

British artist brings love of the American West to Aspen's Galerie Maximilian

News [FOLLOW NEWS](#) | Feb 9, 2024

Sarah Girgis [FOLLOW](#)
sgirgis@aspentimes.com



Artist Suzy Murphy in her London studio.
Courtesy photo

Contemporary British landscape artist Suzy Murphy will debut her first major show in the United States with 30 unique works on paper created expressly for Galerie Maximilian in her one-person show opening on Friday, Feb. 16, running through Sunday, March 10.

“Simply put, Suzy Murphy is one of the most delightful and talented artists that I have worked directly with in my 40-plus year career of being a fine art dealer,” said Albert Sanford, owner of Galerie Maxmillian. “She is a thoughtful, warm, engaging, authentic, colorful, and dynamic person who expresses all of those same qualities in her works. There is a sense of peace and tranquility in her landscapes that creates a sense of nostalgia — as if one has been in her landscapes at some point in the past.”



"Snow Deep," 2023. Monoprint with hand painting in oil. Signed in pencil. 75.5 x 56.5 cm (29.7 x 22.2 in) (16121)
Suzy Murphy/Courtesy photo

A big draw of her pieces is that she draws much of her inspiration from the American West, a place she has extensively traveled through and called home during a crucial time in her life.

"The Rockies and the American landscape is highly-emotional for me because, as a small girl, I was transported there," she said via Zoom from her London studio. "I grew up in London's East End, which was very urban and a slum. There were 11 of us living in one flat. My mother got married, and she and my new stepfather took me to Alberta, Canada. It was a huge cultural shift for me. And even though I was homesick, I used the land as a comfort and threw myself into the sense that I had all this physical freedom. It's God's land; it's so untouched compared to Europe."

Though she only spent a few years in Canada before returning to London, she said that time made such a huge impact on her that she continued to long for the wide, open spaces and dramatic landscapes of her childhood, making it a priority when she became an adult.

“When I had my children, I wanted them to experience this freedom that I’d experienced, so I started taking them to Wyoming,” she said. “I realized that it had such resonance for me, such deep emotional resonance, that it fed into my work, so I began taking solo road trips in the American West and started drawing everything I saw in these little notebooks. “



“Spirit of My Place,” 2023. Monoprint with hand painting in oil. Signed verso. 138 x 110 cm (54 3/8 x 43 1/4 in) (16310).

Suzy Murphy/Courtesy photo

A chance encounter brought Murphy to spend a lot of time in Dunton, Colorado. She said many of the paintings for her show at Galerie Maximillian were directly inspired by the charcoal drawings she made while traveling around and exploring the Centennial State.

She began drawing the moment she was able to pick up a pencil. She noted that growing up in a working-class family, she didn't have anyone taking her to museums or galleries to learn about and appreciate art. She took the initiative to seek it out herself.

"We used to get a bus from this place called White Chapel Road where we lived, and it took you to Trafalgar Square, which is where the National Gallery was," she said. "It was free, and I used to go there because it was free. I remember being about nine or 10 and seeing Rembrandt and and thinking, 'I have to do that. I want to do that.' That's why I believe museums should be free; if it hadn't been free, I wouldn't have experienced that and might not be where I am today."



"Falling II," 2023. Monoprint with hand painting in oil. Signed in pencil. 75.5 x 56.5 cm (29.7 x 22.2 in) (16089)
Suzy Murphy/Courtesy photo