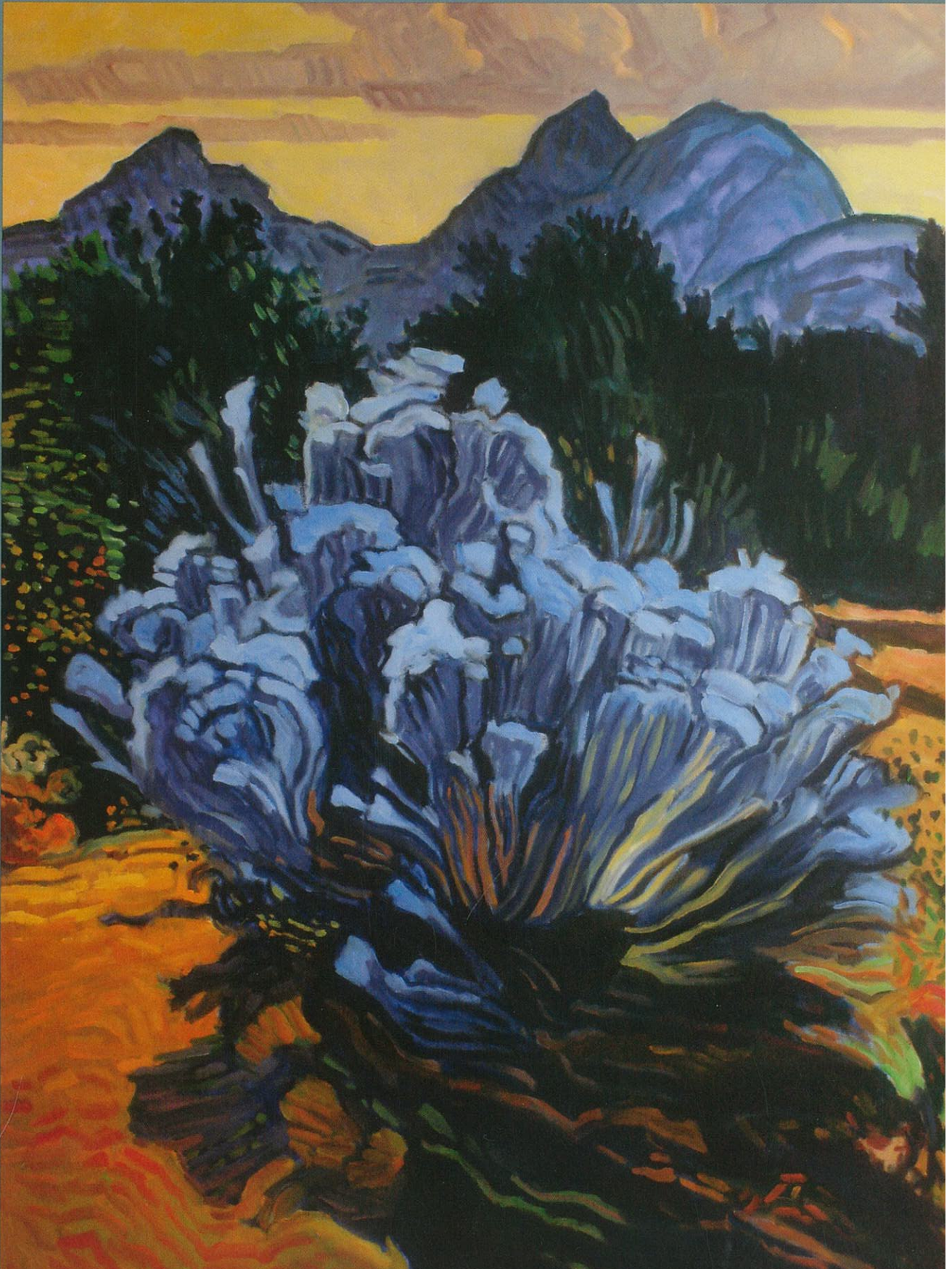


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"Oratorio de San Ysidro"

oil

36" x 36"

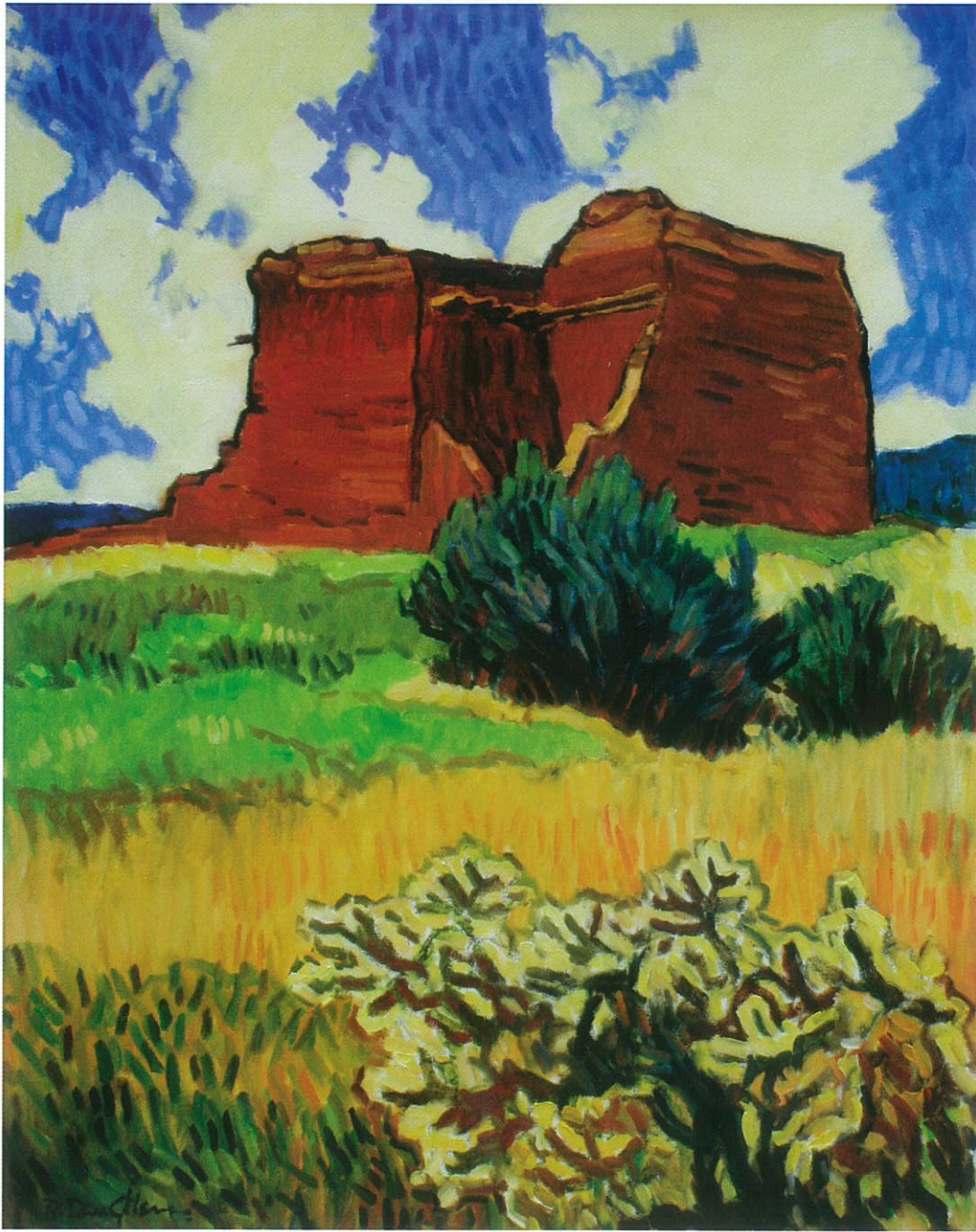
ROBERT DAUGHTERS

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Franciscan Mission Ruin, oil, 30" x 24"

Robert Daughters: A Master of Southwestern Landscapes

BY EMILY VAN CLEVE

His gait may have slowed down a bit as he has gotten older, but Robert Daughters is still a dedicated master painter who is in love with the Southwestern

landscape. The passion he feels for the area's high desert mountains, fertile valleys, windswept plains and picturesque adobe structures is evident in every ener-

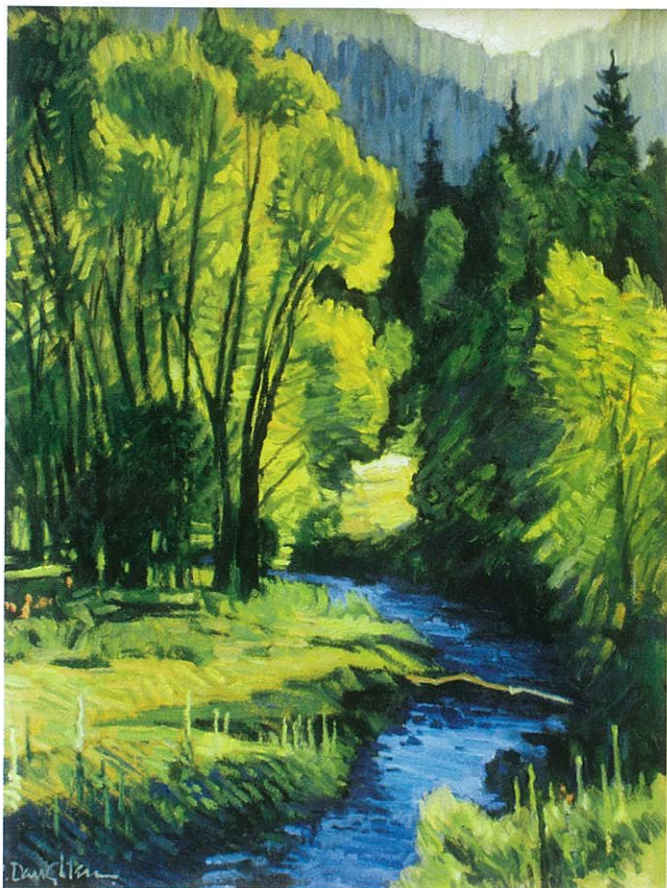
getic brushstroke. Chamisa dance in the breeze and point their golden flower tips toward the intense sunlight, while distant mountains glow with a special bluish



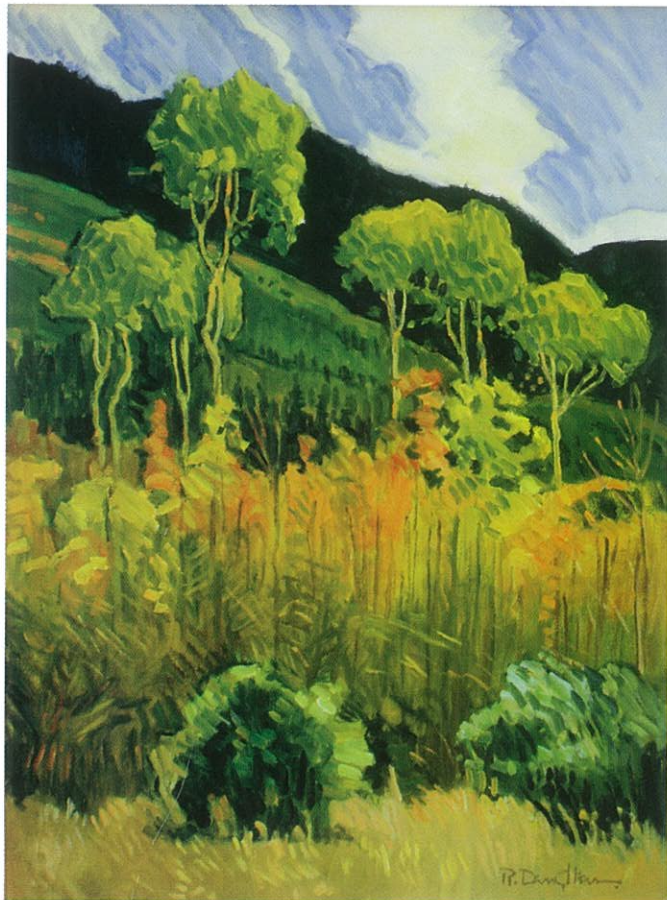
Pecos Runoff, oil, 18" x 24"



Old Coyote Fence, oil, 11" x 14"



Upstream, oil, 20" x 16"



Pecos Wilderness, oil, 24" x 18"

tinge found only in this magical environment. Churches stand tall and proud, and humble homes and barns show wear from years of being baked in the sun and chilled by winter snows. Daughters has observed these scenes over and over again for almost a half century, and yet each painting is vibrantly alive as if he is discovering the beauty in front of him for the very first time.

"I travel to other areas of the world to get reference material, but what amazes me after I come back from each trip is that this is the area I really want to paint," he says about his Southwestern home.

Daughters used to get local reference material by taking long drives down rural roads in northern New Mexico by himself, but lately his driving companion is his daughter and fellow artist, Nancy Daddio. Together, the pair explores Highway 14 that traverses through the village of Cerrillos and on to the old mining town of Golden. Daughters stops to photograph the local churches that have been landmarks in their communities for generations. He looks for new ways to present well-known subjects and through his unique vision inspires the viewer to appreciate familiar scenes in different ways.

"Contrast is an important part of a painting," Daughters explains. "Northern New Mexico landscapes are full of contrasting colors. The mountains are usually shadowed and really dark, which gives the painting 'umph.'"

Daughters, who believes that solid composition is the foundation of a good painting, reveals a secret about the underlying compositional structure of his paintings when he talks about the "S" that weaves through the work. "I start in the lower left corner and lead the viewer through the painting in an "S" shape to the upper right corner," he says.

Although some critics like to attach the adjective "impressionistic" to describe his paintings, the artist prefers the word "expressionistic." It is all about expression from the heart for Daughters, whether he is painting desert shrubbery, a dilapidated coyote fence or an overgrown arroyo framed in the background by rugged mountains.

Retirement is not a word in his vocabulary. "I think I'd die if I didn't paint," he exclaims. Twelve and fourteen hour days in the studio are a thing of the past, but Daughters still spends a solid six or eight hours painting most days. He gets the basic design down in a day while his energy is fresh and spontaneous. Details are dealt with later. Even though he has practiced his art for many decades, he still

deals with the same problems he faced in younger years.

"Sometimes the painting is going well, and sometimes it isn't," he explains. "When things aren't going well at the end of the day, I often think about the painting all night long. The next morning, I may be able to fix it."

Daughters preplans his imagery, but don't think for a minute that he feels he has to keep true to his original vision. "A painting may turn out just like I imagined it, but a lot of the time it doesn't," he says.

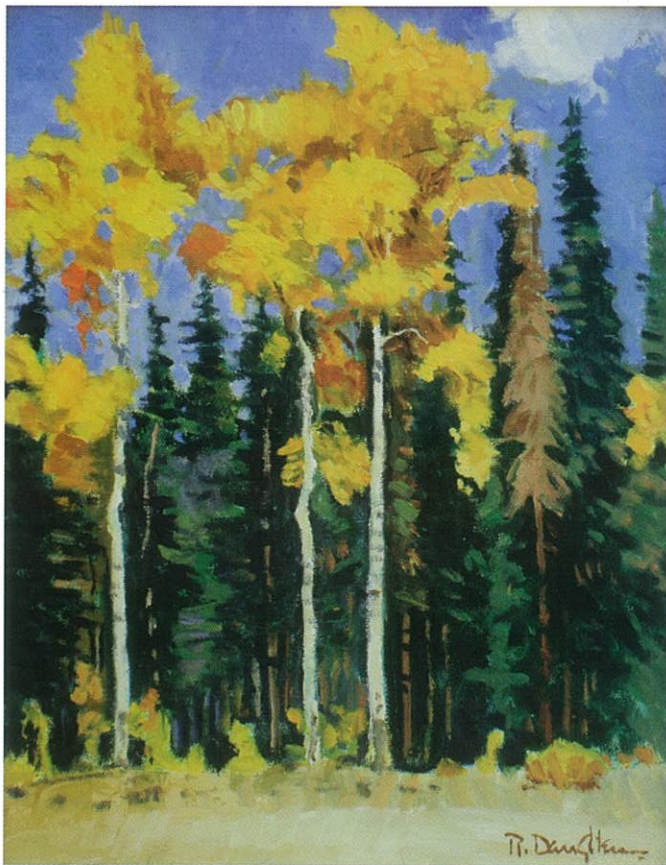
Although the majority of his subject matter is centered around Southwestern scenes and New Mexico in particular, Daughters cruises the Mediterranean and Caribbean to gather photographic images. Unlike some artists who take dozens of rolls of film with them, Daughters is selective about what he photographs. "I look for really good visual material," he says. "What's interesting to me is that when I get home and look at the photographs, I occasionally realize that I remember the places as looking different from the way they look in the photos. If it's a choice between using the photos for reference material or my memory, I go with my memory."

Santa Fe is home for the artist, but there were years when he lived part time in Mexico and Arizona. Raised in Missouri, he studied fashion art, painting and sculpture at the Kansas City Art Institute and School of Design. During his last year at school he met his wife, Sandra, whom he married in 1953. They made their first trip to Taos during their honeymoon.

The couple lived in Taos for more than 20 years. Most of the time was spent living in a home that had been built by Oscar E. Berninghaus, a founding member of the famed Taos Society of Artists. Daughters was the co-founder of an association of artists called the Taos Six, which also included Walt Gonske, Rod Gobels, Ron Bursano, Ray Vinella and Julian Robles.

"New Mexico really grows on a person," Daughters says. "It seems we all get addicted to the area-its landscape and icons."

Roberts Daughters' work is exclusively exhibited at Meyer Gallery, located at 225 Canyon Road, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87501. Hours: 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and 11:00-4:00 p.m. Sunday. (505)983-1434 or (800)779-7387, or visit their website at: www.meyergalleries.com. Email: MeyerSFM@aol.com



Aspens Three, oil, 14" x 11"



Hollyhock Blooms, oil, 14" x 11"