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**Wendy Chidester**  
**Contemporary Still Life Painter**  
American, b. 1964

A champion for the victims of obsolescence, Wendy Chidester devotes her artistry to drawing attention to commodities of yesterday. In particular, she pays tribute to such beautifully crafted objects as old tricycles and pedal cars, vintage cameras and projectors, manual typewriters, bubblegum machines from the 1940s, and candlestick telephones with rotary dials. "I am trying to bring things that have been forgotten about back to life," she says. "I want to evoke memories from the viewer."

A native of Salt Lake City and holder of a bachelor of fine arts degree from the University of Utah, Wendy was painting in the studios of her mentor and former professor David Dornan (also a CODA Gallery artist) in Helper, Utah, in the late 1990s when she reached a pivotal point in her career.

On a day when rain prevented her from her usual plein-air painting of landscapes, she wandered into a nearby antique store and found inspiration in a vintage camera. The shop loaned her that camera and subsequently other objects, including typewriters and movie projectors, to use as still-life subjects.

These days, Wendy visits antique shops on travels, buying items from many sources. She has amassed a collection of 20 typewriters, which are lined up below a bookshelf in her home studio. A glass-fronted cabinet in her home's entryway holds more than 50 vintage cameras. "Some people will want a typewriter or camera when they buy my painting. If it is something I am willing to give up, I will sell it to them," Wendy says. "Also, people commission me to paint certain things, like an old typewriter that belonged to their dad or grandfather."

In the summer, Wendy paints at her studio on Helper's Main Street. "I enjoy the artist community there," she says. "We have lunch or dinner together and share ideas."

In the winter, she paints in her home studio, where a large table accommodates multiple still-life setups so she can rotate between canvases while the oil paints she uses dry. With a complex painting of multiple items (such as the montage of film projectors and cameras purchased by DreamWorks Pictures for its corporate offices), she alternates from painting one side and then other, background or foreground.

From a distance, her paintings appear photographic. Closer examination reveals expressionist qualities. "I use a lot of flat brushes, so I start out really loose," she says. "Then I scratch into the surface to build up a 'history.' I flick paint and apply glazes using the side of a flat brush. You can get too precise. I don't want to get so detailed with a fine brush that I lose the energy of the brushstroke."

Wendy veered from her M.O. of painting from life objects dating back 30 to 40 years (items that people remember using) and rendering them without shadows after receiving a call from a Texas collector of candlestick phones from the late 1800s to early 1900s. During a visit to his home, she took photographs from which she has painted a series, adding shadows the phones cast on a wall. "The shadows give them a human quality," Wendy explains. "They almost look like figures."

In day-to-day life, Wendy relies on new technology like most everyone else. "It's not like I am trying to keep it out of my life," she says. "It's just that there's something about nostalgia — memories of a simpler time. There was a beauty in things that doesn't happen today."

## **Artist Statement**

*"I'm a bit of a sentimentalist and it shows in my work. I find myself drawn to the abandoned and neglected objects of yesterday. In today's fast paced, high tech world an incredible array of well worn tools, gadgets, and mechanical gems have been overshadowed and left behind. These are the subjects for my paintings, and I enjoy the challenge they present."*

## **Education**

Bachelor of Fine Arts, University of Utah with an emphasis in drawing and painting. 1988

Internship under professional artist and university professor, David Dornan, Helper, Utah. 2007

## **Awards**

International Artist Magazine Still Life Competition SECOND PLACE 10-2011 87th

Spring Salon, Springville Museum of Art AWARD OF MERIT 4-2011

Artist's Magazine 29th Annual Art Competition SECOND PLACE 12-2010

86th Spring Salon, Springville Museum of Art AWARD OF MERIT 4-2010

Southwest Art Magazine 21 over 31 FEATURED ARTIST WINNER 11-2009 85th

Spring Salon, Springville Museum of Art FIRST PLACE 4-2009

2008 Utah Arts Council Statewide Annual Exhibition JUROR'S AWARD 2008

84th Spring Salon, Springville Museum of Art AWARD OF MERIT 4-2008

2007 Annual "Inspired by Carbon County" Helper Arts Festival Show FIRST PLACE 8-2007

Utah Watercolor Society Miniature Show AWARD OF EXCELLENCE 10-2004

Deseret News 17th Annual Art Show BEST OF SHOW PURCHASE AWARD WINNER

Utah Watercolor Society 2001 Fall Membership Show AWARD OF EXCELLENCE 10-2007

67th Spring Salon, Springville Museum of Art ACCEPTED

69th Spring Salon, Springville Museum of Art ACCEPTED

Utah Arts Council's Traveling Exhibition, 2001-2002 ARTIST INVITATION

University of Utah Annual Student Art Show BEST OF SHOW

## **Exhibits**

Giacobbe Fritz Fine Art Gallery Santa Fe, New Mexico Solo Show 7-2011

Giacobbe Fritz Fine Art Gallery Santa Fe, New Mexico Solo Show 7-2010

Giacobbe Fritz Fine Art Gallery Santa Fe, New Mexico Group Show "Get Real" 5-2009

Coda Gallery, Park City, Utah Two-Man Show 2-2009

Coda Gallery, Palm Desert, California Two-Man Show 12-2008

Art & Soup, Salt Lake City, Utah Juried Exhibit 3-2007

## **Periodicals**

Southwest Art Magazine 21 over 31 Article 11-2009

American Art Collector Magazine Featured Article 4-2009

## **Corporate and Private Collections**

Dreamworks Studios

Access Hollywood

John Cleese, actor

Charlie Gibson, ABC

Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme

Bill & Sally Neukom, owner San Francisco Giants

Zions Bank Corporation

Deseret Newspaper Corporation

Utah Arts Council