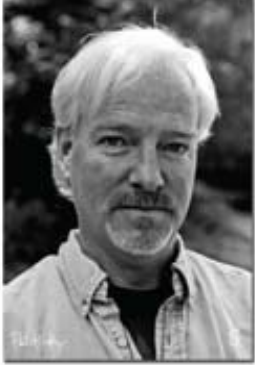


## | ARROYO GRANDE'S PAUL MCCLOSKEY

## PHOTOGRAPHS that Paint with Light



For more than 20 years cover artist Paul McCloskey lived a comfortable urban life working at a large San Francisco Medical Center, taking evening art and photography classes and exploring California's back roads on weekends.

In 2004 a layoff turned that tidy world on end and opened fresh opportunities for the Boston native.

"When I first came to California in 1977 it was a three-and-a-half day Amtrak trip. After the layoff I decided what I really wanted to do was journey back across the country, visiting as many national parks as I could," he said.

He grabbed his camera and a sleeping bag and took more than two months making his way to New England. McCloskey spent more than a year in the East, staying with his elderly father on Cape Cod and accompanying him to Florida in the winter. The camera was in constant use. The photographer's return trek to California took a southern route across the nation's lower latitudes. The result—a large body of work that captured the American landscape and shaped McCloskey's future.

"When I lived in San Francisco, a city that I still love, I would come down to the Central Coast

when I needed to escape the madness and congestion of the Bay Area. I loved the people, the environment, the whole package. When I came back, I decided that San Luis Obispo County was where I wanted to call home, and art was what I wanted to pursue." He moved to Corbett Canyon just outside of Arroyo Grande. "I couldn't have picked a better place in terms of my personal outlook and also getting my work out there."

McCloskey's innovative art draws heavily on his former career as a graphic artist at the hospital. "I still think of myself as a graphic artist," he said. "I was doing graphics on the first Macintosh back in the 1980s. Now I see myself as something of a digital alchemist combining today's digital imaging and photo technology with digital printmaking and the fine art of plein-air painting. They're *all* about natural light."

A diverse group of artists capable of conveying light provide McCloskey with inspiration. They range from photographers such as Arthur Stieglitz and Ansel Adams to an assortment of masterful painters including Caravaggio, Vermeer, Pissarro, Monet, O'Keefe and Dixon.

Like them, he works to portray light and also to "capture the spirit and beauty of nature. I hope that viewers find that there's more than just a pretty picture when they look at my work." ■



*Spring in Adelaide Country*, a 24" x 36" photo-painting on canvas, mixed media/pigment print with acrylic depicts the outskirts of an old town site near Paso Robles.



*Old Paso Barn*, a 16" x 24" pigment print on watercolor paper is based on an infrared photograph.

To create his "photo-paintings" McCloskey starts with a color image created with his digital camera. He does minor touch-ups in Photoshop and often converts the image to black and white. He then prints on either watercolor paper or canvas using a digital fine art printer and archival fine-art pigment inks. McCloskey uses acrylics to paint over what he terms his "pigment print." "This creates a more painterly, textural image with a 3-D perspective," he said.