

The Taos Six Collection: An Homage to Joseph Henry Sharp



The Taos Six Collection: An Homage to Joseph Henry Sharp

Throughout history serendipitous events have created “eureka” moments – moments when a seemingly unrelated occurrence sparks discoveries that have wide-spread and significant consequences. Such was the occasion when, in 1894, two young artists from New York – Ernest Blumenschein and Bert Phillips – were studying in France and met Joseph Henry Sharp. As a casual aside, Sharp shared his excitement about a recent trip to a small village in New Mexico where the evocative play of light over the Taos valley’s dramatic landscapes and the remarkable complexity of the Native American, Spanish, and Mexican cultures captured his attention. By 1898 Blumenschein and Phillips had followed Sharp’s lead and visited the region. The three men knew immediately it was an ideal location for an art colony.

Founded in 1915, **The Taos Society of Artists (TSA)** initially comprised a half dozen accomplished artists from the East and the art and signature styles that would emerge from their presence in the region would become known and highly coveted throughout the art world. Their circuit exhibitions across the nation exposed audiences to new cultures, new visions, and a distinctive landscape. Taos became one of the most important art colonies in America, lasting in its original form until 1927. The consequences of that long ago happenstance meeting of three men in France has inspired and influenced generations of today’s finest painters in fresh and exciting ways.

As a premier Santa Fe gallery for nearly three decades, Blue Rain works with an international array of collectors and art lovers and showcases thoughtfully curated

selections by some of America’s most celebrated artists. Repeatedly we encounter those with an abiding appreciation for the unique voices and artwork of the Taos Society artists. As a part of our reverence for their legacy, we have chosen to showcase **Joseph Henry Sharp** in the second of our series of six scheduled theme exhibitions focused on the society’s founders.

Joseph Henry Sharp trained at the McMicken School of Design in Cincinnati as well as in Europe and devoted close to 80 years of his life to painting Native Americans throughout the western states and is best known for his portraits of Native peoples, primarily Taos Pueblo Indians and Plains Indians. Using short, dynamic brushstrokes to create a sense of lively texture, his paintings were often impressionistic and suffused with light and color. In more recent times the significance of his still lifes and landscapes has also gained recognition. It is notable that a curator of anthropology at the Smithsonian Institute, which acquired a number of Sharp’s paintings, regarded the artist as “among the first, if not the very first, painter of Indian portraits in this country” and commended the exactness with which he portrayed the physiognomy and the Native people’s costumes.

For our spring homage to Joseph Henry Sharp, fourteen of Blue Rain’s premier contemporary artists will select one of his masterworks to reinterpret in their own inimitable style. Participating artists include **Jim Vogel, Nathan Bennett, Erin Currier, Sean Diediker, Hyrum Joe, Brad Overton, Mark Pugh, Matthew Sievers, Kathryn Stedham, Z.Z. Wei, Doug West, Rimi Yang, Dennis Ziemienski, and Andrea Peterson.**



Rimi Yang
Young Chief's Day Dream
(after Joseph Henry Sharp painting titled “Chief Spotted Elk – Sioux”)
Oil on canvas
24” h x 20” w



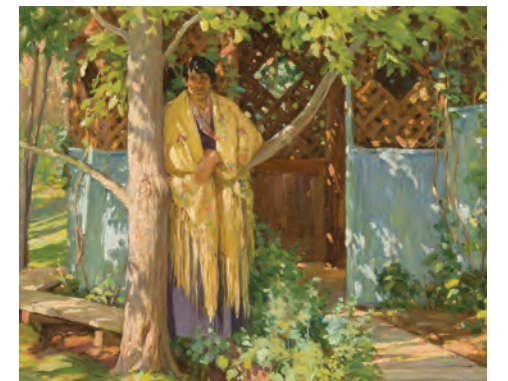
Joseph Henry Sharp
Chief Spotted Elk – Sioux
Year: Unknown



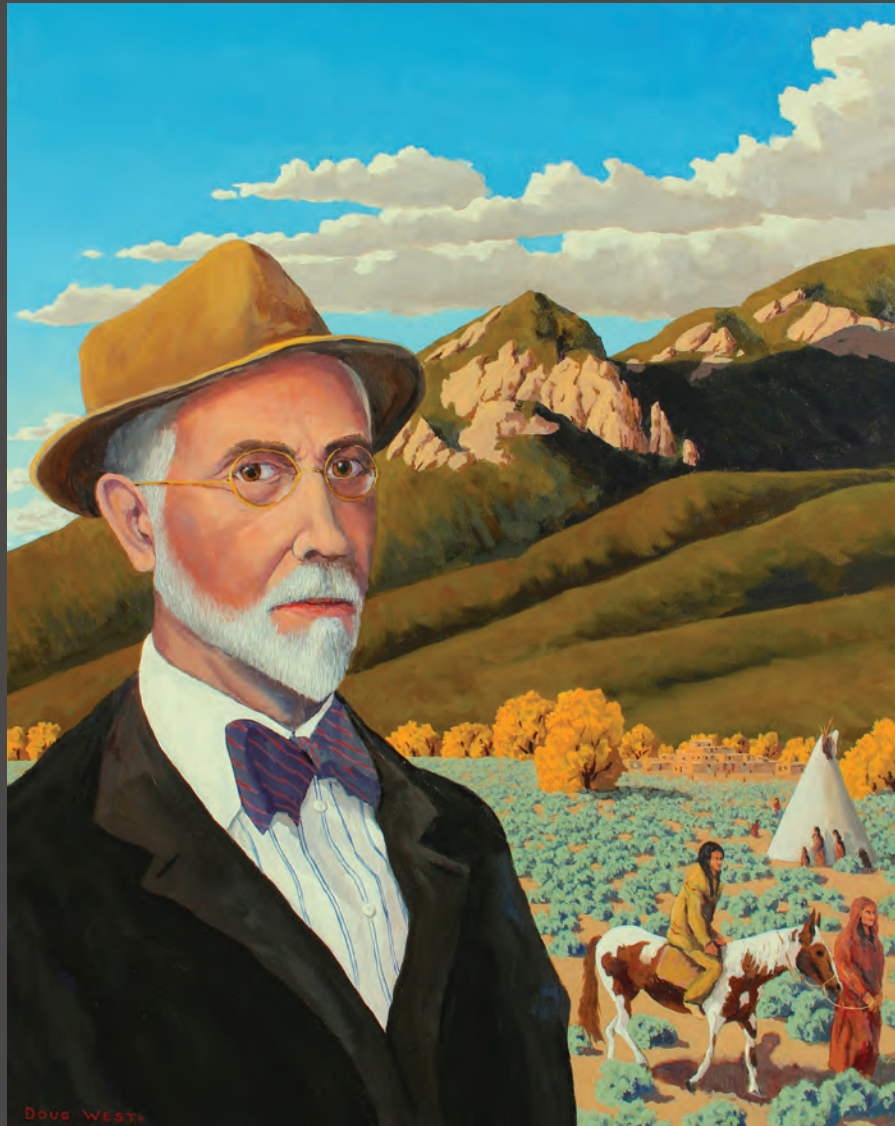
Like most of the Taos Society of Artists Joseph Sharp was charmed by the climate of New Mexico. I too found magic in recreating the light that filters through the leaves of trees. For my painting “Dappled Autumn Light”, I was inspired by his fascination with this play of sunlight. My inspiration was “Untitled (New Mexico Portrait).” Also, I have given the figure’s serape the colors and pattern used frequently by Sharp.

Dennis Zieminski

Dennis Zieminski
Dappled Autumn Light (after
Joseph Henry Sharp painting titled
“Untitled (New Mexico Portrait)”)
Oil on canvas, 20”h x 24”w



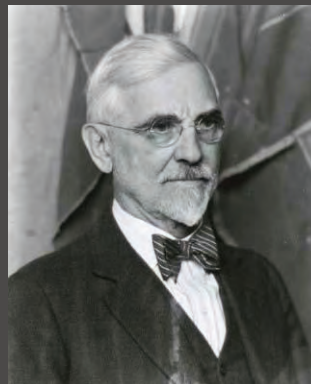
Joseph Henry Sharp
Untitled (New Mexico Portrait)
Year: Unknown



Doug West, *Joseph Henry Sharp's Taos* (Loosely inspired by Joseph Henry Sharp painting titled "Self Portrait" and a photograph from the Smithsonian American Art Museum), oil on canvas, 30" h x 24" w



Joseph Henry Sharp
Self Portrait
Year: 1947



Photograph of the artist
From the Smithsonian
American Art Museum

Jim Vogel
*Matching the Color of
the Sangre de Cristo*
(after Joseph Henry Sharp
painting titled "The Old
Santos Mender")
Oil on canvas panel
32" h x 24" w



Joseph Henry Sharp
The Old Santos Mender
Year: c. 1925





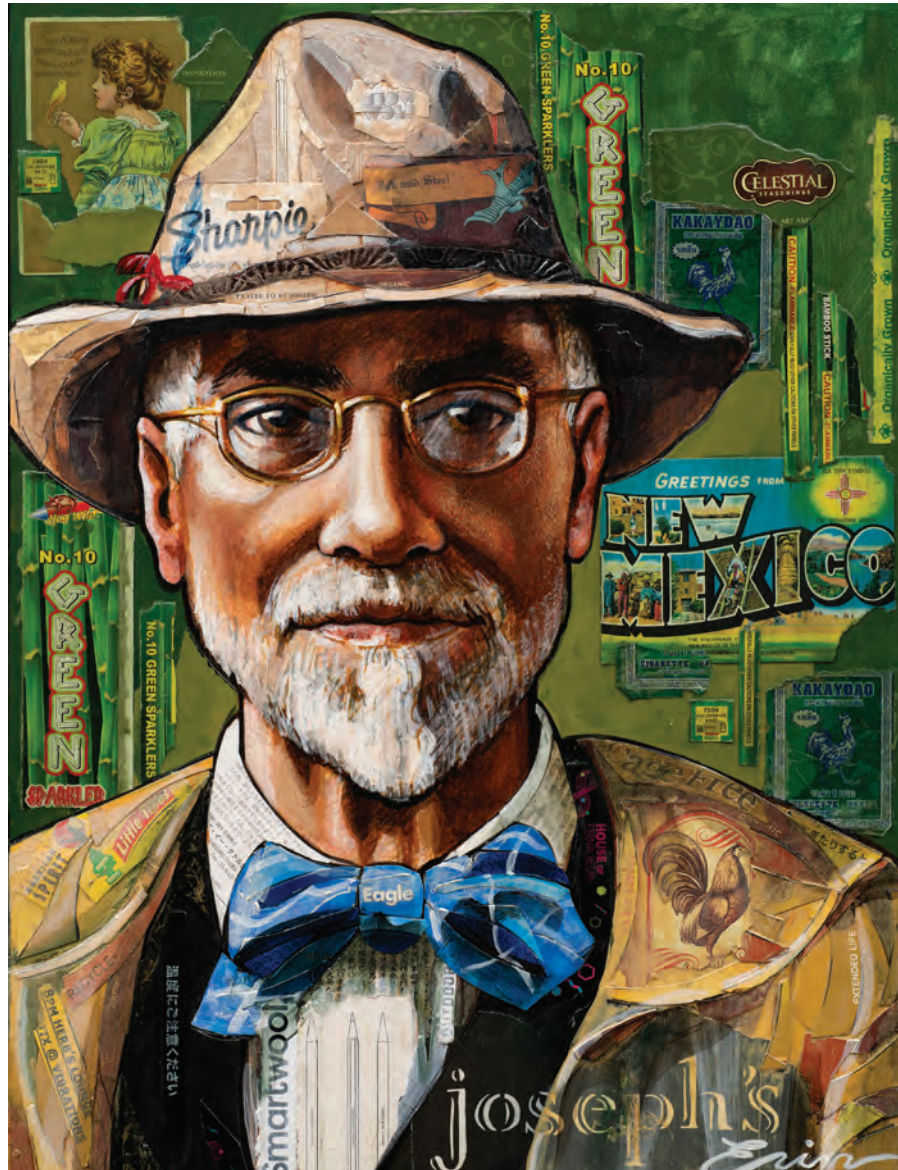
Kathryn Stedham
Twilight Stoic (after
Joseph Henry Sharp
painting titled
"The Stoic")
Oil on Belgian linen
27" h x 31" w

I first saw Sharp's painting, "The Stoic", many years ago and it just stopped me on each occasion. What was it about this painting? At first, I felt it must certainly have been for its strong narrative content: a native figure hunched, pierced and dragging his favorite ponies' heads. Being a horse person this really spoke to me, but interestingly I wasn't repulsed rather intrigued. It was through my study and interpretation of Sharp's painting that I came to realize that perhaps this painting is actually a painting about transcendence, of rising above ones own circumstances to become one with the great mystery.

Kathryn Stedham

Joseph Henry Sharp
The Stoic
Year: c. 1914





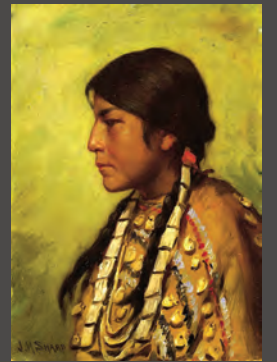
Erin Currier
 Portrait of Joseph Henry Sharp
 (after Joseph Henry Sharp
 painting titled "Self Portrait")
 Acrylic and mixed media on
 panel, 24" h x 18" w



Joseph Henry Sharp
 Self Portrait
 Year: 1947



Matthew Sievers
 Ode to Sharp
 (after Joseph Henry
 Sharp painting titled
 "Blackfoot Girl")
 Oil on canvas
 24" h x 24" w



Joseph Henry Sharp
 Blackfoot Girl
 Year: c. 1899-1905

Sean Diediker
Fireside (after Joseph
Henry Sharp painting
titled "Daylight Firelight")
Oil on canvas
30" h x 22.5" w



I've always admired the use of firelight in Sharp's paintings. By manipulating the hue of his flesh tones he evokes that warm, almost hypnotic feeling that can only be achieved when in close proximity of a burning fire. He did this in multiple works and my personal favorites include designs where you can't see the primary light source at all, only the implied light.

I took inspiration from six of Sharp's paintings, all of which apply the above concept. But perhaps his work "Daylight and Firelight" illustrates it best. Similarly in my own painting "Fireside," I excluded the primary light source allowing the stripes of the rug to symbolize flame and bringing more focus to the ensconced subject reverently pondering the source of comfort at her feet.

Sean Diediker

Joseph Henry Sharp
Daylight and Firelight
(Bawling Deer)
Year: c. 1940





Z. Z. Wei
Sunlight, Catching the Last Rays of (after Joseph Henry Sharp painting titled "Firelight")
Oil on canvas
30"h x 24"w



Joseph Henry Sharp
Firelight
Year: c. 1913



Mark Pugh
Girl in Taos Forest
(after Joseph Henry Sharp painting titled "Taos Forest")
Oil on canvas
18"h x 24"w

Joseph Henry Sharp
Taos Forest
Year: Unknown





Nathan Bennett
Night Lights (after Joseph
 Henry Sharp painting
 titled "Lone Teepee")
 Patinas on bronze
 18" h x 24" w



Joseph Henry Sharp
Lone Teepee
 Year: Unknown



Brad Overton
Sharp Shooter
 (after Joseph Henry
 Sharp painting titled
 "Broken Bow")
 Oil on panel
 20" h x 20" w



Joseph Henry Sharp
Broken Bow
 Year: c. 1912



Andrea Peterson
Twilight Portal (after Joseph Henry Sharp paintings titled "Council Call of Crows: Firelight and Twilight" and "Crucita – A Taos Indian Girl")
 Oil on canvas
 36" h x 36" w



Joseph Henry Sharp
Council Call of Crows: Firelight and Twilight
 Year: c. 1927 [1900]



Joseph Henry Sharp
Crucita – A Taos Indian Girl
 Year: 1913



Hyrum Joe
Taos Chief's War Bonnet
 (after Joseph Henry Sharp painting titled "Old War Bonnet")
 Oil on canvas
 16" h x 20" w

Joseph Henry Sharp
Old War Bonnet
 Year: 1916





 **Blue Rain**
GALLERY

544 South Guadalupe Street, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501 | 505.954.9902

www.blueraingallery.com