



Chris Morel, *Early Spring Creek*, oil on canvas, 18 x 24 in.

## Chris Morel and Ed Smida Pathways

**M**ore than 40 works of art by painter Chris Morel and sculptor Ed Smida will complement one another during a new exhibition hosted by Nedra Matteucci Galleries in Santa Fe. “We’re so proud to exhibit the works of these two amazing artists with our first show of the year,” says gallery director Dustin Belyeu. “Their career paths have been unique, but they’re united by a love for art and the

Southwest, and we can’t wait to see them come together.”

*A Lifetime of Learning: Two Artistic Journeys* focuses on each individuals’ journey to becoming artists, showcasing important works indicative of those experiences. The exhibition begins June 21 and runs through July 12.

A number of Smida’s bronze busts and figurative works will be featured, including *Taos Man*, depicting a strong and formidable Native American man.



Ed Smida, *Grandma*, bronze, ed. of 11, 17 x 10 x 9 in.

Originally in the field of engineering, Smida first began working with clay in 2012 at the age of 51, immediately demonstrating an innate connection to the medium. The artist is a member of the National Sculpture Society, and his work has been featured in their 85<sup>th</sup>, 86<sup>th</sup> and 88<sup>th</sup> *Annual Awards Exhibition* as well as in shows from Taos, New Mexico, to London. He has permanent works at the Couse-Sharp Historic Site and has shown at both the Albuquerque Museum and the Harwood Museum. Other works in the show by Smida include the 2017 bronze *Grandma* and the 2022 bronze *The Seeker*.

After receiving his fine art degree from Towson University, Morel first began his professional life working as an art director in Washington, D.C., and later as a staff illustrator for the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. Upon moving to Taos, Morel finally took the plunge and dove into painting full time, blossoming into the skillful landscape painter he is today.

“Most of my paintings feature what I consider to be my neighborhood,” says Morel, who lives in the mountains outside of Taos in an area just off the famed High Road to Taos. “[My] work focuses on the mountains, streams,



**Ed Smida, Taos Man**, bronze, ed. of 11, 18 x 12 x 10 in.

and adobe villages and dramatic landscape of Northern New Mexico and southern Colorado.” One of his pieces in the upcoming exhibition, *Early Spring Creek*, depicts a scene marking the transition from one season to the next. “*Early Spring Creek* was a painting of the ‘Rio Pueblo de Picuris’ in late March, just a few miles upstream from my home

and studio,” he reflects. “The creek was starting to open up with the warmer days while still holding on to its deep snow banks and rich winter colors. This particular area, which is close to 9,000 feet above sea level, is rich in subject matter and always delivers wonderful ideas for my paintings.”

Another painting in the show, *San Luis Valley*, came from a recent trip Morel took to San Luis, the oldest town in Colorado, located just across New Mexico’s northern border. “This painting features the valley looking east toward the 14,000-foot peaks of the Sangre De Cristo range covered in fresh March snow,” he says. “While there painting along the road, I met a group of local Hispano ranchers who told me all about these beautiful mountains and their life and experiences exploring, hunting, gathering wood and grazing their cattle there.”

This is Nedra Matteucci Galleries’ first major show of the year. 🐾



**Chris Morel, San Luis Valley**, oil on canvas, 12 x 22 in.