



"Cowboy Crossing," oil 36" x 60"

The life of a painter

Born in St. Boniface, Manitoba, Canada, Paul Van Ginkel's interest in art reaches back to his childhood. As a youth, art became a favored subject in school and Paul's talent put him at the top of the class. In high school, Paul began to consider what life path to take, and found himself returning again and again to the visual arts. Following his art instructor's advice, Paul went on to attend the Alberta College of Art in Calgary. Once at college, Paul found that the commercial arts program offered the discipline and structure he felt would best benefit an art career.

The commercial art studies gave specific assignments that involved problem solving and experimenting with various mediums and methods — a good fit for Paul's personality and personal goals.

Then, in Paul's last year of art school, he applied for and was offered a job at the Calgary Herald newspaper as an illustrator and graphic designer. Though the decision to drop out of art school was difficult, Paul relied on his instructors' advice and took the opportunity. He later continued his schooling, earning a Master of Fine Arts degree from Syracuse University in New York in 1989.

In 1990, after almost seven years at the Calgary Herald, Paul resigned to become a full-time painter and fine artist. During Paul's first few years as a painter, he dabbled in some freelance illustration work. In 1996 he moved to Vancouver for a change of pace but returned to Calgary in 2001. In February 2004, Paul married Kristin Bell, a talented architect from the Calgary area. The couple is in the process of building a large home, which Kristin designed to include both studio and gallery space from which Paul will create, promote and sell his work.

"The artist must wear two hats," Paul says, " — a creative hat in the studio and subsequently a business hat once a painting is done. I'm first and foremost an artist, but I also consider myself a small businessman."

Paul and Kristin plan to host their own art shows from their home gallery. "Our intention is to provide a wonderful art show experience complete with live music, great food and drink in a stimulating environment overlooking the majestic Rocky Mountains," he says.

Over the years, Paul has received many awards and distinctions. He's most proud of being recently selected by Albuquerque's Fresco Fine Art Publications as one of the top 38 western artists working today. In addition to being featured in a beautiful hard-cover book, *Western Traditions — Contemporary Artists of the American West*, he was among featured artists in an exhibition that opened October 1, 2005, at Borsini-Burr gallery in Half Moon Bay, California.

Editor's note: For more information about the artist or to view his work, visit his Web site at www.paulvanginkel.com.