

An abstract landscape painting featuring layered, horizontal bands of color. The top section is a deep, dark blue. Below it is a broad band of vibrant green and teal, with some lighter yellow-green highlights. The middle section is a darker, more muted blue. The bottom section is dominated by dark, expressive brushstrokes in shades of brown, black, and dark red, suggesting a foreground or a shadowed area. The overall style is gestural and expressive, with visible texture and brushwork.

DICK EVANS

Published on the occasion of
Inside Out: The Landscape of Memory,
a one-person show by Dick Evans,
at Joyce Robins Gallery, Santa Fe, NM,
September 3-17, 1999.



Left and Cover Detail:
Red Grove With Evening Sky, 24 x 24

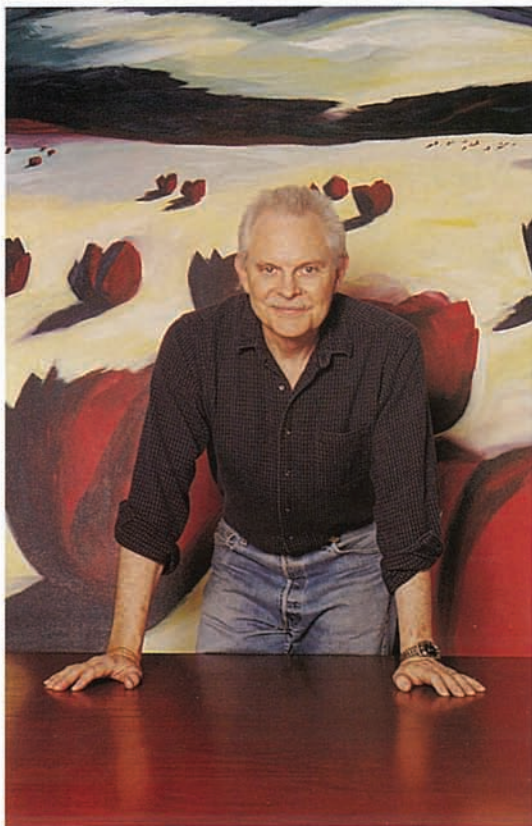
©1999 Joyce Robins Gallery
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Dick Evans portrait, Daniel Barsotti.
Production: Open Studios Catalogs
Note: All paintings are acrylic on canvas.
Dimensions are shown in inches, height by width.

DICK EVANS

Inside Out: The Landscape of Memory



The Landscape of Memory, 40 x 60



Inside Out: The Landscape of Memory

Absorbing the sensual world, Dick Evans filters it through his memory, then expresses his emotions in acrylics on canvas. The paintings likewise tap into the psyches of those who view them. Suddenly juxtapositions of mountain horizons and tree forms take on new meanings. Raking shadows edging against one another both confirm and challenge perception. Green trees naturally wear their complement of red. A patch of orange sky is simultaneously threatening and endearing.

“If one of my paintings makes someone look at the physical landscape or the emotional landscape in a fresh way, then I’ve succeeded,” says Evans. He speaks softly, but with expansive gestures. “What is important to me is presenting ideas in such a way that people bring to them their own memories and get involved.”

To make that connection, Evans uses “indicators”—forms that somehow trigger recollections, vivid and subtle. Among these indicators are tree- and bush-like forms. The bushes are often dark and weighted to the ground. Conversely, the tall, feathery trees are colored in passionate shades of blue, purple and red and reach upward, charged by an elemental energy.

In recent years the trees have come to dominate his paintings. Placed singly, in pairs or in large planar groups, they often bask in sunlight or moonlight, casting long, dark shadows. Like the shadows, the negative spaces between the trees become as real as the trees themselves. These dichotomies force us to examine the paintings carefully. To look, then think, and then to look again. Many times when you look back, something has changed ... either in your own mind or in what you thought you saw on the canvas.

“I twist things just enough to introduce questions,” says Evans. “That’s what is exciting about making art. Artists continually evaluate ways of seeing. The great moments in art history have come when someone distills a different way of seeing and can present it so that others are able to see the world or themselves differently.”

“But what you see in my paintings is just a trigger,” he says. “What’s going on *within* us is where the richness is. The way we take in material, then meld and merge it with our experiences, our lives, our evolutionary chemistry, is why everyone reacts differently to the paintings.”

Evans’ painting process is likewise one of “reaction.” He builds a variety of canvas sizes and at the beginning of the day chooses one based on his energy and emotions. He positions the canvas on the 14-foot-tall wall of his studio, where a grid of nails placed 12 inches apart serves as his easel. A pencil stroke or a splash of color is enough to get him started.



Six in Purple Field, 60 x 60

“Then I ask myself, ‘What now?’ Everyone has some intuitive and analytical aspects of their lives,” he continues. “I use the analytical when I need to. But when the heavy stuff is on the line, my intuition—my gut—makes the choices. The paintings are distilled memories called up through responding to what is there.”

Responding often means that he has no idea what prompted him to do a certain passage in a painting. “In The Light Fragment Series, I started putting in these yellow marks. I had no idea where they came from. It wasn’t until I was walking in the Pecos Wilderness that I encountered these yellow plants and realized I had seen them before. They weren’t in the sky, but they were running up the mountainside, like little fragments of light. The experience of creating something from the subconscious, then seeing it once again in nature happens to me repeatedly.”

Music often motivates what Evans calls the “choreography” of a painting. His large collection of compact disks has been influenced by his travels around the world. Whether it is the cyclic rhythms of minimalist Phillip Glass or a performance by Tibetan throat singers and a Bulgarian woman’s chorus, the abstract relationships of melodic progressions conjure up primal correspondences that Evans cannot ignore. He points to a purple passage in the blue foreground shadows of *Poplars With Light Fragments* and says it was inspired by the edgy soprano sounds of Meredith Monk, an avant-garde performance musician who pioneered the extended vocal technique. Another work, he says, was colored by the guttural voice of Tom Waits.

Evans has been attuned to the landscape since he was a ten-year-old driving a tractor on his family’s cotton farm in the wind-driven plains of West Texas. (See Chronology, pages 19-20.) “I was aware of movement in the landscape even back then,” he says. “I remember only once when the wind wasn’t blowing. It was so startling that all the kids went inside. The silence was dead.”

As a university undergraduate he focused on abstracting the Utah landscape in paintings. Later, as a university professor, he created several series of sculptural ceramics inspired by his Lake Michigan environment and by his memories of New Mexico. Drawing upon repeated textures in nature—tree bark, leaves, waves, ripples—he constructed pastel craters and mountain ranges that were segmented to reveal saturated interior hues. From there he moved to large wall murals in which complex, junglelike worlds pulsed with painterly flying forms. Flying ...or perhaps floating underwater.

Evans is fond of snorkeling and compares the underwater visual sensation to that of walking in the desert at night. In both cases space becomes palpable, with relationships taking on new importance. One gets the same sense in the paintings. It’s as if you are moving through familiar yet foreign territory, and that everything is connected.

While there are no human elements in the paintings, human issues underlie them. “Look at this painting,” he says, pulling out a laser-light pointer



Junipers With Poplar, 66 x 34



Three With Green Sky, 40 x 60

reminiscent of his days as a professor. “This talks about positioning and relationships. The closeness and the size and the space between the trees and bushes, and what’s happening between the two bushes in front of the hill and those in back alludes to how people relate to one another. Now, I don’t want it to look like a mother and father with two kids. It is not a family group ... unless that is what someone brings to it.”



He pauses, then sighs, overwhelmed by having to put into words what he expresses in paint. “I’ve always been interested in what appears on the outside and what is actually happening on the inside. And that carries through to my interest in music—the tone and atone, the movement and countermovement, the counterpoint.”

Much of Evans’ work revolves around the counterpoint or the layering of melodies—meanings—one over another. It was also a design topic he taught to his college students. “There are certain ways of putting elements together that ring true in the inner psyche and that ring true to our traditions, which are partly evolutionary and partly cultural,” he explains. “That is why you develop a preference for certain compositions, colors or juxtapositions of forms. But it is also our nature to like counterpoint. Much of my work is about going against the grain—the difference between something chaotic and something that tantalizes, titillates.”

Shadows are among those tantalizing surprises. Evans often includes a shadow of something that isn’t in the picture, compelling the viewer to contemplate what’s going on outside the framework of the painting. And he never lets us forget that the landscapes are paintings. His seemingly arbitrary colors and gestural brushwork continually bring us back to the surface, adding yet another layer to the meaning of art and illusion.

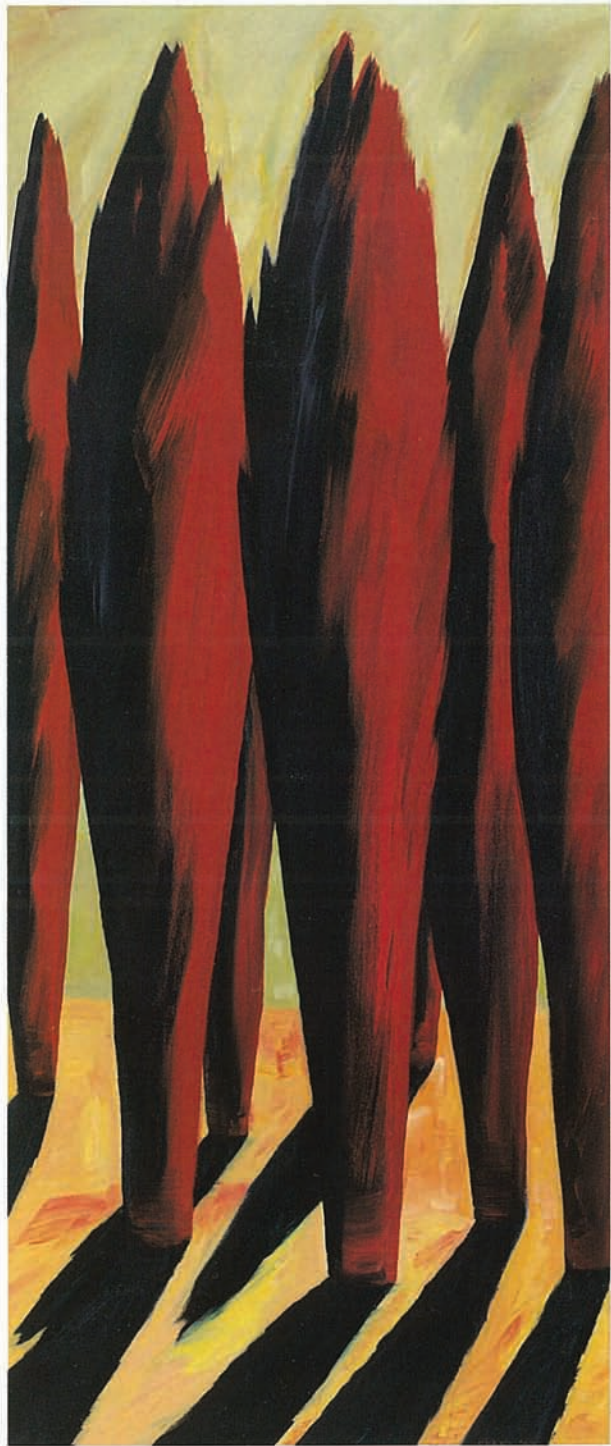
“That’s what artists do: They look around to see what’s out there, and it helps other people see what is in here,” says Evans pointing to his heart. “When I started painting red trees it seemed to me perfectly logical. I loved it. But a part of me thought, ‘Why are you doing this? It will never make sense to anyone’ ... but it does.”

Susan Hallsten McGarry
16 June 1999

Susan Hallsten McGarry received her master’s degree in art history from the University of Minnesota. She was editor in chief of *Southwest Art* magazine from 1979-1997 and has written and/or edited numerous catalogues, the most recent being *Women Artists From the Land of Enchantment* (1999 New Mexico Chapter, National Museum of Women in the Arts). Her books include *Spirit of the Wild Things: The Art of Sandy Scott* (1998 Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK) and *West of Camelot: The History Paintings of Kenneth Riley* (1993 Eiteljorg Museum, Indianapolis, IN).



Three Plus Two Plus One, 44 x 66



Seven in Sunlit Field, 72 x 30



Junipers With Storm Clouds, 66 x 84



Nineteen in Sunlit Field, 66 x 120





Poplars With Green Sky, 60 x 40



Shadow Trees With Red, 40 x 40



Two With Canyon, 36 x 48



Four With Yellow, 40 x 40



Landscape With Red Presence, 34 x 44



Eight With Red Sky, 60 x 40



Dark Mountain With Red Line, monotype, 16 x 16



Two on Ocher Rise, monotype, 17 x 25

Chronology

- 1941 Dick Evans born in Roswell, NM.
- 1950 Evans family moves to a farm in Earth, a small community in West Texas.
- 1959-63 Studies architecture and advertising art at Texas Tech University, Lubbock.
- 1964 Receives Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting and drawing, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. Paintings are primarily abstract and nonobjective.
- 1966 Receives Master of Fine Arts in sculpture and ceramics, University of Utah.
- 1966-70 Teaches ceramics and design at Texas Tech University while doing his own ceramic, welded steel and cast-bronze sculpture. Receives tenure in 1970 and resigns within the month.
- 1970 Moves to San Juan, New Mexico, a small rural community on the Pecos River, where he sets up a full-time art and pottery studio.
- 1971 One-Person Show, C. Troup Gallery, Dallas, TX.
- 1971-72 Teaches ceramics and design at University of Tennessee, Knoxville.
- 1972-75 Teaches ceramics at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. Co-teaches a summer class in the dance department dealing with movement and spatial relationships.
- 1973 One-Person Show, Adams State College, Alamosa, CO. National Invitational Craft Exhibition, Atlanta, GA.
- 1974 Three-Person Show, University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque.
- 1975 One-Person Show, Roswell Museum and Art Center, Roswell, NM
- 1975-87 Moves to Wisconsin. Teaches ceramics and design at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. Serves as Associate Dean of the School of Fine Arts, 1981-1983. Receives full professorship in 1984.
- 1976 One-Person Show, Bradley Galleries, Milwaukee, WI. One-Person Show, University of Wisconsin-Madison Student Center.
- 1977 Two-Person Show, Clay and Fiber Gallery, Taos, NM. Two-Person Show, Edgewood Orchard Galleries, Fish Creek, WI. Group Invitational Show, Exhibit A Gallery of American Ceramics, Evanston, IL. Work included in Tradition and Change, The New American Craftsman (Dutton) by Julie Hall.
- 1978 Landscape: New Views, Group Show, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University. One-Person Show, Bradley Galleries, Milwaukee. Travels to El Salvador, the first of a series of trips that will influence his work. Exhibits a series of segmented ceramic forms that can be arranged by the viewer, described by reviewer James Auer as "suggesting simultaneously

- fossil skeletons and the landscape, from bluffs and beaches to snowdrifts and sand dunes." Work included in *Ceramics, A Potter's Handbook* (4th ed., Holt, Rinehart and Winston) by Glenn Nelson.
- 1979-80 Develops a passion for remote spaces and embarks on a number of canoe trips to hard-to-reach lakes in Canada.
- 1980 *American Porcelain: New Expressions in an Ancient Art*, Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. One-Person Show, Bradley Galleries, Milwaukee. *Studies in Scale*, Group Show, Wustum Museum, Racine, WI. *Poetic Image*, Group Show, The Elements Gallery, New York, NY. Two-Person Show, Mount Mary College, Milwaukee. Work included in *American Porcelain: New Expressions in an Ancient Art* (Timber Press) by Lloyd Herman.
- 1981 *Wisconsin Directions 3: The Third Dimension*, Group of One-Person Shows, Milwaukee Art Museum. Work included in *The Decorative Touch* (Prentice Hall) by Carl E. Paak, and *Porcelain: Tradition and New Visions* (Watson-Guptill) by Jan Axel and Karen McCready.
- 1982 *Vessels and Paper*, National Invitational Exhibition, Friends Gallery, Minneapolis Institute of Art, MN. Two-Person Show, Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, University of Nebraska. *National Ceramics Invitational: All Clay*, Cheney Cowles Memorial Museum, Spokane, WA.
- 1983 One-Person Show, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI. Travels to Ireland, London and Greece. Exhibits a series of bowls described by a reviewer as objects you might experience in a Japanese tea ceremony. Inside, however, "they fairly explode with intense gestural pressures of abstract-expressionism."
- 1984 One-Person Show, Friends Gallery, Minneapolis Institute of Arts. One-Person Show, Michael H. Lord Gallery, Milwaukee, WI. Tenth Annual Ceramics Invitational, Weber State College, Ogden UT. Exhibits a series of ceramic murals whose impact was described as: "Elemental forces seem to wrestle with one another in Evans' work and to come to uneasy yet exciting resolutions." Work included in *Ceramics, A Potter's Handbook* (5th ed., Holt, Rinehart and Winston) by Glenn Nelson, and *Design in the Visual Arts* (Prentice Hall) by Roy Behrens.
- 1985 *Wisconsin Survey: Three Dimensional Art Today*, organized by Wisconsin Academy Review and toured throughout the state. Canoe trip in the Florida swamps. Work included in *Mold Making for Ceramics* (Chilton) by Donald Frith.
- 1986 Travels to Brugge, Paris and Switzerland.
- 1987 Retires from the University of Wisconsin and devotes full time to studio work. About Clay, Group Exhibition, Rockford Art Museum, Rockford, IL. Begins flyfishing.
- 1988 Wisconsin Craft Masters, Wustum Museum of Fine Arts, Racine. Fishing trip to Alaska.
- 1989 One-Person Show, Michael H. Lord Gallery, Milwaukee. Canoe trips to Canada.
- 1990 Returns to New Mexico and begins work on a studio/home in the hills above Santa Fe, NM. One-Person Show, Elaine Horwitch Galleries, Santa Fe.
- 1992 Stops working in ceramics and returns to his original medium of painting.
- 1993 One-Person Show, Tory Folliard Gallery, Milwaukee. Travels to Vienna, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Istanbul.
- 1995 One-Person Show, Tory Folliard Gallery, Milwaukee. One-Person Show, Abbey Lane Gallery, Creede, CO. Travels to Singapore, Bali and Bangkok. Work included in *New American Paintings, Number V* (The Open Studios Press)
- 1996 One-Person Show, Robins Hyder Gallery, Santa Fe. Creates first of a series of monotypes. Travels to Spain. Review, *The Santa Fe New Mexican* (July 12). "Form and Function," *Mountain Living* (Summer).
- 1997 One-Person Show, Robins Hyder Gallery, Santa Fe. "The Abstracted Landscape," *Southwest Art* (September). Review, *The Santa Fe New Mexican* (June 20). Gallery Preview, *Santa Fean* (January/February).
- 1998 One-Person Show, Joyce Robins Gallery, Santa Fe. Review, *Santa Fe New Mexican* (August 21)
- 1999 One-Person Show, Joyce Robins Gallery, Santa Fe. Travels to Scandinavia, Russia and China. Publishes catalogue: *Inside Out: The Landscape of Memory* (Joyce Robins Gallery). Featured in *New Mexico Distinguished Artist Calendar* (*New Mexico Magazine*). "Art Pairs," *Santa Fean* (May). "Life Imitates Art," *Building Ideas* (Spring). "Best of the West," *Southwest Art* (February). Review, *Santa Fe New Mexican* (February 6). "New Mexico Gold," *Art-Talk* (August/September 1999).



Poplar With Yellow Sky, 66 x 34

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Four With Light Fragments, 66 x 84

