

Paul Van Ginkel



The art world meets the world of the horse at the Calgary Stampede, a ten-day rodeo that includes a major art show and other attractions. Paul Van Ginkel's indelible images combine all these factors. His big, bold works of art take command of the exhibitions. He paints mighty herds whose backs, manes, and tails ripple in the sunlight like ocean waves. He conjures up the early West in thunderous compositions of stagecoaches and horsemen. He leads his horses to water at twilight, then paints their deep blue reflections. And he moves through the wheeling and dealing of the Stampede with the ease and grace of a natural-born artist and businessman who regularly sells a goodly portion of his yearly output at this one event.

Van Ginkel's first interest was photo-realism. Since that time, he has loosened up, and his work has become rooted in pattern and rhythm. However, his work retains the visual integrity of that early style. His primary subject is horses, closely followed by classic Indian figures and a smaller number of nudes and travel subjects. The overriding theme of Van Ginkel's work is honesty. Each painting is straightforwardly constructed and faithfully realized. It is presented simply, by an artist whose unassuming manner belies the splendor of his work.

Van Ginkel grew up in Calgary and attended the Alberta College of Art, later earning an MFA from Syracuse University. For a time, he worked at the Calgary Herald newspaper, a job that taught him to solve problems, work with others, and meet deadlines. The discipline enabled him to continue painting until he could devote himself to it full time, which he began doing in 1990. A year later, he participated in his first Calgary Stampede art show. In 1992, he took his work to Santa Fe. There, he found a completely new world, one that captivated his eye and expanded his horizons. He returned periodically to paint and to learn the subtle complexities of art as a business career.

From his studio loft in downtown Calgary, Van Ginkel travels the world internationally. His favorite trips, however, are the photo shoots for working artists. In Wyoming, he captured Spanish mustangs; in Oregon, horsemen and vintage vehicles such as stagecoaches and buckboards. On the Artist's Ride in South Dakota, an invitation-only event more than two decades old, he photographed authentically outfitted models and actors staged in every conceivable situation, from frontier saloon life to mounted cavalry exercises. He was able to get right into the middle of the action with his camera. With thousands of slides thus acquired, he has been able to expand his scope and do larger and far more complex paintings.

Van Ginkel's greatest strength is in the structure and the flow of his unique compositions. "When I paint, I don't allow myself to be interrupted," he says. "As a result, a rhythm starts to develop within the painting. It doesn't come right at first, but when it does, it consumes the canvas, and the painting takes on a life of its own."



Sticking Together Oil 36 x 60"



White Out Oil 43 x 65"



Two and a Team Oil 50 x 80"





Tidal Wave
Oil 48 x 72"



North Oil 40 x 50"