



Howard Terpning At The Rockwell Museum

The Story Behind The Storyteller

“My Medicine is Strong,” 2000. Oil on canvas, 33 by 40 inches.
Courtesy Basha Collection.

By James D. Balestrieri

CORNING, N.Y. — Howard Terpning (b 1927) is, unquestionably, the most celebrated, honored, best-known contemporary artist of the American West. Not only do his paintings command the highest prices privately and at auction, but the prices they command — they routinely break the million-dollar barrier — are far higher than those of his nearest rivals.

It is a long way down from Howard Terpning.

At auction or in galleries, you might see one or two Terpnings. In print, you see many more, but there is no substitute for apprehending



**“Medicine Man of the Cheyenne,” 1983. Oil on canvas,
48 by 40 inches. Courtesy Basha Collection.**

the scale, colors and textures of these paintings. You need to see an artist's work en masse — in the paint — to get a real sense of what the art is after.

A gallery full of major Terpnings is a rare treat, so “American Masterworks of Howard Terpning: Highlights from the Eddie Basha Collection,” organized by curator of collections Kirsty Buchanan and at the Rockwell Museum in Corning through September 11, offers viewers an opportunity to see for themselves just exactly what it is that makes a master a master. There is a bonus as

Howard Terpning in his Arizona studio with his painting “New Beginning.”



well: viewers of the show at the Rockwell get to see what attracted a major collector of Western art like Eddie Basha to Howard Terpning's work, and what kept him coming back to Terpning over many years as their artist/patron relationship evolved into a fast, long friendship.

Howard Terpning began as many painters of his generation began: in illustration. Think Norman Rockwell's (no relation to the Rockwells who started the Rockwell Museum) *Saturday Evening Post* covers. Think Haddon Sundblom's...

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“Find the Buffalo,” 1988. Oil on canvas, 32 by 36 inches.
Courtesy Basha Collection.

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