

Al Wynne

January 3, 1922 - November 23, 2009



Photo by Mark Sink

Born Albert Givens Wynne on January 3, 1922 in Colorado Springs, Al's work has been featured in numerous major exhibitions from Minneapolis and Washington D.C. to Colorado Springs, including individual and group shows, and he has been listed in the *Who's Who in American Art* encyclopedia since 1959. Among important exhibitions in Colorado are: Denver Art Museum (1962); Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center (one-man show); Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art (1999); Museum of Contemporary Art/ Denver "5 *Abstract*" (2002); Kirkland Museum of Fine and Decorative Art (retrospective October 2008); Fort Collins Museum of Contemporary Art (May 2009). His most recent gallery exhibition was at Z Art Department in downtown Denver, September 2009. Other regional and national exhibitions are

too numerous to list. Al's paintings are held by the Kirkland Museum and the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center collections along with those of major institutions and private collectors across the country. He is included in "Colorado Abstract," a major book documenting many of Colorado's finest painters from the 1930s to the present. <http://www.unmpress.com/Book.php?id=12200106061981>

Al studied at the Broadmoor Art Academy at the age of 9, where his love of art was kindled by his teacher, Boardman Robinson. A child of a poor family, Al and his four brothers struggled through the depression, barely surviving, selling newspapers on the streets of Colorado Springs. Al lived at the Myron Stratton Home near The Broadmoor, a home for children during which time he attended Cheyenne Mountain High School.

During WWII Al was stationed at Roswell, New Mexico with the US Army Air Corps, where he piloted B-25s, and flying became his second passion. Airplanes and the "wild blue yonder" were strong contenders; but art won his heart and Al studied at the University of Denver, later completing his Master of Arts Degree at the University of Iowa under S. Carl Fracassini. He met his wife of 58 years in Iowa, Lou, a printmaker and ceramist. The couple had three children and Al continued to do his own work in oil painting while teaching high school art in Tennessee and Alaska. He began his college teaching career at Iowa Wesleyan College 1956 and returned to his home town of Colorado Springs in 1961 as art instructor for Colorado College. He later taught at Trinidad State Junior College and Morningside College in Iowa, and established the UCCS art department with classes in his Black Forest studio.

Shortly after settling in Colorado, Al and Lou bought their first house and founded New Art Crafts (later renamed as The Wynne Studio) in Black Forest. New Art Crafts housed the first UCCS art classes and became a private art school that quickly gained a following. Al deeply loved classical music, jazz, and the wilderness—passions shared by his family. Camping, backpacking, fly-fishing, four-wheeling over high Colorado passes, listening to Sinatra, Getz, and Stravinsky, arguing philosophy and politics and the meaning of art and life—these were all essential to both Al's creative process and his well-being.

During the 1950s and 60s, Al and Lou participated in major national exhibitions. In the 1970s, Al quit teaching to dedicate his life to oil painting, sculpture, and calligraphy, while Lou continued teaching and working in clay. The Wynne Studio became a private studio for the couple to work and hold exhibitions of their work for over 20 years. Al's paintings reflect his strong connection to classical calligraphy and his work reflects his love for the work of artists such as Matisse, Picasso, and Jackson Pollock.

Diagnosed with cancer, Al lost his ability to speak in 2002 but continued painting until 2008. He was able to attend opening receptions at both the Kirkland Museum in 2008 and Z Art Department in summer 2009. He died quietly at home in Black Forest, with wife and daughter beside him, listening to a favorite composer, Dmitri Shostakovich.