

Carrie Ballantyne

Carrie Ballantyne began drawing as a child anything that would hold still long enough, although it was the West that stimulated her imagination. Drawing was as natural to me as eating or sleeping, something that had to be done. From the start it was Western images that captured my imagination. At the age of 19, Ballantyne left her home near Los Angeles, California and traveled to Cody, Wyoming; there, her interest in the West become more than an image to me; there was a lifestyle here that I wanted.

A student of the Old Masters, Ballantyne refined her style as a graphite portrait artist with encouragement and inspiration from local artists. Working as a camp cook, she accompanied fishermen and hunters into the Absaroka Mountains, her sketchbook never far away. As she became increasingly skilled in pencil, her work came to the attention of painter Ted Feely, who urged her to attend the George Phippen Western Art Show in Arizona. There she not only met the renowned James Bama, who she cites as her biggest influence, but sold most of her drawings, starting her career as a Western fine artist. I choose to portray country people because they are the ones who live and work around me, she says. Tender moments that please me typically appear in my work. I am always striving to communicate all the emotions you can see in a face, posture and other body language.

Marrying Jesse Ballantyne, a working cowboy, furthered her involvement with the Western lifestyle, giving her a continual supply of her favorite subject. Many artists go in search of subjects and inspiration. Ballantyne has only to look around her. Her subjects are the men, women and children of the high plains, where she lives with her husband and children near a 14,000-acre cow and calf camp. Her portraits suit her subjects; deceptively simple and strong, but still delicate and elegant. It s exciting and rewarding to be able to portray people and a lifestyle that I admire and respect.

Her awards include first place at the George Phippen Memorial Show and Best in Show at the Buffalo Bill Art Show.

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