge Fine Art, Breckenridge, CO; Vail Fine Art, Vail, CO; Beaver Creek Fine Art, Beaver Creek, CO; Aspen Fine Art, Aspen, CO; Santa Fe Fine Art, Santa Fe, NM; Folger Gallery, Midland, TX; www.sahlistudio.com.

UPCOMING SHOWS

Small Gems, Saks Galleries, December 11-31.
Artist-in-Residence, Vail Fine Art Family of Galleries, February-March, 2010.
25th Anniversary Show, Folger Gallery, Spring 2010.
Nomadas del Arte, Southwest Gallery, Dallas, TX, April 2010.



FIRST BLOOM, SUMMER PEONIES, OIL, 30 X 24.

First appearance in *Southwest Art*: Profile, October 1998

Awards won since then: I haven't made winning awards a priority in my career, though I have received accolades both locally and nationally. My teacher, Sergei Bongart, told me long ago, "compete only with yourself. Do not compare yourself to others."

Price change since then: In 1989, a 30-by-40 painting went for \$1,250. Today it sells for \$10,000.

Southwest Art

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