

Arkansas Champion Trees: An Artist's Journey

Drawings by Linda Williams Palmer

Organized for Travel by the Arkansas Committee of the
National Museum of Women in the Arts

Artist Biography

Linda Williams Palmer began her visual arts career in 1980 by studying with Don Lee and Pete Howard at the Westark Community College, now the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith. With an Associate Degree already in hand (Ouachita Baptist University, Shawnee, OK, 1961: Music), she immersed herself in drawing and painting classes while raising a family, and did so for five years, ending her research with a Special Projects class on “The Landscape.” From 1985, Linda Palmer directed her focus on establishing her visual arts career. She opened a studio and The Linda Palmer Gallery in Fort Smith, created multiple series of work, entered and was selected for numerous competitions, and was publicly and privately collected. When Linda Palmer moved to Hot Springs, Arkansas, in 1991, she opened her studio and Palmer’s Gallery 800 on Central Avenue. It has since moved upstairs in the same location and is now known as the Linda Palmer Gallery.

Linda Palmer has continued her education through travel and studying past and contemporary masters first hand in many of the world’s finest museums. She lists Vermeer, Grant Wood, Georgia O’Keeffe, Jules Olitski, Milton Avery and Gustave Caillebotte as major influences. Over time, she experimented with techniques and media, gravitating to Prismacolor Pencils on textured papers — her chosen medium to interpret natural and urban landscapes. She was awarded “Signature Status” by the Colored Pencil Society of America in 2006: an award for active members of the Society whose work appears 3 times within 10 years in one of the annual juried CPSA International Exhibitions; it entitles the member to use the initials "CPSA" in their signature (Palmer was selected for the 10th, 11th and 14th *International Exhibitions* in 2002, 2003, and 2006.). In 2010, Palmer’s work was included in the CPSA *Signature Showcase* (Oregon: CraneDance Publications), and in Volume I of the *Best of Worldwide Charcoal, Pastel & Pencil Artists* (Virginia: Renee and Adam Kennedy).

Palmer’s latest series, *Arkansas Champion Trees: an Artist's Journey*, began in 2007 when she viewed the online list of the largest and oldest examples of each species of tree determined by Arkansas foresters. A logical progression after her *Guardian* and *Dancing Trees* series, the *Champion* series has entailed over 5,000 miles of travel across the state, accompanying documentary photography, and research into the history and science of the trees. This information, with collected community stories and oral histories will be used as resource material for an AETN documentary film on the topic. Part of her journey has been to share her knowledge and artistic expertise with arts groups and institutions, and via educational programs sponsored by the Arkansas Forestry Commission. This penchant for service is also strongly evident in her involvement in the Hot Springs art community where her advocacy and leadership is widely recognized, and in the number of artists and arts professionals with whom she has working relationships.