

**Ed Mell: Paintings of the New West
February 27 – May 23, 2010**

Tucson, AZ - Decidedly western in theme and expression, Ed Mell's name is synonymous with the desert southwest. His luminous canvases of striated clouds stretched over distant mesas have become his stock-in-trade, earning his trademark incandescent sunsets the euphemism, "Ed Mell Sky." It is these landscapes and more that will be in the exhibition *Ed Mell: Paintings of the New West*, on view at the Tucson Museum of Art February 27 – May 23, 2010.

The innovative paintings and sculptures of Phoenix artist Ed Mell portray the majestic panoramas of the desert Southwest and the intricate nuances of its flora and fauna through fragmented studies in the contrast of light and dark, and color and hue. Like the distilled Western vistas of noted artist Maynard Dixon, Mell often abstracts his images of nature to intensify a scene.

Born in 1942 in Phoenix, Arizona, Mell attended the Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles to pursue an interest in automobile design. Soon after graduation in 1967, he accepted a position in New York as an art director for a large advertising agency. Within two years, he opened Sagebrush Studios, an illustration studio that featured his airbrush illustration technique marked by angular forms inspired by art deco. Among the many publications that commissioned him for cover illustrations are *National Lampoon*, *Esquire*, and *Psychology Today*. He also created advertisement illustrations for Air France, Helena Rubinstein, Tang, Fabergé, and other major accounts.

Mell received national recognition for his illustrations, but in 1971, he found a renewed connection with the landscapes of the West after spending a summer teaching art on the Hopi reservation in 1971. A year later, he returned to the Southwest and opened an illustration business in Phoenix with his brother, and created landscape paintings when time permitted. Over the years, his passion for fine art gradually supplanted his commissioned illustrative work.

This exhibition of 30 Ed Mell's paintings and sculptures is a curatorial partnership between the Museum of Northern Arizona and the Tucson Museum of Art.

Embracing the traditional with the inventive, the Tucson Museum of Art presents exhibitions with a focus on Art of the American West, Asian Art, Latin American Art, and Modern and Contemporary Art, and boasts a permanent collection of more than 8,000 works. The Historic Block features five distinctive houses built between c.1850 and 1907 that provide a unique look into Tucson's past. The Museum is open Tuesday – Saturday 10:00 am – 5:00 pm and Sunday 12:00 noon – 5:00 pm. The first Sunday of each month is free. It is located at 140 North Main Avenue in historic downtown Tucson.

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