

## **Wikipedia Submission: June 12, 2011**

### **DON SAHLI – AMERICAN ARTIST**

#### **A Career Built on a 150-Year Russian Legacy**

Don Sahli made the decision to become a professional artist at a very early age. By age 16, he was selling his work and by 18, Sahli was exhibiting side by side with seasoned artists as an established painter. In 1982, this self-taught artist formed a faithful friendship with Russian master painter - Sergei Bongart.

During this period with his mentor, Don Sahli was taught in the “old academic way” not how to paint by formula, but how to “see” the relationship of color, form and design in nature. More than just brushstroke technique, Don’s paintings are an emotional interaction between the viewer and the painted image. Upon the death of Bongart, Sahli moved to New Mexico to begin a new era. “What could I do?...it was hard. I stopped painting as a student and began painting as a human being, with my own voice,” Sahli said.

#### **Continuing the Legacy**

In 1995, Don opened Sahli School of Art in Evergreen Colorado. “I opened the art school to give the “hungry” student a safe place to learn and work.” This created an opportunity for Don to meet his goal of carrying on the legacy of his teachers. “My teacher taught, his teacher taught, for me, it is a matter of keeping a tradition alive and of giving something back, but it’s also a critical aspect of the artistic process... it helps one articulate what one is thinking and doing.”

**SAHLI SCHOOL OF ART**, established in 1995 – continues in the teaching tradition of the Russian School of Painting and Art of Painting. Through 2009, more than 500 students have attended 75 studio and plein air workshops. Beginning students, as well as professional artists, come together at the school to continue this Russian heritage. Two exhibitions – **Journey of Color** held at the Colorado History Museum in July 1999 and **Under the Influence** held at Center for the Arts Evergreen in Fall 2004 – gave students the opportunity to exhibit and sell their work.

#### **Expanding the Legacy**

In 2008, an **Interactive Art Instruction DVD Collection** was produced. Sahli Publishing LLC, made it possible for Sahli to expand his reach - sharing his knowledge with more students than ever before. **Art of Painting – Interactive Art Instruction DVD Collection: Still Life, En Plein Air, and A Painter’s Journey** allow students to bring Don Sahli into their studio.

*You take control of the lesson – learning in a more instructive style rather than just watching a painting demonstration. The Interactive Forum used to develop the DVD allows you – with a simple click of your mouse or remote...to explore and expand the process with a focused lesson, to read about the method or to continue on with the demonstration.*

The multiple camera production (including a Hi-Definition camera), the interactive format and the highlighted sections of the painted image and view make these DVD's unlike anything available on today's market.

## **The Journey Continues**

Sahli's work is currently represented in galleries around the country, including Sahli Studio of Evergreen, Colorado. As a painter Sahli travels throughout the country – capturing local splendor. Though very American, Sahli's work contains echoes of the Russian Impressionist masters, evident in his uninhibited use of brilliant color and in his unique vitality. When painting plein air, Sahli works on at least a 16 x 20 canvas. When in the studio, you can find him working canvases 3.5 x 7 ft. and larger!

As an artist, he has marched to his own drummer as they say. He has successfully built his career which now includes gallery representation across the country, an art school and a publishing company. During this time, he has chosen to compete with himself striving to improve and perfect his work. From 1978 till now – Sahli continues to live by his own words, "Enjoy the journey..."