

UPCOMING SHOW

Up to 25 works

September 10, 2010

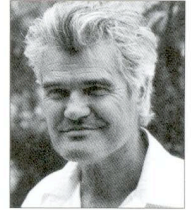
Strong Schenck Galleries
200 Canyon Road, Suite C
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 982-2795

SHOW LOCATION SANTA FE, NM



See *ALL* the works in this show
www.galleryshowsonline.com/wac

BILLY SCHENCK



Larger than life

Beginning in the early 1950s, Craft Master sold over 12 million Paint By Number kits, each box proclaiming "Every man a Rembrandt!" The task was to match the number of the paint with the number on the printed canvas board and to carefully

paint between the lines.

Billy Schenck laughs when he recounts the story of when he was sitting in a gallery and a couple stopped in front of one of his paintings and exclaimed in horror "Oh no. He paints by number!" He wonders what else to call his

system of painting—bold flat colors next to each other with hard edges—so it's the Paint By Number System.

Schenck appropriates his subjects from Western movies and other sources and combines the elements into compositions that



Water Hole, oil on canvas, 30 x 40"



The Gathering Storm, oil on canvas 18 x 22"



Distant Dust Clouds, oil on canvas, 20 x 24"

recall our memories of images of the West but with the colors punched up in a startling and artful way. The paintings, either small or large, appear larger than life, just like the West, and just like their creator.

He attended the Kansas City Art Institute where he discovered his inability to draw at a time when drawing wasn't important to the avant garde. Andy Warhol used found images of soup cans and painted them in a flat, unmodulated way. Although Schenck worked with Warhol for awhile, the boy from a ranch in the West discovered spaghetti Westerns and the work of the Italian filmmakers, especially Sergio Leone of *A Fistful of Dollars* fame. He also admires the drama and emotional content of films such as Fellini's *Juliet of the Spirits* and Antonioni's *Red Desert* as well as in the work of painters as disparate as Caravaggio and Francis Bacon.

Schenck explains, "I used my weaknesses to make my strengths." He knew he wanted to work with images and began with black-and-white movie stills, which he broke down into their elements, reducing



Not a Chance, oil on canvas, 20 x 16"



Sheep at Katsina Mesa, oil on canvas, 32 x 38"

detail and producing a simple line drawing. Having overcome his weakness at drawing, he brought in his skill with color, building it up to enliven the image. His genius is in describing a desert mesa, a horse, or clouds with as little detail as possible which, combined with his use of color, produces a believable image.

In 2007 he felt he'd reached a dead end in his painting and decided to pursue his love of photography, experimenting with adding

text like his Pop art forebears. Meanwhile, he continued his other career involving horses and cattle. In fact, in 2009 he became champion in the Masters Division of the Ranch Sorting National Championships.

Last year a collector in St. Tropez (yes, *that* St. Tropez) commissioned a portrait of John Wayne, and Schenck was back in the running as a painter. The brief hiatus was energizing, and Schenck has returned to his unique graphic

style to produce colorful paintings that embody the energy of the landscape and the people of the West.

Strong Schenck Galleries in Santa Fe will present 25 of his new paintings in a solo show September 10 from 6 to 8 p.m. 🐾

For a direct link to the exhibiting gallery go to

www.westernartcollector.com

