Bassel Wolfe

Bassel Wolfe’s art widely recognized and appreciated for its vibrancy and vivid images of many diverse subject matter but especially the southwest. Wolfe got his start in art as a farm boy in Oklahoma. He fondly remembers his father giving him an old slate chalkboard from a local schoolhouse that became one of the first surfaces upon which he drew. Living next to the famous 101 Ranch and two Indian reservations served as a major influence on his love for Western subject matter. Although he has never worked as a cowboy, Wolfe frequently visits working ranches, taking hundreds of photographs that depict both unique livestock such as the traditional Texas Longhorn, and the rapidly vanishing images of activities on a contemporary working ranch. Wolfe confides that he received some of his most precise training in Western imagery when he was a teenager. "Rodeos are a primary form of entertainment in many of the small western towns, and I got the bright idea that I could make some money on a summer job painting banners in the windows of local stores advertising the information about the rodeo. Believe me, the local ranchers were my most discerning critics. I learned a lot in three short summers about the confirmation of a horse and proper western tack."

Like many other widely recognized fine artists, Bassel Wolfe spent the early part of his career working in the field of commercial illustration. He graduated from Texas Tech University with a degree in advertising. His first job was in advertising in Grand Prairie and then he moved to Dallas a year later. During the Korean War, he joined the Army and was stationed in San Francisco. During his enlistment, he taught art in the Bay Area. After military duty he continued working in the field of advertising before deciding to pursue art full-time in 1981. Wolfe eventually made a permanent move to El Paso.