

Aaron Sutton: Paint it Like You See It

BY LAUREN GALL

The oldest known paintings in the world are located in France and claimed, by some historians, to be about 32,000 years old. They depict horses, rhinoceros, lions, buffalo, mammoth or humans often hunting, which was the primary “pastime” of the day. Aaron Sutton, the artist, doesn’t exactly paint these types of things. Instead, he paints what he sees throughout the beautiful beach communities along Highway 30-A. Whether the pastime of the day is surfing, swimming, biking, or simply a family vacationing and basking in the golden sun, Sutton is painting it...daily.

The 28-year-old artist was born and raised deep in the heart of San Antonio, Texas, as the oldest of four children. Throughout his childhood, he moved around a lot, as his father was a pastor, which helped develop his awareness of the world around him. His mother recognized his creative abilities at an early age and encouraged him to develop his talents.

“My parents recognized that I had a knack for drawing when I was young and always encouraged me in it. I guess my first real excitement came when I won ‘best of show’ out of all the third-graders in Houston, at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. They had a big art contest at the rodeo, so I drew a Western scene with horses, gunfighters and mountains and won the contest. I got this massive trophy and free tickets to the rodeo.... I will never forget that. I still have the drawing. It’s dusty and full of cobwebs, but I still have it! That definitely made a huge impression on me,” says Sutton.

Throughout his elementary, junior high and high school days, Sutton entered and won just about every art contest that was available to him. His senior year of high school, he was awarded a Gold Key Portfolio for the best high school portfolio in all of West Texas and received an exclusive scholarship to Texas Tech University for being one of the top local high school artists in 1999.

While at Texas Tech, Sutton discovered painting and, needless to say, has been “hooked” ever since. Upon graduation, with a Bachelor in Fine Arts, Sutton was offered an MFA program. He and his wife, Emily, turned down the offer and ultimately decided to, instead, move to the quaint area of Northwest Florida, known as 30-A. When asked what makes this area so artistically inspirational to him, he quickly responds, “When you come to 30-A, there are certainly a variety of people that live here and vacation here. However, the groups that stand out to me the most are the families. Certainly, it helps that we have sparkling waters, white beaches, picture-perfect villages



Aaron Sutton



and landscape... but I always come back to the people I see. When you combine the elements of family, friends and the surroundings, it provides a wealth of inspiration to create from. When you paint about family, friends and romance, you add a story to the work... it’s no longer just about form and color.”

...he paints what he sees throughout the beautiful beach communities along Highway 30-A.

What most people don’t know is that Sutton is red-green and blue-violet colorblind. When asked how he overcomes this challenge while creating, he responds, “I always love to joke around with people and say ‘you know I am just thankful they put the color name on the tube so that I know what it is.’ In reality, that helps a lot, but it is a small part of what I have to do. I have done tons of memorization. I also try not to worry about color

and paint only by what I feel is ‘warm’ or ‘cool.’ If I can paint feeling this, most of the time the painting is believable because temperature and value is more important than color. Also I try to go back to what my painting mentor, Ken Dixon, used to tell me back at Texas Tech... don’t worry about color, just paint it the way you see it.”

Judging from his work, Sutton is doing just that...and more. “I want to inspire people with my work, Sutton is doing just that...and more. “I want to inspire people with my paintings, encourage them and help them remember what is really important in life. God has blessed us very much. I believe, as an artist, I have a responsibility to remind people of the simple blessings God gives us in our lives... and that might come in a symbol of our freedom, a sunrise or a smile from a person who has been with you your entire life. As a Christian, I believe in God and that this time on earth is just a glimpse. I’ve got a reason to live and paint because this is not the end. It’s only a beginning.”

To learn more about the artist, or to purchase a painting, visit www.aaronsutton.com, or visit Aaron on Facebook at Aaron-Sutton-Artist. Aaron’s work is also available at the Blue Giraffe Gallery in Watercolor or Lyons Share Gallery in Fairhope, Ala.