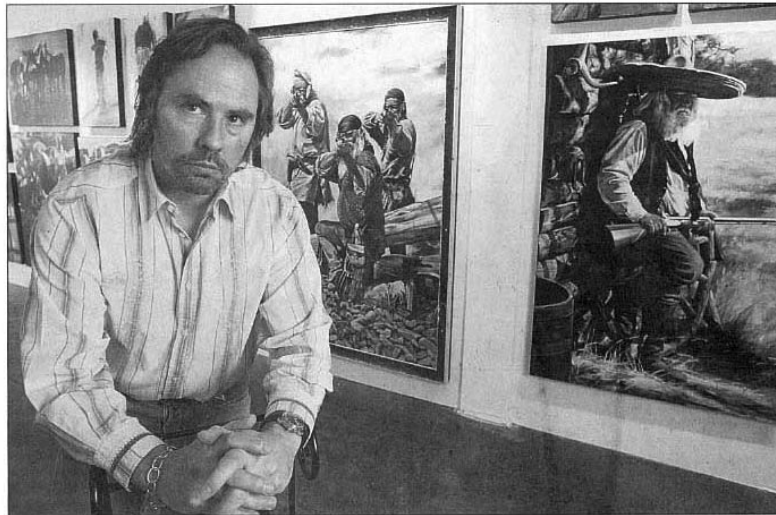


GALLERIES



Lorraine Hjalte, Calgary Herald
Paul Van Ginkel, who has a gallery in Art Central, is comfortable mixing art with business. "Once I stop painting, well what do I do with that painting? I've got to put on the businessman hat ... and market and sell it," he says.

Painter finds marketing an art form in itself

Van Ginkel Gallery brings together art and business

MARIO TONEGUZZI
 CALGARY HERALD

Some would say that art and business don't mix.

But artist Paul Van Ginkel, best known for his western themes, knows that the logistical, business aspect of his career is just as important as his creativity.

"First and foremost I'm an artist, but quite frankly, sort of a second, I'm a small-business man and I take that role very seriously," said Van Ginkel.

"First of all, I think I have the personality to be a businessman, meaning I like to market, I like to talk to the people, I like to represent myself. ... When I'm creating, I'm the artist, but once I stop creating, once I stop painting, well what do I do with that painting? I've got to put on the businessman hat, if you will, and market and sell it.

"To me, it's almost as big a challenge as creating the work. In a lot of ways, it's more challenging because to create is sort of a natural thing for me ... but to market creatively is a real art form in itself."

And that involves having art shows and advertising using similar principles to any business, big or small.

Van Ginkel, who will be 46 in May, was born in Winnipeg but moved to Calgary in 1973.

He graduated from Bishop Grandin High School and then attended the Alberta College of Art between 1979 and 1983. He also attended Syracuse University from 1987-89 to earn a master of fine arts degree.

At the post-secondary level, he was trained as an illustrator and graphic designer.

"However, my desire and intent always was to be a fine art painter," said Van Ginkel. "But I thought the discipline and so on of being trained as an illustrator would serve me well as a painter."

From 1983 to 1989 he worked for the

small
 business

Paul Van Ginkel Gallery

- Location: 104, 100 7th Ave. S.W., in the Art Central building;
- Phone: 261-5061;
- Hours: Fridays from noon to 4 p.m. and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Also by appointment;
- Website: PaulVanGinkel.com
- Opened: Dec. 1, 2005.

Calgary Herald as an illustrator/graphic designer.

As of Jan. 1, 1990, he became a full-time gallery painter.

"I didn't have any contracts, leads necessarily, I just quite frankly had a burning desire to be a painter," said Van Ginkel.

And over the next few years, he built his career in Calgary.

In May 1996, he moved to Vancouver for personal reasons and lived there until December 2001 — he sold some paintings there while maintaining his existing markets in Calgary and the southwest United States.

Van Ginkel then returned to Calgary and has been here ever since.

He opened his current gallery Dec. 1, 2005.

"I've put a lot of emphasis to the business of art and that includes a lot of things including staging my own shows," said Van Ginkel. "In addition to the Calgary Stampede ... from time to time probably at least once a year I would have a two- or three-day show — not in a gallery, because I prefer to represent myself locally, but in different hotels. I had a couple of shows at the Hyatt, the Palliser Hotel and then I found out about this building."

The Art Central building at the corner of 7th Avenue and Centre Street S.W. has a number of galleries, studios and shops.

In May 2005, Van Ginkel had a three-day show at Art Central and "it proved

to be relatively successful."

He had another show at the building in November 2005, which also proved successful.

That's where he had the idea of keeping a permanent space for his gallery.

He doesn't have commercial hours but the gallery is open Fridays from noon to 4 p.m. and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and by appointment.

There are about 35 original paintings plus nine prints in the 550-square-foot gallery, ranging in price from \$3,000 to \$20,000.

"I'm probably best known ... for my western work — horses primarily and also native American work," he said.

Although the western theme is closest to his heart, there are many other themes he loves to work with, such as dancing and boxing. He creates about 85 to 90 paintings a year — and sells just as many.

About 90 per cent of his work goes to private collectors. His clientele ranges from corporate Calgary to young couples buying their first painting.

Van Ginkel creates his paintings in his studio and at home in a loft in the Beltline.

He and his wife, Kristin, an architect, plan to move into a new 6,000-square foot home in Springbank designed by Kristin. Van Ginkel's studio will move there in early May and the new home will also include a gallery.

His downtown gallery may also stay in place.

"To have a downtown location still is really good," said Van Ginkel.

"This window alone (as he points out to Centre Street), the exposure of this window has paid for this place 10 times over. People are just literally walking by and it's right in the core of downtown. Even though I've advertised this space to existing people on my mailing list and so on ... people walking down the street not even knowing of me or my art have been introduced to it just by this space.

"That's my attempt businesswise to sort of continue to market and be out there as best I can. And it's the responsibility of me as an art businessman to make my stuff available. And this is another attempt to do that."