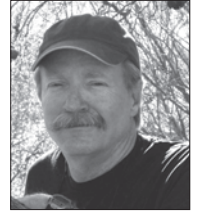


UPCOMING SHOW

Up to 25 works on show
April 3-11, 2008

J. Willott Gallery
73190 El Paseo, Suite 1
Palm Desert, CA 92260
(760) 568-3180

SHOW LOCATION PALM DESERT, CA



KEN STOCKTON

Arid edens

With miles and miles of flatlands, large rock formations broken down into loose sporadic boulders and the odd assortment of cacti and other alien outcroppings of plants and shrubs, the Joshua Tree National Park has an otherworldly look that makes it one of the most distinctive regions of the Mojave Desert. For Ken Stockton, though, it is pure bliss and the antidote to his passion for expressing the landscape on canvas.

"Deserts have always been among my favorite places," says Stockton. "I love the distance, the silence and the quality

of light. I'm fascinated by the 'ordered chaos' expressed in the architecture of the rock—the way it fractures, weathers and reflects light."

Rock takes on special significance for Stockton because it is an interesting symbol of time immemorial, especially when given the fluidity of the rest of the landscape. However, like so much that is found in the land, even this has a conflicting presence.

"I love the permanence and solidity of rock, contrasted with the ephemerality of the plants and animals that live on and around them," says Stockton. "Yet,

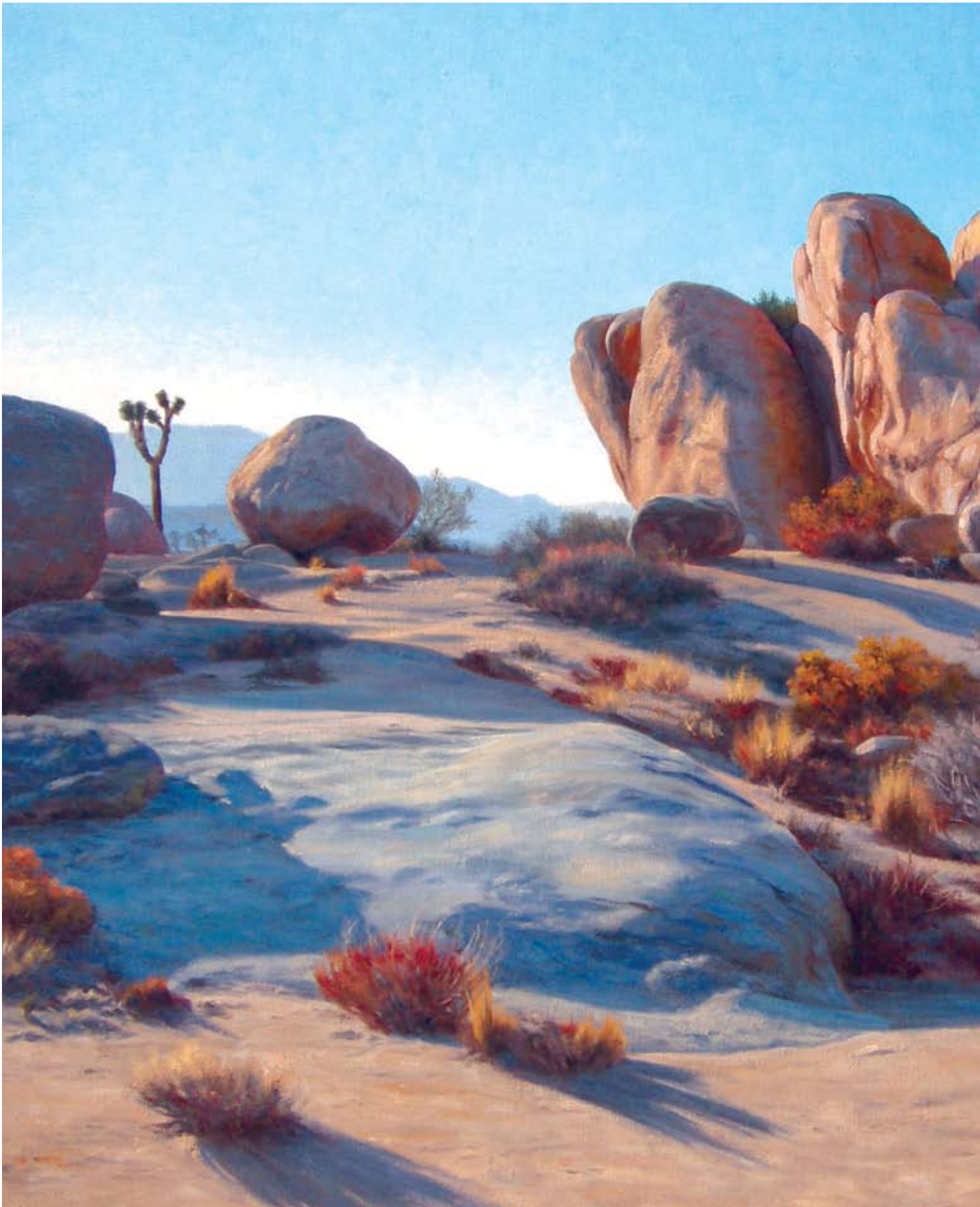


Ken Stockton painting in his studio.



Fall Flame, oil on linen panel, 9 x 12"

The artist says: People often comment that they 'miss the seasons' here in Tucson. We don't get much in the way of fall color in the open desert so when I saw these backlit ocotillos one October, I seized the opportunity. The normally bare stems burst forth with new foliage soon after a soaking rain. The leaves' brilliant hue was due to the drying soil rather than chilly weather.





“For me, plein air painting is almost like a sport—a race against the clock of changing light and shadow.”

the very beauty of rock is owed to the constant forces of erosion—it really isn’t permanent after all.”

Stockton’s landscapes record all the infinitesimal details of the Mojave Desert—the details that carry with them a history of the land and its changes, from streambeds giving way to large canyons to sand shifting and moving throughout time.

“I’ve always been intrigued by the way time transforms a landscape, creating patterns and meaning in the endless cycle of growth and decay,” says Stockton. “The expanding arc of a river as it devours one bank to feed the other, the soft, silver patina of weathered wood, eons of desert rain recorded on a canyon wall by the parallel strokes of gravity’s descending brush, the slightly-skewed horizon of a distant bajada.”

Stockton finds beauty in all of this and feels that by painting the desert, it is his own unique way of preserving it and understanding what part of its beauty speaks to him most clearly. →

Rolling Toward the Sun,
oil on linen, 30 x 40”

The artist says: The thrust of the rocks, combined with the ribbons of shadow curving over the rounded form brought to mind a sense of the earth’s rotation; of the whole scene spinning forward to meet the sun.

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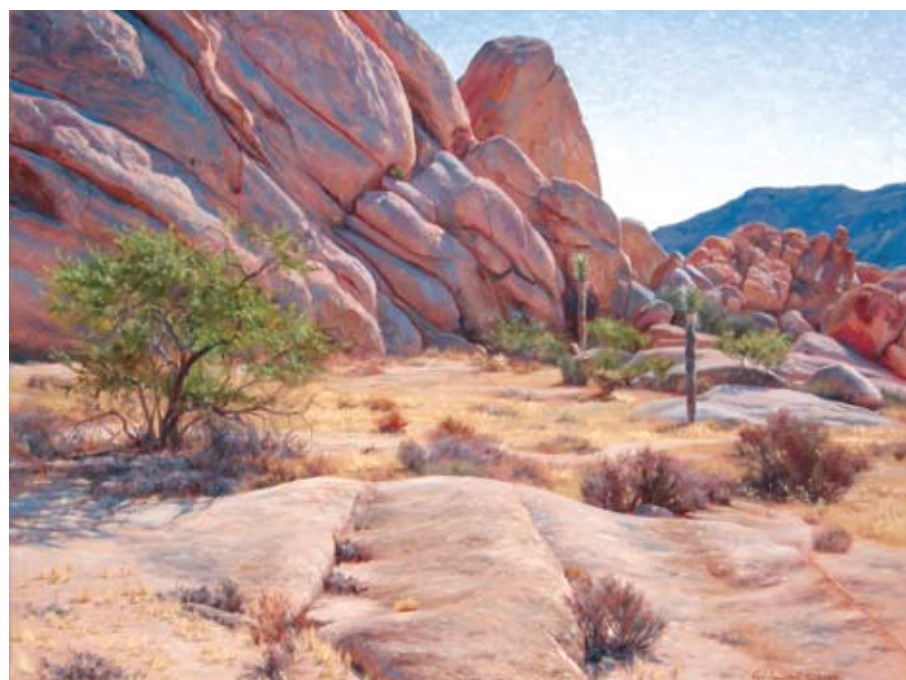
Rock & Rhythm, oil on linen, 24 x 36"

The artist says: The curving sweep of perched boulders builds a sense of movement and expectation, leading the eye from one ascending "step" to the next before arching over the top to begin again. The play of light and shadow accentuates the rhythmic forms.



Arid Eden, oil on linen, 36 x 48"

The artist says: Despite the obvious evidence of a very dry climate, I found the overall effect of this scene to be one of almost lush exuberance, creating an appealing visual contradiction.



Mid-day Dazzle, oil on linen, 24 x 30"

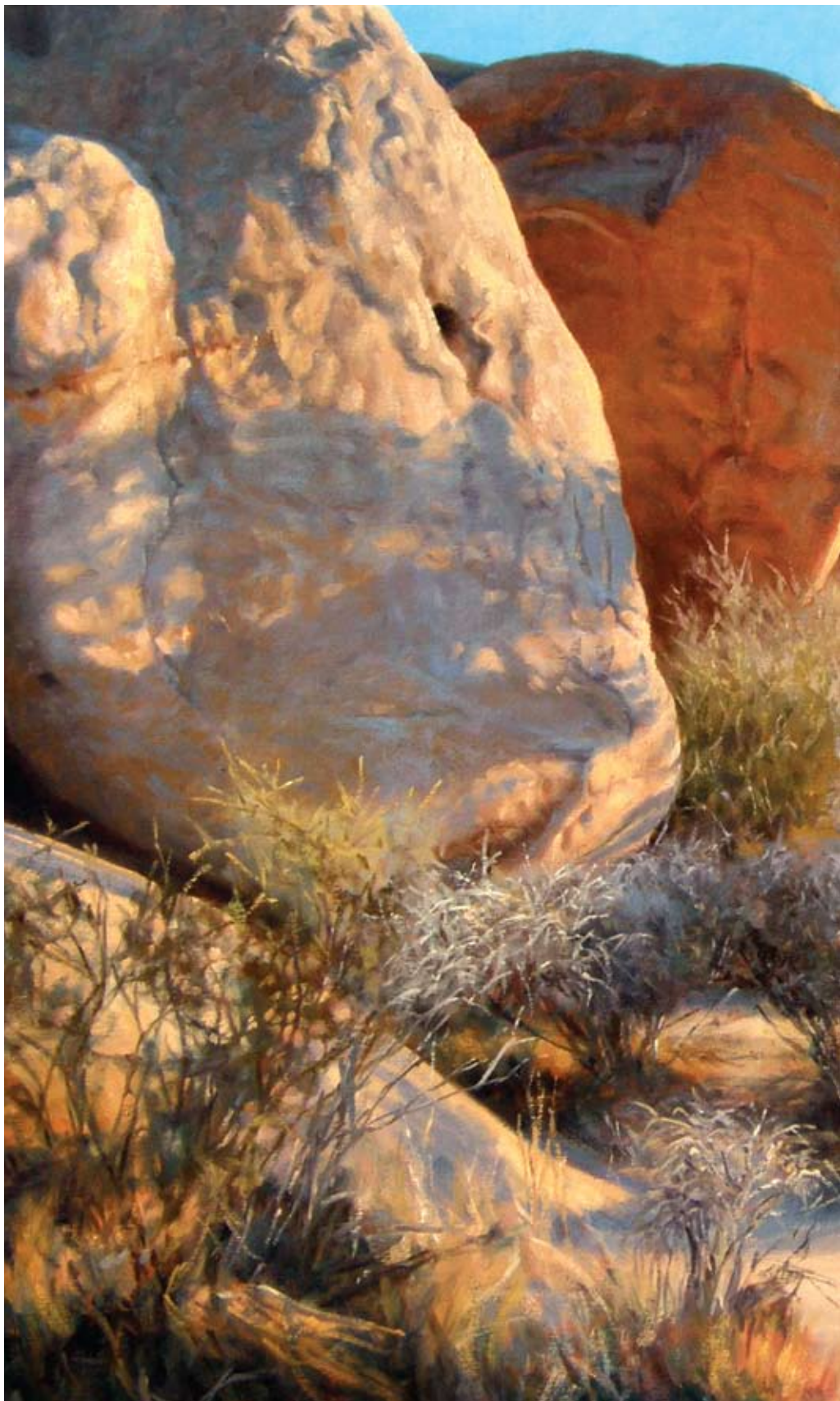
The artist says: I was struck by how the warm brilliance of sunlight reflected from the desert floor illuminates the shaded undersides of the rocky outcrop, while the upper portions reflect the cool blues of the sky.

“Deserts have always been among my favorite places. I love the distance, the silence and the quality of light. I’m fascinated by the ‘ordered chaos’ expressed in the architecture of the rock—the way it fractures, weathers and reflects light.”

→ “My reasons for painting are really pretty simple,” says Stockton. “Painting helps me understand, and savor, that which I find beautiful or compelling, and provides me the means of expressing this to others. I love the magic of light—the stained-glass incandescence of backlit cottonwood leaves in early spring, the reflections in a stream or a sun-raked field at dawn.”

Stockton starts out by painting on location, where he works “small, fast and direct” in order to best capture the intricacies of the scene—from changing cloud patterns to shadows of weather conditions. Stockton sees this all as a challenge and relished the opportunity to paint in such a direct manner.

“For me, plein air painting is almost like a sport—a race against the clock of changing light and shadow,” says Stockton. “I enjoy the challenge, but I’m not particularly fast—so time constraints





Caress of Shadow, oil on linen, 24x36"

The artist says: The soft tracery of shadow brushing against the rough surface seems to draw the rock and tree together in the early morning light.



Lichen Mosaic, oil on linen, 24 x 48"

The artist says: At first glance, these lichens appeared to grow randomly over the rock, but a closer look reveals their preference for the shelter of bright shade. The dappled splashes of color bring unexpected richness to an otherwise subdued palette.



Tumbled Remnants, oil on linen, 30 x 36"

The artist says: From my vantage point on the base of a steep outcrop, I try to picture the inexorable weathering as mountains of rugged rock erode into rounded, shrinking boulders and settling fragments, eventually melting into the ocean of sand formed from the same unending process.



The Collector Says. . .

“For some time now we have been captivated by the beauty of the desert landscape in this part of southeastern Arizona. The moment we laid eyes on Ken's 'Secluded Canyon' we were struck with the amazing degree to which he was able to capture the feel, the essence and the detail of a very special place. He has a way of depicting a scene so that one has a sense that, here is a beautiful spot I know one that I've been to before — one that I must return to again.”

*— Joel Fowler and
Patricia Packard*

tend to limit my canvas size and subject matter. Plein air work now serves mostly as a reminder of how colors and values appear to the natural eye, and the majority of my painting takes place in the studio.”

And, once he gets started, the paintings become less and less about the subject matter and more about the actual technical aspects of painting.

“Landscapes reveal a great deal about cause and effect, and authenticity can be sacrificed when elements are altered or separated without a clear understanding of the relationships that once connected them,” says Stockton. “Subject matter sometimes takes a back seat as my attention shifts to

the immediate feel and texture of the paint, the juxtaposing of certain colors or the expressiveness of a particular stroke.”

For a direct link to the exhibiting gallery go to 

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
2002	\$650	\$1,700	\$2,800
2007	\$900	\$2,000	\$3,200
2008	\$1,000	\$2,200	\$3,500-\$11,500