

**UPCOMING SHOW**

Up to 28 works on show  
Sept. 25-Nov. 2, 2008

Taos Art Museum  
227 Paseo del Pueblo Norte  
Taos, NM 87571  
(575) 758-2690

**SHOW LOCATION TAOS, NM****JEFFREY R. WATTS**

## Kindred spirits

Jeffrey R. Watts can hardly wait for the rare opportunity to display his new works in the original Taos home of his biggest influence, the late Russian-born painter Nicolai Fechin (1881-1955).

"It's like getting to go and compose in Mozart's house. In spirit that person is still there," says a jubilant Watts. "When you go into Fechin's house it's so him. It embodies him. I feel like a kindred spirit to Fechin. I hold him in the highest regard as a draftsman."

Watts' solo exhibition will hang Sept. 25-Nov. 2 at the Taos Art Museum, which is housed in the studio and home that Fechin built for his family between 1927 and 1933, in Taos, N.M. Today, the home itself remains a work of architectural art and is the base for the museum. An artist's reception will be held Sept. 25, 4-7 p.m., followed by a three-day painting workshop led by Watts.

This exhibition is aptly titled *Kindred Spirits* to reflect the many parallels between Fechin and Watts. Fechin, one of the most important portrait painters of the 20th century, is noted for his representations of people and of the New Mexico desert landscape depicted in pencil and charcoal drawings, oils, and sculpted forms. Watts, too, prefers to work in charcoal, but this show will feature mostly oils.

Rather than focusing on a particular theme, Watts' new work showcases his diverse style and includes only subjects he enjoys painting like gypsies. In a figurative style that emulates Fechin's, and is often compared to the late master's, Watts' new body of work ranges from plein air scenes of dilapidated old tractors to nudes and still lifes.

"It's a show of intimate images of things that I enjoy painting. It's a very honest show," says Watts. "The show is about



The Taos Art Museum is dedicated to the art of early 20th century Taos and the patrons who have nurtured and preserved it for the future. The museum is housed in the studio and home that artist Nicolai Fechin built for his family between 1927 and 1933.

reconnecting with my goals and who I am as a painter, and to be able to show in his house and museum is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. It's paying homage to Fechin and me taking my hat off to him."

One such personal painting, titled *Liz*, is modeled after Fechin's muse and caretaker when he later moved to Santa Monica, Calif. Watts met Liz during the last five years of her life. In fact, Watts was given the easel that Fechin used while

living in Taos, which he proudly stands next to Liz's easel in his studio.

Watts' recent work encompasses several vignettes as well as a few 30-by-40-inch pieces that deal more with the impact of the image than the size. Gypsies often find a place on his canvas because of their carefree spirit, colorful garbs and textures. In trying to relay the romantic concept of these nomads, Watts works to capture the soul of the sitter. In a new →

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Teasha, oil,  
36 x 20"



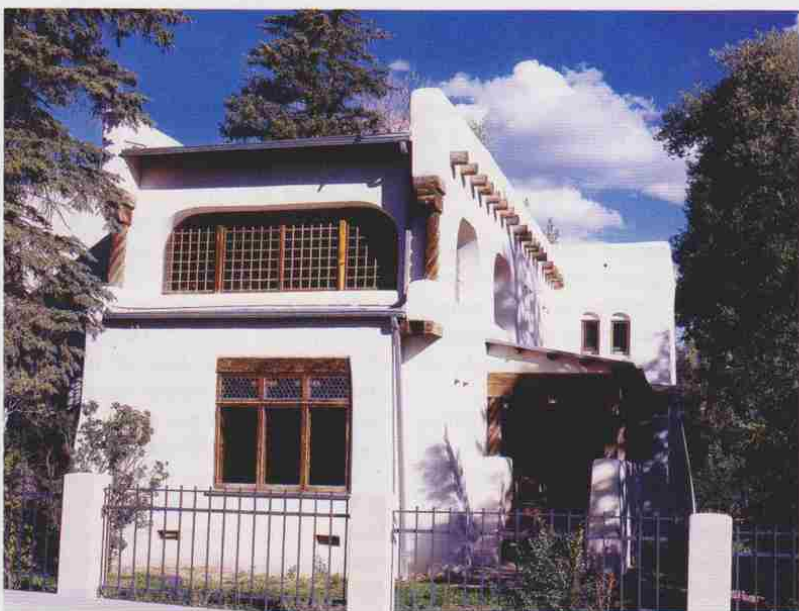
Liz, oil, 16 x 12"



*Kaleidoscope*, oil, 20 x 16"

*The Collector Says . . .*  
 "Jeffrey Watts' work is very dynamic. Though a lot are portraits, they seem to go beneath the surface. There's a depth to his work. He's closing in on Nicolai Fechin. I've been collecting his work since 2000, and it's fabulous to watch him develop as a fine artist. He's not static; his work goes from one beautiful symphony to another."

—Fran Canegaly,  
 San Diego, California



Late Russian-born painter Nicolai Fechin carved and molded this adobe into what is now the base for the Taos Art Museum. Today, the walls of this renovated home are a perfect setting for Fechin's paintings, hand-carved furniture, and architectural ornamentation.



**Burro**, oil, 16 x 20"

→ painting titled *Teasha*, Watts portrays the free spirit and angelic look of a family friend. Less textured than past works, this piece is tightly rendered and exemplifies his artistic range.

A slight shift in subject matter can be seen in *Burro*, the only one of its kind in the show. This piece was inspired during one of Watts' first solo shows several years ago in Morocco.

"I just love burros. They're kind and smart. Their heads are large and clunky looking, but they have an honesty about them," he reflects. "They're the workhorse. They represent a strong sense of work ethic."

Watts' art mirrors his intense, outgoing, and strong-willed personality. By massaging edges and using a brash wild style of paint application, Watts leads the eye around a painting with one area in focus at a time.

"I always try to look to hook the viewer

with an area that I want them to see. It's a fun way to paint, but the painting also has a life of its own," he adds.

While there's a continuity of subject matter, Watts approaches each painting as if it's a new beginning, using subtle undercurrents and spontaneous color choices in a style that's constantly emerging.

Watts' enthusiastic palette knife work and heavy brushwork reflect his roots in impressionistic realism of 19th century Europe and Russia. Watts says education and maintaining the fundamentals are vital to his success as a painter.

"Otherwise it would be like an athlete who competes without training," says the 38-year-old artist. "I love repetitious training and developing an intuitive knowledge base."

To that end, Watts started a life drawing and painting studio called Watts

Atelier of the Arts, where he resides with wife Krista in San Diego, Calif., which currently boasts 200 students. This atelier allows him to work constantly from live models, grounding his work in traditional principles. Watts' strong base in anatomy perspective and composition contribute to his powerful painting style that makes a strong visual impact; something he calls "controlled chaos."

"Many may perceive this style painting as easy, but it isn't," clarifies Watts. "It requires a solid base of knowledge otherwise it becomes sloppy loose painting. People come up to me, especially artists, and recognize the difficulty of this style."


Watts is a Master Signature member of Oil Painters of America, a Signature Member of the Laguna Plein Air Painters Association, an artist member of California Art Club, and holds membership in the




**Tracker Yard**, oil, 12 x 14"



Portrait Society of America. The California native has won numerous awards and participated in several prestigious national shows, including the 2008 Portrait Society of America's Portrait Competition and the 2007 and 2008 Prix de West. It was this exposure to top-notch collectors and galleries that marked a turning point in Watts' career.

"It's like the Super Bowl of art," he says of the Prix. "People start to take notice of who you are as a painter." 

For a direct link to the  
exhibiting gallery go to 

[www.westernartcollector.com](http://www.westernartcollector.com)

### Price Range Indicator

*Our at-a-glance Price Range Indicator shows what you can expect to pay for this artist's work.*

	Small	Medium	Large
2008	\$2,500-\$5,000	\$7,500-\$13,000	\$20,000-\$55,000

◀ **Patience**, oil, 24 x 20"