**William (Bill) Alther**’s work is a confluence of his greatest lifelong interests: art and nature. He was born in Topeka, Kansas, and grew up in Midland, Texas, after moving there at age eight with his family. From a very early age, he had a fascination and innate respect for the natural world and all its life-forms, and these have only increased with time. He also had a penchant for drawing. Throughout his school years he dabbled in a variety of artistic pursuits, including pen and ink, watercolor, oil painting, and wood carving. When it came time for college, however, art took a back seat to science. He earned a degree in wildlife biology at Texas A&M University, which eventually led to a position in the zoology department at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, a post he held for 13 years.

Alther has lived in Denver for the majority of his adult life. Through his job at the Denver Museum, he became well connected with the scientific and naturalist communities around the region. It also turned out to be a great place to meet other artists when they made use of the museum’s specimens for anatomical reference. Throughout this time, he was an active artist. In the years following college, his artistic outlet was primarily wood sculpture.

In his early 30s, feeling that he could use some proper art training, he enrolled in a color theory course at a local art college. Doing the class assignments sparked a new level of enthusiasm for painting. He also became aware that Denver had a thriving art community and some excellent artists to learn from. One of them was Mark Daily, a brilliant painter who taught at the Denver Art Students League. His paintings were eye-opening, and his working methods, knowledge, and frank critiques instilled high standards. In his classes Alther realized how much there was to learn and the level of work he should strive for. Some of Daily’s ability is on an intuitive level that can’t be taught. Nevertheless, the time Alther spent as his student—and even more so as friends, just talking art, watching, and absorbing valuable bits of painting wisdom—has been one of the most important parts of his artistic development. Painting from life is another big part, which sharpened his perception and transformed his approach to painting.

After years of painting in his free time, Alther decided to leave the museum in 2004 and give it a go as a full-time artist, with whole-hearted encouragement from his wife, Debbie. Her successful career in the cable television industry provided a reassuring safety net for such an “adventurous” decision. All along, her full support has been more than he would have ever asked or hoped for.

Within a couple of years, Alther was showing in a few galleries around the Western U.S. Since then, the trajectory of his art journey has been gradual and steady. Martin “Bubba” Wood at Collectors Covey in Dallas and Brad Richardson at Legacy Gallery were particularly significant early advocates of his work. In addition to his association with these and several other established and respected galleries, Alther participates in prominent national shows every year, including *Western Visions* at the National Museum of Wildlife Art in Jackson, Wyoming; *Night of Artists* at the Briscoe Western Art Museum in San Antonio, Texas; Wyoming; and the *Buffalo Bill Art Show & Sale* at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody, Wyoming. He also participated in the Northwest Rendezvous Group’s *Bighorn Rendezvous* at the Brinton Museum in Big Horn. His paintings have also been juried into the esteemed *Birds in Art* exhibition at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau, Wisconsin, numerous times.

Among his awards, two notable honors came at the *Western Visions* show: the “Red Smith” Artist’s Choice Award in 2018 and the Trustee Purchase Award in 2021. Other awards include the Founders Award of Merit at the *Bighorn Rendezvous*, and the President’s Award of Excellence at the Oil Painters of America’s National Exhibition.

Alther’s work has been featured in *Art of the West*, *Cowboys & Indians, Southwest Art*, *Western Art Collector*. His paintings are in the collections of the Brinton Museum, the National Museum of Wildlife Art, the Woodson Art Museum, and many private collections. He is a member of Oil Painters of America and the Society of Animal Artists, and was also a member of the Northwest Rendezvous Group.

Alther is known for his animal subjects, but he is just as interested in the landscape. “Sometimes there’s not much of a distinction between the two,” he says. “If animals are to be portrayed in their surroundings, painting habitat and the landscape is just as much a part of the painting as the animals. If I do a pure landscape but then decide to put a little animal figure in the scene somewhere because it improves the painting, is it now a wildlife painting or is it still a landscape? I don’t know and don’t think it matters. My concern is whether it’s a good painting or not.”

William Alther is represented by Legacy Gallery, Scottsdale, Arizona; Oh Be Joyful Gallery, Crested Butte, Colorado; Pitzer’s Fine Art, Wimberley, Texas; and Turner Fine Art, Jackson, Wyoming.

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