



BRUSHSTROKES OF THE WEST: JACK SORENSON'S LEGACY

Discover the profound impact of Jack Sorenson on Western culture, as his art not only captures the majestic landscapes and spirited narratives of the American West but also plays a crucial role in preserving its rich heritage for future generations.

STORY BY JILLIAN SINCLAIR

In the heart of the American West, where the spirit of the frontier burns as brightly as the setting sun against its vast landscapes, one artist has stood out for his unparalleled ability to capture the essence of the cowboy lifestyle. Jack Sorenson, often hailed as a storyteller in paint, has carved a niche for himself in the world of Western art. He has become an emblematic figure for cowboy artists whose works resonate deeply with the cultural fabric of American life.

His remarkable ability to encapsulate the beauty of the American frontier without sacrificing accuracy has not only endeared him to art enthusiasts but has also established him as a cultural icon whose paintings narrate the stories of the West with authenticity and passion unrivaled by others.

FROM CHILDHOOD DREAMS TO CANVAS REALITIES

Born into the rugged beauty and rich heritage of the West, Sorenson was raised on the outskirts of a national park, where his father operated a trading post. This environment, steeped in the lore and allure of cowboy culture, shaped the young Sorenson, igniting a passion for storytelling through art.

"I feel so blessed to have grown up at Six Gun City, our family's frontier town and dude ranch on the rim of the Palo Duro Canyon," Sorenson says. "It was the perfect background for what I do now."

Sorenson was drawn to the vibrant tales of Western life, a fascination that would become the cornerstone of his artistic journey. He drove a stage coach for six years and spent most of his time

ABOVE: "Wet But Almost Home" — Through rain-soaked trails in the high country, a cowboy nears the journey's end, reflected artfully by Sorenson, who finds joy in the challenge of painting such mirror images of nature's quiet drama.

horseback in the Palo Duro Canyon on horses he broke and trained himself. Sorenson's home now sits on the rim of the Palo Duro overlooking the Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

A CANVAS OF CONNECTION

Sorenson's art is more than just a visual feast; it's a bridge to a bygone era, meticulously preserving the traditions, values and aesthetics of the Western way of life. His paintings, rich in narra-

tive, invite viewers to step into a world where the bond between human and nature, cowboy and companion, is celebrated and revered. Through his mastery of oil painting on linen, capturing light, color and emotion, Sorenson has helped to preserve Western culture for generations to come.

"I want to paint ranch life and the stories I experienced growing up cowboy," Sorenson says. "I think these stories have universal appeal, especially if I'm able to convey my love and joy of each scene. The viewer may not have grown up on a ranch, but he identifies with the love of a dog or horse. Anyone can appreciate how hard it is to mount a tall horse or open a gate as a short kid."

THE SORENSON INFLUENCE

Sorenson's impact transcends the boundaries of his canvas, influencing the art community and Western enthusiasts as a whole. By depicting scenes of everyday life in the West with a romantic yet realistic touch, Sorenson has helped foster a renewed appreciation for its heritage.

"I believe every great painting should tell a story," Sorenson says. "After all, how can you elicit an emotional response from the viewer if you don't involve him in a story line? One of my favorite paintings is one called, 'C-Sick.' It appeared on the cover of *Western Horseman*.

"A young cowboy is at the mailbox reading his report card, and it's not good news," he continues. "His horse and dog are feeling his disappointment. It was a very popular image because everyone can identify with a bad report card."

His work has graced the covers of *Western Horseman* 16 times, most recently with "A Christmas Ride," on the cover in December 2023.

"I feel blessed to get to paint cowboys and horses for a living," he says. "I consider having done 16 *Western Horseman* covers as one of my greatest achievements as a Western artist."

Sorenson's election into the elite

Cowboy Artists of America further cemented his Western legacy.

"Being voted into the Cowboy Artists of America group was a life dream of mine," Sorenson says.

More than the accolade itself is the privilege of displaying his work shoulder to shoulder with some of the best artists in the country.

Sorenson's commitment to authenticity and the portrayal of the West with a respectful, nuanced perspective has garnered him admiration from a diverse audience, including historians, cultural scholars and fellow artists.

"I've been painting full-time for more than 50 years, and I feel I've only scratched the surface of what I want

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to say,” Sorenson says. “The Western way of life is so very important to me, and I want viewers to experience it through my paintings.”

THE SORENSON SIGNATURE

Each of his paintings tell a story, whether it’s a quiet moment between a cowboy and his horse or a dramatic landscape displaying the untamed beauty of the West.

“I’ve never had trouble coming up with ideas for paintings with original story lines,” Sorenson says. “My trou-

ble is finding time to tell all the stories I want to tell.”

Sorenson’s distinctive style, characterized by a rich palette and dynamic lighting, captures the vibrancy of the scenes he paints.

“I think my work is appreciated because I try to cover every aspect of the Western way of life,” Sorenson says. “I paint the old West, modern cowboys, cowgirls, kids and Christmas in the West.”

Sorenson’s subject material ranges from the daily life of the American

cowboy to the simple grandeur of Western landscape, but he is perhaps most beloved for his unique take on classic Christmas scenes. His holiday art, filled with warm nostalgia, is a staple for his fans.

“I’ve received so many letters and e-mails from folks telling me how much my paintings have meant to their family members,” Sorenson says. “One lady told me I had always been her father’s favorite artist, and when he was in hospice, the only thing he wanted around his bed were my Christmas cards. She sent me a photo of him with my Leanin’ Tree cards taped above his bed.

“My prayer before I start every painting is that it will glorify God and touch people’s hearts,” he continues. “Stories like this let me know my prayer was heard. It’s very humbling.

INSPIRING FUTURE GENERATIONS

Beyond the time spent behind his canvas, Sorenson serves as a mentor and inspiration to aspiring artists. Through workshops, exhibitions and personal engagements, Sorenson has shared his vision and skills, nurturing a new generation keen on preserving the rich tapestry of Western culture.

“I’ve taught numerous workshops on ‘How to Paint a Horse From Life,’ and continue to do demonstrations with the Cowboy Artists of America,” Sorenson says. “In June, I’ll teach a painting workshop at the Museum of Western Art in Kerrville, Texas.

“I’ve taken numerous workshops at that museum from many past Cowboy

LEFT: “The Good Life” — Inspired by his cherished memories as a working cowboy, this painting reflects the serene satisfaction found by many in the simplicity of cowboy life. Sorenson captures the essence of the cowboy’s spirit, a life less concerned with material wealth and more with the boundless treasures of nature and the open sky.



illustration by JACK SORENSON

Artists of America Members,” he continues. “This time, I’ll be the teacher.”

Sorenson encourages others to explore and express the stories of the West, ensuring that its spirit continues to thrive in contemporary art and beyond.

“I always tell other artists to not be so worried about achieving a photographic image in their paintings, but instead to put as much heart and love into their work as possible,” Sorenson says. “Their emotions will show in their work if they try.”

Sorenson paintings can be experienced in person at a number of art shows annually including the Settlers West Miniature Show in Tucson, Arizona; the America’s Horse in Art Show & Sale at the Quarter Horse Museum in Amarillo, Texas; the Small Works, Great Wonders show at The National Cowboy and Western Heritage Mu-

seum in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and the Cowboy Artists of America Show in Fort Worth, Texas. Additionally, he hosts a one-man show during Indian Market at Santa Fe Trails Fine Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

By sharing his journey and knowledge and artwork, Sorenson helps foster the growth relevance of Western art for years to come. Not to mention, everyone loves an opportunity to bring home their very own Jack Sorenson Cowboy Santa art.

CELEBRATING JACK SORENSON

Sorenson, through his art, has become a custodian of history and an advocate for the preservation of uniquely-American way of life.

Sorenson’s paintings offer us a chance to connect with the Western spirit, its people and its landscapes.

“When my great, great, grandkids

look at one of my paintings long after I’m gone, I want them to learn something about me — what joy did I get from what I’d painted? Not just what a horse looked like,” Sorenson says.

Through his eyes, we are granted the privilege of seeing the West not just as it was, but as it forever will be — intrinsically beautiful, wildly untamed and eternally cherished. 🐾



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