

## Looking

The American West continues to inspire artists w

Available for \$2,500



JOHN GAWNE (b. 1952)  
*DESERT SUNRISE*  
 2007, OIL ON CANVAS, 16 x 14 IN.  
 \$2,500 FROM SETTLERS WEST GALLERIES, TUCSON

short list, fortunately. He makes sketches directly from the enactors, and also takes reference photographs when there are too many images to capture.

*Desert Sunrise* confirms that Gawne, like other Western artists today, trains an almost ethnographical eye on physiognomy, clothing, and ornament. Yet the calm monumentality with which he endows his sitters also evokes the idealizing strategies of early Taos painters like E.L. Blumenschein, even as his deft handling of sunlight points to Joaquín Sorolla y Bastida (see page 49) and Nicolai Fechin, who worked in Taos during his most crucial phase (1927-32). Gawne also admires the sparkling brushwork of Richard Schmid (b. 1934), who looms large today, especially in Chicago.

Although mindful of the past, Gawne has found his own métier in pictures like *Desert Sunrise*, which hovers adeptly between the timeless and the immediate.

Available from: Settlers West Galleries, 6420 N. Campbell Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85718, 520.299.2607, settlerswest@qwest.net, settlerswest.com

tripped westward after college. He became fascinated with Native peoples and began sketching them, but pursued a career in finance instead. It was only in the early 1990s that he switched to art full-time, and now he punctuates his studio time in the Chicago suburb of Oak Park with drives west several times each year.

These trips provide Gawne with new imagery and revitalize his feel for brilliant light and open vistas, which can be difficult to recall during Chicago winters. Particularly

helpful are the multi-day "reenactments" staged by Native peoples to sustain their traditions; few artists are invited to observe, and Gawne is on the