

# WILLIAM HASKELL

Detail-driven drybrush watercolorist William Haskell originally intended to specialize in painting birds of prey, apprenticing to award-winning Wisconsin wildlife artist Terril Knack. Haskell, who also paints with egg tempera and oils, decided to broaden his subject matter—inspired by “the change of seasons, the rural American landscape, historical structures, and light and shadows”—but Knack’s influence is still apparent when observing Haskell’s attention to detail and depth. Also, wildlife frequently appear in Haskell’s landscape paintings. His materials and methods are chosen in part to encourage a closer look. The artist, who resides in the historic village of Galisteo in North Central New Mexico, uses 300-lb. (640gsm) paper with a smooth, hot-press finish, then seals, dry-mounts and architecturally varnishes the finished painting. “This removes the need for glass, which traditionally protects a watercolor,” says Haskell. “This allows the user to get closer to the work.”

## Q&A

### What inspired this painting?

The traditional farming methods once used, as well as the area and appearance of the historic structure, all being rooted in the American farmscape, as a vanishing tradition. This is a complex painting with many different layers and colors, creating a richness that conveys its message. The drybrush technique is complementary to this process; it is based on precision, layers and complex design.

### What was your greatest challenge in making it?

To create an image of the corn field that brings the viewer into it, a tangible experience that evokes the sensation of the viewer to “touch and feel” the corn, the rows, the coolness, the distance of the mill. Creating this all from my imagination, and making it function in the painting—this is a challenge, transferring my perception to another.

### What is your favorite part of this piece?

The corn field and the tangled branches of the trees. Highly textural.

### How does it relate to your other paintings?

The theme is something I use in my work: traditional farming, architectural landscapes, narrative themes and historic experience. The palette is a little more tonalist in nature compared to other works of mine.

### What do you feel or hope it says to the viewer?

I hope it captures a certain quality that the American landscape has. I hope it will always give them something to think about, and make them feel a sense of peace.

