

THE ART OF EZRA TUCKER

ENDORSEMENTS

I very much admire Ezra Tucker's paintings, which continue a tradition of classic American illustration and figurative art; and they are much more than what they might seem at first glance. In his luminous images of majestic animals in their natural settings, Tucker's deftly captured depictions demonstrate that the artist possesses a zoologist's eye for accuracy, while also imbuing his subjects with the dignity of formal portraiture, cultivating empathy and respect for the creatures with whom we share a world. Tucker's historical subjects also effect a subtle and important shift in perspective. I am particularly charmed by his paintings of the animal performers in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, at ease in a quiet moment and placed center stage with no human protagonists in sight. Other works are loving homages to the artists who mythologized the American West but with a crucial difference: Tucker depicts a Black experience of the frontier and borderlands that remains underrecognized and unappreciated in the art world and amongst the wider public. While Tucker's technique and style are traditional, his viewpoint is anything but; his art offers a much-needed fresh perspective on our relations to the natural world and the legacies of American history.

—BILL ANTHES, PROFESSOR OF ART

Pitzer College, A Member of the Claremont Colleges

Author of Native Moderns: American Indian Painting, 1940–1960, and Edgar Heap of Birds (both published by Duke University Press) and co-editor of Dakota Modern: The Art of Oscar Howe (Smithsonian Institution National Museum of the American Indian).

"Black Experience in the history of The American West has gone untold for too long. Ezra Tucker's paintings pictorially tell the stories of African American bronco busters, Pony Express riders, Buffalo Soldiers, Indian scouts and others who shaped the frontier."

—THOMAS J. "DR. COLORADO" NOEL, DENVER, COLORADO

Professor of History and Director of Public History, Preservation & Colorado Studies at University of Colorado Denver

"On so many different levels, [Ezra] Tucker is an enigma in the world of contemporary wildlife art—in one sense a disciple of the grand, Old World tradition of painting and America's Golden Age of illustration—and yet his work possesses an engaging, modern approach to composition so aesthetically alluring the eye cannot look away. When Tucker paints, it is with a deeply personal conviction that animals are life forces. He does not create merely to commemorate or render subjects. Instead, his scenes activate a wild spirit in the spaces we inhabit."

—TODD WILKINSON, BOZEMAN, MONTANA

Author, Last Stand: Ted Turner's Quest to Save a Troubled Planet

"As a retired National Park Ranger and former Chief Naturalist, who happens to be African American, it was my honor at several national parks to direct the interpretation of the natural world. I believe that those experiences allows me to write this endorsement for the Wildlife Art of painter Ezra Tucker.

While done with a nod of the head to the rich style of famous American illustrator Howard Pyle, Mr. Tucker's work is both lyrical and specific at the same time. His artwork captures the majesty and special qualities of American wildlife, especially in the open spaces of the West.

Mr. Tucker speaks to how painting these creatures connects with both his sense of imagination and also wonder, but you can also see in his work how he takes great pains to paint from life and imbues his wildlife, whether from the American Plains or the Steppes of Africa, with a sense of presence, reality and individuality.

Harkening back to the days when outdoor magazines and product illustrations demanded the painstaking work of artists and illustrators, it strikes me that Mr. Tucker's paintings can serve to excite a new generation of Americans, of all backgrounds, with the natural world and the animals that are at the heart of that world.

These works speak not only to the grandeur of what Park Rangers used to call 'Charismatic Megafauna,' large animals whose size, shape, beauty and ways of movement proved to be fascinating on so many levels, but also to how human beings continue to relate to these animals . . ."

—WILLIAM W. GWALTNEY, OAHU, HAWAII

"Ezra Tucker is widely admired for paintings that portray wildlife, notably mammals but also birds as well as historic scenes. The artist approaches wild subjects as a naturalist might, but with a modern, minimalist aesthetic to capture personality and texture, in motion and repose. His paintings of mammals are direct and imbued with a sense of poise and self-assurance, but they also can have an easygoing calm tantamount to unconcern or even indifference, which give his work a sense of irony in this alarming age of environmental concern."

—DAVID J. WAGNER, PH.D., MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

Curator/Tour Director, The Art of Ezra Tucker and Author, American Wildlife Art