



Insider's Look at Grand Canyon

Webisode #21 – Interview with artist Sally Hall Transcript

Ranger Patrick Gamman: On this week's webisode of Insider's Look at Grand Canyon, I am joined today by artist Sally Hall. Sally, welcome to the show.

Artist Sally Hall: Thank you very much.

Patrick: So you have an exhibit going on right now here at Kolb studio. What are the dates of that exhibit?

Sally: It starts December..., well actually November 13th and goes through February 17th, 2010.

Patrick: Nice, it's going to be here for awhile, so folks can see it.

Sally: Hopefully they will want to come and see it more than once.

Patrick: Ha, ha, that's great. So, I know that you've been to the Grand Canyon before. Could you tell us, and the audience out there, what where your early experiences at Grand Canyon? What first brought you here years ago?

Sally: The first time I came with my family. I was nine years old. My father was doing field research on the north rim of the Kaibab squirrel. And my mother came with... I was the oldest, I was nine, with our four girls. The youngest was one year old. So, we all got in the Volkswagen bus and drove from the San Francisco bay area, where we lived, all the way to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. Pitched a big yellow tent and that is where we spent our summers until the early 70's. We would come for several weeks each season. Dad would do his field work; we would sort of be helpful. I don't know, I am sure there were some summers, it was debatable. That's what first brought our family out to the North Rim and the Grand Canyon. It is a major part of all our lives, as a result.

Patrick: Well, I can see in your art, you have a real affinity for the Grand Canyon, for the desert. There are not only scenes of the desert, you've got the ravens in there, you've got lots of sky, and a lot of the pottery. Could you first tell us where the images, in your paintings of the pottery, where does all that come from, where did you get a lot of your source material?

Sally: The pottery is actually fairly recent. The things I started painting mostly were the skies, the ravens, and especially to Hopi Kachina dolls, because as a nine year old of course they were very interesting to me and I have been collecting them since the first summer. The pottery was something that is not as dramatic and just little shards and pieces here and there. They were never something that I paid a lot of attention to when I was younger. But they were something that was always there. And I would say maybe in the last three or four years it really has become a fascinating source of inspiration for me. The patterns are very profound or they are dramatic is maybe a better word. I live on the east coast, which is a wonderful place. I raised my family there and I love living there. But, ever since I have been on the east coast, about thirty years now, it has been a little bit difficult because I have so much heart connection with the west and especially with the southwest and the Grand Canyon in particular. Through my painting I have been able to find different images that just help me sort of spend more time in my heart connection with this area. Fortunately for me, I live not far from Boston Massachusetts and Harvard University has an extensive collection of *Membres* pottery, a lot of Rio Grande pottery, a lot of ancient pottery. I am able to go visit there, do a lot research in there, an amazing collection. So, that's been a huge source of information, reference material for me. And then being able to come out here as I do to visit my family on a regular basis, we always come back here so, it's worked out actually very well have those two very different basis of operation, I guess is one way to talk about it. But they are both really, they are very rich in the imagery and in the sense of place that I get to take with me on my camera, but then into the studio and I really get to explore those feelings, emotions, connections, designs, patterns through the painting.

Patrick: Before I had ever met you I had heard a story about you. Because, as I saw in your paintings, there is so much sky and there is a story that goes along with that. Could you share with the audience why there is so much sky in your paintings?

Sally: There is so much sky because several reasons, first of all; growing up around here there is a lot of sky around here, which was always a part of my world. When I moved in the early 80's to New York City the first apartment I had was with several other artist. I had a loft room that was a huge room. but

It had no windows at all. And the floor, walls, ceiling were all painted white so you could paint in there. I thought; "You know what this is missing, are some windows". It dawned on me; I am an artist I could paint some. So that is how that started and of course painting skies the ones I knew the most were the skies over the Grand Canyon. So, sometimes you have to move away from what you know best to realize how much a part of you it actually is. So that was the beginning for me of realizing that this was what I enjoyed painting. It wasn't until I moved away from the southwest that these are the images that mean the most to me. These are the places that evoke the most from me. These are the places that matter the most. So, in some ways it is interesting that I have stayed in the east for so long but I find that connection so powerful.

Patrick: Well Sally, Welcome... welcome back to the Grand Canyon. We are so happy to have you here and we are so happy you are sharing your art.

Sally: I am so thrilled to be here, especially with my family history and then canyon in particular meaning so much to everyone in my family. It's an honor for me to be in this place. Thank you for having me.

Patrick: Well folks, that's it for this week's webisode of Insider's Look at Grand Canyon. If you get a chance, Sally Hall's exhibit, her art, will be here at the Kolb studio through February 17th, 2010. Hope to see you folks there.