

## Artist Edgar Sotelo: Getting to the essence

Written by Terry Mathews

Saturday, 26 September 2009 10:59

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There's a saying that behind every great man is a great woman pushing him to be more than he could ever imagine.

Artist Edgar Sotelo is living proof that there's a lot of truth to the statement. His wife, Michelle, is the one responsible for pushing him into the world of art, where he is currently enjoying a successful career.

"Michelle forced me into it," Sotelo said while sitting at the kitchen table at his home on 14 acres south of Sulphur Springs. "We were living in Lubbock at the time. I came home one day and there was a pink slip on the table."

The slip was a receipt for an art class in Lubbock with noted painter Paul Milosevich.

"He had been drawing for a long time," Michelle said. "His father and grandfather were artists. It was a shame to waste a talent [like his]."

Sotelo, who stands 6 feet 6 inches tall, felt at home immediately with painting.

"From day one, I fell in love," he said. "I also studied with cowboy artists Martin Greeley and Bruce Green. They're both members of the Cowboy Artists of America."

Sotelo said he learned right away that if he was going to paint cowboys, he was going to have to get some "real life experience," so he established a relationship with the Tongue River Ranch and the Pitchfork Ranch, both located between Wichita Falls and Lubbock.

"They were gracious enough to let me work with them. It helped me get to know my subject

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matter,” Sotelo said. “When you work spring and fall roundups, you get right in the middle of things and to the essence [of being a cowboy].”

When he rides on the roundups, Sotelo carries a sketchpad and a camera with him and spends his down time photographing and drawing the sights around him.



“You don’t see it [the working cowboys and scenery] from the road,” he explained. “So, you have to take your tools with you out onto the range. Plus, the light is completely different out there.”

Sotelo, who graduated from Texas Tech University in 1988 with a degree in food technology, believes the only way to really capture a moment on canvas is to “paint from life like the masters did.” “It took a lot of trial and error,” he said, “but I feel that I have become a good artist.”

Obviously, he’s not the only one who thinks that way.



Earlier this month, Sotelo’s “Making a Mark” won first place at the 24th annual Bosque Art Classic Invitational art show.

He placed second at the 2008 Phippen Western Art Invitational show in Prescott, Az. and was invited to participate in the 2009 Cattlemen's Invitational Western Art Show in Paso Robles, Calif.

For the past two years, Sotelo was invited to show in the “America's Horse in Art” show sponsored by the American Quarter Horse Association Hall of Fame and Museum in Amarillo.

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"I like doing shows," Sotelo said, "because I get to talk to the people who collect Western art and I get to see the work of other artists."

According to Michelle, the notable thing about the shows is that they are high-level juried entry shows and only a few artists are invited.

"The most notable thing about the 'America's Horse in Art' show is that it's only two years old and the organizers have made an effort to include what they thought were the best Western and equine artists in the country," she said.

Sotelo pays homage to his father, Daniel, and grandfather, Hector, by painting "charros," Mexican cowboys, at work.

"I remember sitting at the kitchen table watching my father draw," Sotelo said.

When not doing art shows and contests, Sotelo accepts commissions.

Vincente Fox, the former President of Mexico, has requested a portrait of him on his favorite horse.

Sotelo's commissions also hang at the Bank of Texas in Dallas and at his alma mater in Lubbock.

Sotelo says it takes about "six months" to complete a private commission, with the bulk of the work happening in a flourish near the deadline.

"That's the way I am," he said. "I work best under pressure."

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The artist is currently represented by the Fredericksburg Art Gallery, but is also “looking for more representation other than just in Texas.”

Sotelo, 45, and his wife have three children: Alissa, 11; Aleah, 5; and Ava, 3. In 2003, they lost a daughter, Ariana, then 9, in an accident.

All the girls show artistic promise, according to their father, who proudly shows off a beautifully framed landscape done by Ariana, hanging on the wall of his studio.

“This one’s not for sale,” he said.

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*To see other examples of Sotelo’s work and for pricing, check out the following websites:*

*[www.soteloart.com/index](http://www.soteloart.com/index)*

*[www.aqha.com/foundation/halloffame/AHIA/index](http://www.aqha.com/foundation/halloffame/AHIA/index)*

*[www.phippenartmuseum.org/events/westernartshow](http://www.phippenartmuseum.org/events/westernartshow)*

*[www.cattlemenswesternartshow.com](http://www.cattlemenswesternartshow.com)*