

A native of Hot Springs, Arkansas, **Richard Stephens** earned a Bachelor's Degree in Art from the University of Central Arkansas in 1969. After serving in the Army as an Illustrator, Stephens began his professional career in 1971 with a design firm in Little Rock, Arkansas. Three years later he opened his own graphic design studio in his hometown providing design and production services for a wide range of commercial accounts.

Having been introduced to the medium in college, Stephens's re-discovered transparent watercolor in the early 90's. He quickly garnered a reputation nation wide for his confident, loose, impressionistic paintings. His works have won awards in numerous national competitions and he has earned signature member status in several major Watercolor Societies.

For the past 22 years Stephens has shared his passion for the medium by conducting painting workshops around the country. The son of schoolteachers, Stephens' comfortable personality and easy style is well adapted to the classroom.

Stephens said, "It is the quest for the excitement, that rush, understood only by other artists that have been blessed (or cursed) with the experience, that gives me reason to continue in the elusive process of making art. "Making Art" certainly means producing my own work. But it also means sharing with my students my knowledge, experience and passion for watercolor. I love to teach. I have discovered that through teaching, more than any other endeavor, I continue to learn."

#### PUBLICATION:

- In 2005 **Watercolor Magic** magazine named Stephens one of 10 artists in their annual "One's to Watch" edition
- He was again featured in **Watercolor Magic** in June 2007 with an article including several of his paintings and drawings with emphasis on his teaching process and philosophy.
- Stephens had his paintings selected for inclusion in the 2008 and 2012 edition of **SPLASH**, a book published every two years representing the best of watercolor in America. His work is also represented in **SPLASH RETROSPECTIVE**.
- Richard was featured with an article in "Creativity Workshop" section of the June, 1013 edition of **Watercolor Artist** magazine.
- In 2014, Richard was honored with a six-page article in the French publication, **The Art of Watercolour**, widely considered the top watercolor publication in the world.
- In 2014, Richard was awarded the **Grand Prize Award** in the Daniel-Smith

## Customer Art Competition.

- In 2015, Richard was again included in the French publication, **The Art of Watercolour**, widely considered the top watercolor publication in the world.
- In 2017, one of Richard's watercolors was selected for the 2018 edition of **SPLASH**.
- The Arkansas Arts Council named Richard the "Arkansas Individual Artist of the Year" for 2018.
- Richard expresses his social and political opinions through editorial cartoons. Rather than drawing in a traditional editorial cartoon way (although he does that sometimes), Richard's TYPETOONS, as he calls them, are an extension of his graphic design background and skills. He uses typography to create a clever or insightful comment. **The Hot Springs Sentinel-Record has published approximately 80 of his TYPETOONS on their editorial page.**

Although recognized for his landscape, architectural and figurative work Stephens feels the real subjects of most of his paintings are his brushwork and the light he tries to capture and amplify through value contrast and an unexpected color pallet. Believing that drawing is the foundation for all good art and design, Stephens often allows his pencil work to show through and become an engaging element in his watercolors.

Stephens says, "My goal is to interpret, not to render. I want to engage the viewer, entertain him and share my vision. When people view my work that is the last step in the painting process. Of course I want people to like my work, but like it or hate it, I don't want them to be indifferent."

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