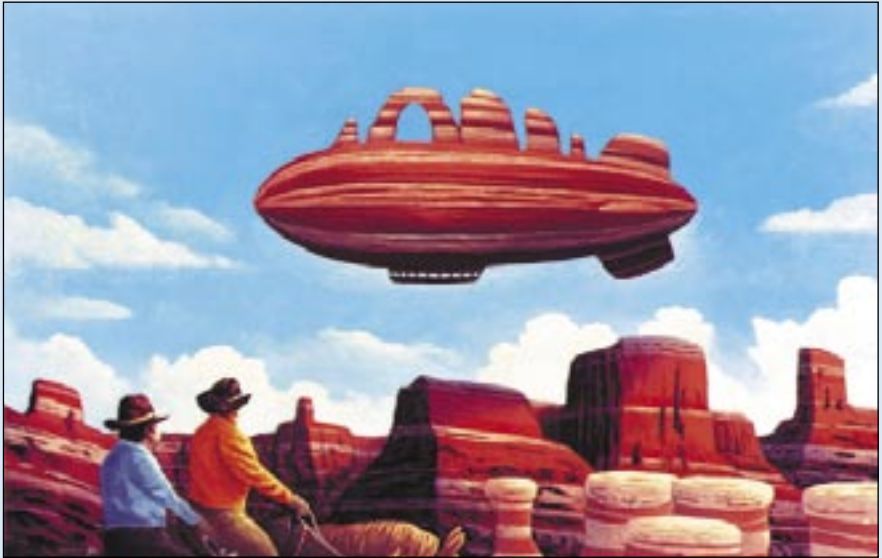


ARTIST PROFILE

CASA Magazine:

Imaginal Worlds



Red Rock Dirigible by **Bruce Birkland**

By **ANDRIA WATSON** / CASA

A CONFLUENCE OF NATURE'S EXTERNAL BEAUTY and internal surrealistic imagination fuse together in the 20 paintings by Bruce Birkland.

The show, called Blossoms, Blimps and Butterflies is on display at CASA Magazine through July 31st.

"Creativity and stretching the imagination is something that puts a new twist on a previous idea," explained Birkland. "It breaks the expected and pushes the boundaries, allowing viewers to see in a different way. That's what the show at CASA Magazine is about."

Red Rock Dirigible (pictured), is a scene in the desert in which two cowboys study the very large, very peculiar red rock zeppelin floating above canyons against a blue sky.

When creating a surrealistic painting, Birkland first begins with what he calls a "root." The Santa Barbara native envisions an environment in the natural world, plays with colors and schemes, and tries to tie the inner and outer worlds, fantasy and reality, together.

"My work is a depiction of my internal reactions to the landscape, whether it be a rainforest or a desert, in a visual way," Birkland explained. "I'm trying to convey a feeling of awe and fascination."

According to Birkland, he was interested in art "from the time he could hold a crayon," but it wasn't until he was an adolescent that

the idea of becoming an artist became a real passion to him.

"At fourteen I became consistent with my work," Birkland added. My initial goal was to recreate and reproduce an image."

A turning point for his work occurred when Birkland was in high school. He witnessed a slideshow accompanied by a soundtrack. An image from René Magritte, *Castle of the Pyramid*, was shown with Judy Collin's musical piece *Both Sides Now*, capturing the artist's interest in the slightly surreal. The second work-altering experience came from Steven Spielberg's film *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

"The final scene of that film totally pushed me over into surrealism," Birkland explained. "Those two events resonated with me in such a way that I decided to alter my previous technique and subject matter."

Descending from artists and musicians, Birkland jokes that he "inherited the genetic disposition," and that his career as an artist couldn't have been planned more.

"I never had any doubts that this was my true calling, and what I enjoyed the most," Birkland expressed.

It usually takes Birkland ten to 20 days to complete a single painting, although he points out that he usually works on several simultaneously.

"My favorite parts of the creative process that go into a painting are when I'm just starting out, and when the piece is nearly complete, and I'm in the fine-tuning stage," Birkland shared. "When I'm beginning a piece, there is a sense of so many possibilities yet to be determined, and a sense that I'm capable of making any of it happen. When I'm finishing, the slightest change can make such a big difference, so it's exciting to watch."

Birkland's training includes study at SBCC and a Bachelors in Art from UCSB's College of Creative Studies. He is a member of the Goleta Valley Art Association.



Bruce Birkland



Emerald Butterfly Rhapsody
by **Bruce Birkland**

CASA Magazine is located at 23 E. Canon Perdido and is open Mo-Tu from 9-5pm. For information call 965-6448.