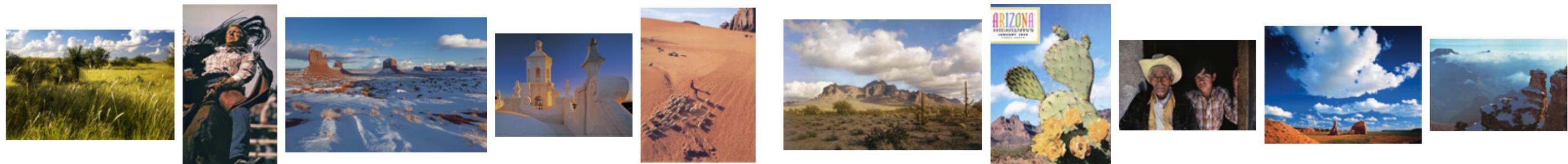




# THE ART OF OUR PHOTOGRAPHY

About a year ago, we reached out to a group of artists to see if they'd be interested in working with us on something we were calling "The December Project." The gist of it was simple: Poke around our extensive photo archive, select one of the many images, set up an easel and paint away. The response was overwhelming, and the artists' interpretations are spectacular. What's more, each one of them has agreed to donate at least half of the sale price of their paintings to a charity of their choice.

EDITED BY ROBERT STIEVE | TEXT BY KATHY MONTGOMERY | ARTIST PORTRAITS BY PAUL MARKOW





Kevin Kibsey  
**Jack Knife**  
 2021  
 Oil on canvas  
 48 by 30 inches  
 \$7,900

### Kevin Kibsey

As a child, Kevin Kibsey dreamed of working as a cowboy. And he did, for a while, on the Eagletail Ranch, juggling those responsibilities with his longtime work as an illustrator and map designer for *Arizona Highways*. The magazine introduced Kibsey to cowboying and to photographer Ken Akers. When contributor Gail Dudley pitched the magazine a story about Arizona Cowboy College, Kibsey was intrigued.

"I thought, *I've got to be part of this*," he recalls. "It turned out I was there when she wrote the article. And that was my first meeting with Ken," who made the photos for the story.



KEN AKERS



Akers and Kibsey subsequently worked together as wranglers for the Verde Vaqueros. But it wasn't Kibsey's relationship with the late photographer or the subject matter that inspired him to choose Akers' 1984 rodeo photo. It was the composition.

"Ken's image is something I would have done had I created a painting from scratch," Kibsey says. "It couldn't be improved by much ... and it appears that that image just occurred by happenstance. I think that's one of the reasons why it struck me so much."

The challenge was capturing the photo's dynamic qualities while making the painting his own. Kibsey's answer was to reimagine the scene from above — taking the

inverse perspective of the ceiling frescoes he admired on a recent trip to Italy. He used a bendable mannequin and other techniques to get the horse's anatomy and perspective right.

Kibsey chose Scottsdale Artists' School to benefit from the sale of his painting. After he graduated from the University of Arizona with a degree in graphic design, the non-profit school was one of the places Kibsey honed his fine-art skills by taking workshops taught by professional artists. "They offer incredible access to some of the greatest artists in the country," he says.

**BENEFICIARY:** Scottsdale Artists' School, Scottsdale, 480-990-1422, [scottsdaleartschool.org](http://scottsdaleartschool.org)

**MORE ON THE ARTIST:** [kibzart.com](http://kibzart.com)