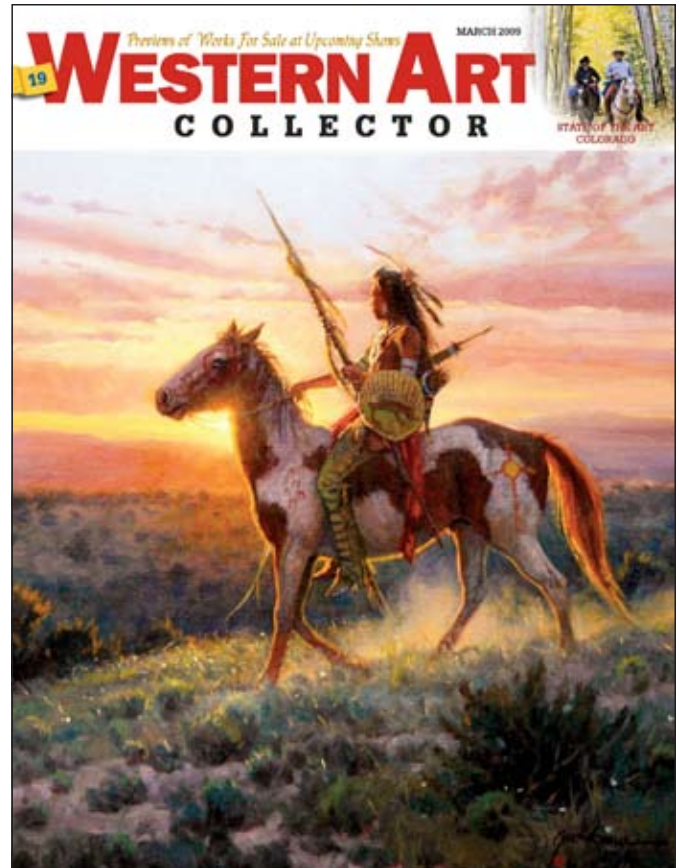


As seen in the  
March 2009 issue of

**WESTERN ART**  
COLLECTOR



**UPCOMING SHOW**

Up to 12 works on show  
March 5-18, 2009

Rive Gauche  
Contemporary Gallery  
15507 N. Scottsdale Road  
Scottsdale, AZ 85254  
(480) 368-3530

**SHOW LOCATION SCOTTSDALE, AZ****FRANK BALAAM**

## *Light through the trees*

While on a plein air painting trip on the Mogollon Rim in summer of 2002, Frank Balaam witnessed the horrific Rodeo-Chediski fire as it tore through vast forests, destroying 67,066 acres of east-central Arizona woodland. Three years later, in July 2005, Balaam would experience his own tragedy when a fire destroyed his gallery housed at the historic Pioneer Hotel in Globe, Arizona. Over 800 paintings and drawings representing 25 years of work were consumed by the inferno.

"It was like losing your entire life," recalls Balaam.

Prior to the destruction, Balaam painted portraits and murals. Since the fire he has focused on treescapes, exploring the evolution of form and the movement of light.

"The forest is the only element that seemed to be able to respond to fire and grow from it," the 60-year-old artist says. "Nature's brave acceptance followed by passionate resilience in response to destructive forces has become a model for me since losing my gallery."

Balaam's latest series, *Light Through the Trees*, represents the renewal found in environments that are usually backdrops to human existence. He describes these paintings, which will be on show at Rive Gauche Contemporary Gallery in March, as an "evolution of color and vibrancy." There is no visible earth, no forest creatures, and no human reference in Balaam's treescapes.

"There is no physical way in or out of my forests," he says. "I want the viewer to feel rooted in a timeless forest that is growing inexorably."

When viewed on a small scale or



*Sunset Birches I*, oil on canvas, 53½ x 41½"

*The Gallery Says . . .*

*“Frank Balaam uses a remarkably difficult single-stroke reverse painting technique in order to imbue his vibrant canvases with passion and the energetic qualities of light and life. Over the years, collectors report that they enjoy the freshness of the textured brushstrokes and they find their eye continually discovers new color journeys into Balaam’s forests.”*

*—Frederic de Claremont, director, Rive Gauche Art Galleries*



**Autumn Breeze on Maples**, oil on canvas, 4 x 4'



*Tall Birches II*, oil on canvas, 62 x 36"



*Spring Birches VIII*, oil on canvas, 47 x 31"

### *The Collector Says . . .*

*"One sees in Balaam's work a master of the medium, whose paintings dazzle the eye as well as the heart and mind. His creativity and experience gained from years of world travel combine with his gifted skills and sensitivity to portray the ever-changing light of a living forest."*

*—Dr. Jim Coates, Arizona*

from across a room, the observer first sees a vividly painted forest but as they near the canvas the more passionate appears the tangle of colors until abstraction and the heavy 3-D impasto of the paint become important. This is one reason the artist prefers his larger works, like *Autumn Breeze on Maples* and *Mid Day*, because they're easier to become involved in because they fill the field of vision.

"Forms that at first are foliage become less recognizable and, finally, at the painters' distance, I use abstraction and organic chaos to represent the primal swirl of existence," he adds.

In many ways Balaam's treescapes are traditional landscapes from the forests of Northern Arizona and the Pinal Mountains. He frequently uses sketches of individual trees and composes them

to form forests. In his recent work, he incorporates intense colors he observed from an arroyo below his studio that is overhung by huge sycamores and cottonwoods that illustrate a focus on the forest as a metaphor for the cycles of life.

Balaam's *Light Through the Trees* series is based on his recollection of the forest's stoic acceptance of all-consuming



**Mid Day**, oil on canvas, 5 x 5'

fire that he and his wife witnessed in 2002. He hopes each viewer finds their own journey into his paintings because he wants his canvases to have lives of their own.

"I enjoy the juxtaposition of contrasting colors to create vibrant energy and I use individual colors and shapes to create visual pathways to lead the eye through the forest," says Balaam.

"I have a philosophical approach to painting that encompasses a deeply emotional analysis of both the forest and life itself, and I feel this is achieved when collectors tell me that they see a different painting every day." 🍃

For a direct link to the  
exhibiting gallery go to



[www.westernartcollector.com](http://www.westernartcollector.com)

### Price Range Indicator

*Our at-a-glance Price Range Indicator shows what you can expect to pay for this artist's work.*

	Small	Medium	Large
1996	\$250	\$850	\$1,500
2002	\$500	\$2,000	\$3,000
2009	\$1,200	\$5,000	\$6,000