

Thomas Kinkade

Thomas Kinkade is widely regarded as one of the foremost living painters of light. Every subject he puts his hand to, whether cottage or countryside, small town America or bustling city seems infused with a radiant quality. It is almost as though a special moment has been captured on canvas and rendered timeless by the warm light of nostalgic memory. His complex technique bears great kinship to a little known group of nineteenth century American painters known as the Luminists. As Kinkade puts it, "Like the Luminists, I strive for three visual aspects in my work: soft edges, a warm palette, and an overall sense of light." Kinkade's mastery of these three seemingly simple aspects gives his paintings the warm glow and idyllic softness for which he is known—a glow Michael Raffety described in *Southwest Art* magazine as "A carefully crafted display of luminosity..."

This special "Kinkade glow" might help explain Thomas Kinkade's enormous popularity as an internationally published artist. Virtually everything Kinkade paints gets reproduced in one or more forms including hand signed lithographs, canvas prints, books, posters, calendars, magazine covers, cards, collector plates, figurines and gift items. Perhaps no American artist since Norman Rockwell has received such broad exposure and popular acceptance. The following generated by this immense exposure has brought five digit sums for Kinkade's original paintings and an ever widening list of prestigious collectors including many well known leaders in the areas of politics, business and entertainment.

Thomas Kinkade was born in 1958 and grew up in the foot hills of the Sierra mountains. From the age of four his calling as an artist was evident and by 16 he was an accomplished painter in oil under the apprenticeship of well known California painter Glenn Wessels. After studying at the University of California Berkeley, and Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, Kinkade began work for the motion picture industry at age 22. He personally created over 600 background paintings for the animated feature film, *Fire and Ice*. The intensive period of work for the movie business may well have been the genesis of Kinkade's master of pictorial lighting effects. While at work on *Fire and Ice*, Kinkade and fellow artist James Gurney adventured across America aboard boxcars recording their experiences in sketches. Kinkade and Gurney subsequently authored a best selling art instructional book based on their adventures entitled *The Artist's Guide to Sketching* (Watson/Guptill, New York).

In 1983 Thomas Kinkade left the film industry to pursue his vision as a painter of light filled landscapes. Since then his career has been documented in feature articles and/or editorial exposure in such well known magazines as *Architectural Digest*, *American Artist*, *Lively Arts and Leisure*, *Worldwide Challenge*, *U.S. Art*, *Southwest Art*, and *Weekend*. He is a regular guest on radio talk shows and has even made a guest appearance on ABC's popular network show, *Home*, starring Gary Collins.

Kinkade's impressive list of honors includes: two Certificates of Merit from the New York Society of Illustrators, two Founder's Awards from the National Parks Academy for the Arts (the first artist ever to receive this award twice), a two-man show at the C.M. Russell Museum in Great Falls, Montana and over 10 one-man shows. Furthermore, Kinkade was chosen as the official artist for the 1989 National Parks Collector's Print and the 1990 Commemorative Press Collector's Print honoring Rotary International.

