

Gary Niblett

Gary Niblett (b.1944-)

Born and raised in Carlsbad, New Mexico, Gary Niblett grew up with the American West as a part of his daily life. Recognizing his artistic talent early on, local ranchers paid him to do portraits of their horses, the beginning of Niblett's professional art career.

From horse portraiture in New Mexico, Niblett moved on to attend the Art Center School of Design in California. He then spent eight years with the Hanna-Barbera studios as a background and animation artist. However, the work didn't fulfill his desires, and in 1973, Niblett left commercial art to focus on his own work. By 1976, he was elected a member of the Cowboy Artists of America, a prestigious and exclusive organization dedicated to the preservation of the cowboy art typified by such artists as Frederic Remington and Charles Marion Russell.

Considering his background doing horse portraits and animation art, it is not surprising that Niblett continues to be a versatile painter, although he generally remains within the larger genre of the American West. However, his paintings all demonstrate human values rather than specific instances, allowing his work to reflect a wider range of humanity than just the American West in which his subject matter is set. In particular, Niblett prefers returning to the quieter, subtler moments of daily life, and is frequently drawn to an earlier time, a time of horse-drawn wagons and small, picturesque villages. He also enjoys the quaint and colorful clothing of bygone eras.

Niblett has tried to analyze his desire to paint these quieter moments, and has found that his motivation goes back to the simpler way of life that he enjoyed while visiting his family on the farms and ranches in west Texas. As he says, "I had a wonderful boyhood," and one that continues to inspire and ground him. Despite his pleasure in painting the life of the American West, Niblett also enjoys traveling to Europe, as well as Mexico, where he feels he is really going back in time. The texture of the old houses, barns and wagons draw him in, and he feels that they are wonderful to paint.

Niblett and his wife, Monika, returned to New Mexico to live.

#45 Lufkin City Hall – 1978 – oil on canvas. Cowboy on white horse/black horse on top of hill.