

# In Memoriam: A Tribute to Timothy R. Thies

In light of the recent untimely passing of painter Timothy R. Thies, *American Artist* would like to dedicate our October 2010 “Landscape and Nature” issue to his life, art, and memory. Thies was an artist, teacher, husband, and friend who was respected and admired by all whose lives he touched, and he will live on through the poetic and honest beauty he so consistently conveyed in his paintings.

“Laughter, love, wind, the spirit, life itself—all are visible only through the things they animate,” arts writer Paul Soderberg once wrote. “Thies’ paintings somehow capture not just visible objects but also the invisible vital forces that animate them. Looking at his paintings of trees, you can hear the breeze moving through their branches. Looking at his portraits, you see not just a face but also a living, breathing, unique personality. ... It is these aspects of Timothy’s paintings that perform a sort of magic:



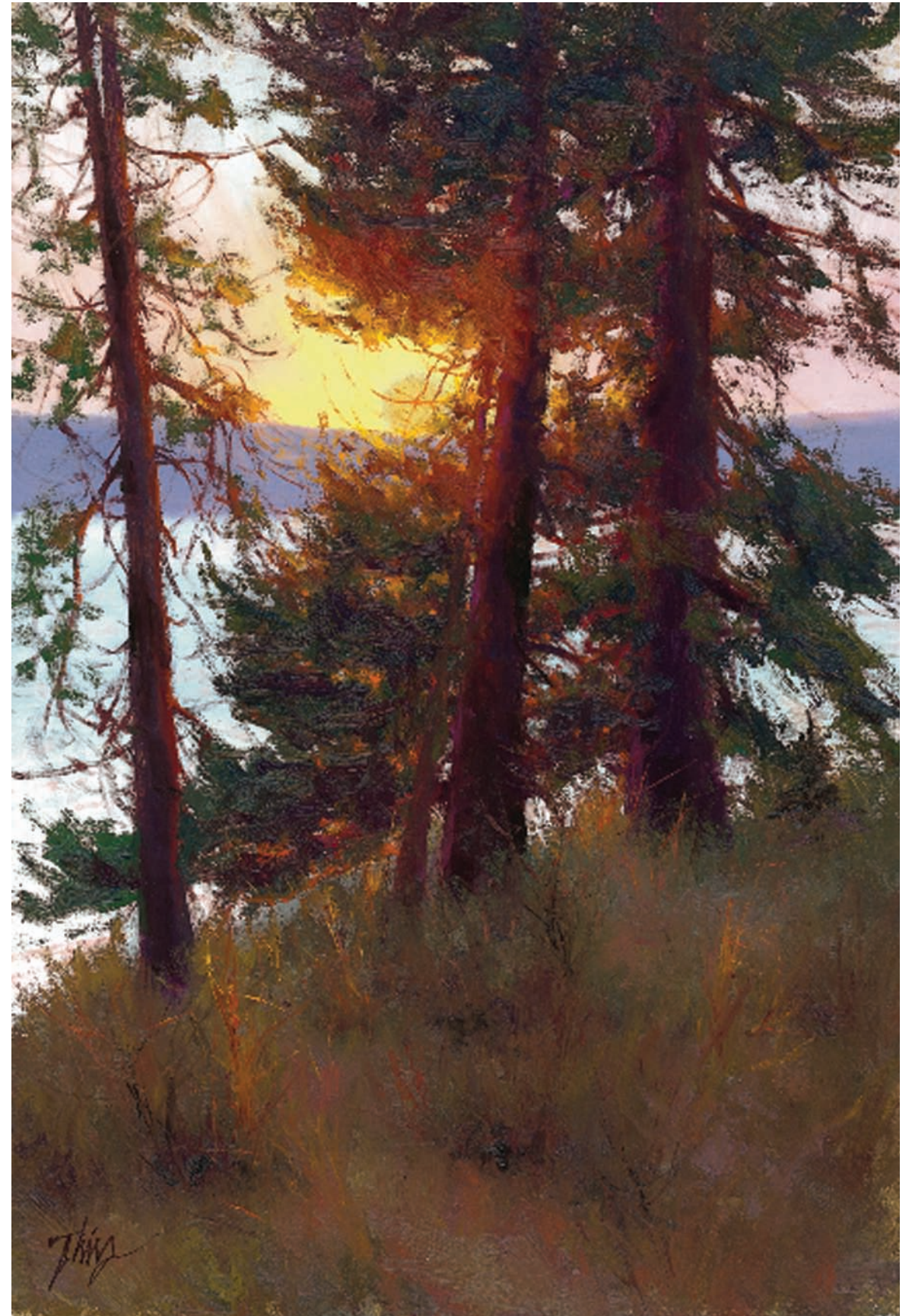
ABOVE  
**Portrait of Timothy R. Thies  
for Kristen**  
by Richard Schmid, 2001, oil.  
Collection Kristen Thies.

you, the viewer, are drawn into each scene, ceasing to be a passive observer and becoming an active participant.”

Although best known for his landscape work, Thies was adept at all subject matter and was widely recognized as one of America’s finest artists. His work was displayed in many landmark exhibitions and collections throughout his lifetime, including the California Art Club’s Gold Medal Exhibition at the Pasadena Museum of California Art; the “Richard Schmid & His Influence” exhibition at the Salmagundi Club, in New York City; the Governor’s Invitational Art Show and Sale,

in Loveland, Colorado; the American Society of Portrait Artists’ competition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York City; the Boston International Fine Art Show; the Copley Society, in Boston; and the National Arts Club, in New York City, among others.

OPPOSITE PAGE  
**Bell Point Sunset—  
Coeur d’Alene, Idaho**  
2007, oil, 18 x 12. Private collection.





**LEFT**  
**Sacred Pines**  
2004, oil, 30 x 18.  
Private collection.

**ABOVE**  
**Hunky Dory**  
2002, oil, 11 x 14.  
Collection Kristen Thies.

Massachusetts, under renowned colorist Henry Hensche. In 1997, Thies became apprenticed to legendary artist and teacher Richard Schmid and shortly thereafter became a founding member of The Putney Painters, in Vermont. It was during those plein air-painting sessions with Schmid that Thies blossomed as a landscape artist. “Timothy was a hero to me,” Schmid says in remembrance of his friend and protégé. “As a person, he was one of the most decent and caring human beings I have ever known. As an artist, he was completely without pretense. He painted what he loved, and he speaks to us still through the beauty

and legacy of his works.” Adds Schmid’s wife, nationally celebrated painter Nancy Guzik, “To me, my friend Timothy has always been like his paintings. Under his colors there was a beautiful and loving strength.”

In addition to being an award-winning artist and nationally recognized instructor, Thies and his wife Kristen were the founders of West Wind Fine Art, which continues to

represent his work along with that of Schmid and Guzik. Timothy and Kristen began the gallery as a way to share their commitment to the finest in representational art with others and support artists who were equally dedicated to excellence. Kristen was an unwavering champion of her husband’s skill and vision and supported his career with equal levels of commitment and creativity. “I believe Timothy would want to be remembered for his passion for excellence in fine art and reverence for nature’s beauty,” Kristen said in a statement published after the artist’s passing. “Timothy loved painting landscapes from life. ‘Nature’s color harmonies are always perfect,’ he’d say with conviction. *Sacred Pines* is a classic example of his dedication to capturing that perfection while painting one of his favorite places near our home in the Green Mountains of Vermont.”

Thies was beloved by both fellow professional artists and students whom he taught, and he was often sought after for wisdom and advice. One of his closest friends, landscape painter and sculptor George Carlson, remembers fondly his colleague’s dedication and talent. “We shared the journey of art as equals, often working together from the same models and confiding ideas and thoughts on art and life,” Carlson says. “There was a mutual trust and respect. He would express to me ideas and visions he had and where he wanted to take his art. Timothy had such a high standard for his work, which in turn gave his paintings a sincere purity.”

**BELOW**

Thies was a highly sought after and respected painting instructor, and he taught both plein air and indoor workshops throughout the country.

Photo courtesy West Wind Fine Art, Coeur d’Alene, Idaho.



Thies often acknowledged this pursuit of purity when interviewed for magazine articles. He also spoke of capturing those aspects of art and life that are eternal. “I paint what excites me,” Thies once said. “It can be anything—a combination of colors, the light, the mood, or something greater. Something transcendent. It hits you in the gut, like a spark. It’s nature’s wake-up call. It says to me, ‘Capture this moment.’ When I paint, it’s that spark I’m trying to recreate and pass onto the viewer.” A statement Thies’ made in an article published in 2004 perhaps offers our most lasting insight into the artist’s feelings on his life and work. “The interesting thing is I can go back to an image and remember exactly how I was feeling at the moment I painted it,” he stated. “In fact, every painting I do is a self-portrait, because they are all about where I was in my life at that specific moment. ... I don’t paint what I think will sell. I paint what inspires me, what I call ‘Divine Inspiration.’ Markets change, but if you’re painting for yourself, for your soul, your work will endure.”

For more information on Timothy Thies, visit [www.westwindfineart.com](http://www.westwindfineart.com).

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