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Spring is a Long Time Coming, oil, 18 x 24.

NATHAN SOLANO

HONORABLE MENTION



WITH A LOVE of traveling, Colorado artist Nathan Solano often gleans ideas for his paintings in locales beyond his home state, from Mexico to Key West. But in his winning entry, Solano captures an area near Salida, CO, not far from his hometown of Pueblo. During a visit to the small mountain town in late March, the artist

decided to go for an early morning drive on Highway 285. Heading northbound, he came upon a view to the west of Mount Princeton, its snowcapped peaks rising up behind a tranquil rural valley. On that cold, overcast morning, "the sun was just peeking through," remembers Solano.

Next, the artist did what he commonly does after noticing a beautiful scene: He parked his car along the roadside, grabbed his camera, stepped out into the frigid air, and started snapping photographs. Later, in his studio, Solano used his images as a loose guide for *SPRING IS A LONG TIME COMING*. As he worked on the oil painting at his easel, he made selective design decisions to strengthen the composition. He added the grazing

cows and the tiny red barn, for example, and he left some other details out. In the actual scene, notes the artist, "There were houses there."

Solano worked in the advertising industry for many years before transitioning to a fine-art career. Today western art collectors are well acquainted with his award-winning portrayals of Native Americans and working cowboys, but the artist—also a seasoned plein-air painter—finds compelling subjects all around him, from a tree's autumn colors to the highlights on someone's hair. "Everything I see could be a potential painting," he says.

Find Solano's work at Ann Korologos Gallery, Basalt, CO, and Broadmoor Galleries, Colorado Springs, CO.