

# James Stroud Sculptures in Paint



(left to right) Ross Parker of Call of Africa/Native Visions Galleries and artist James Stroud

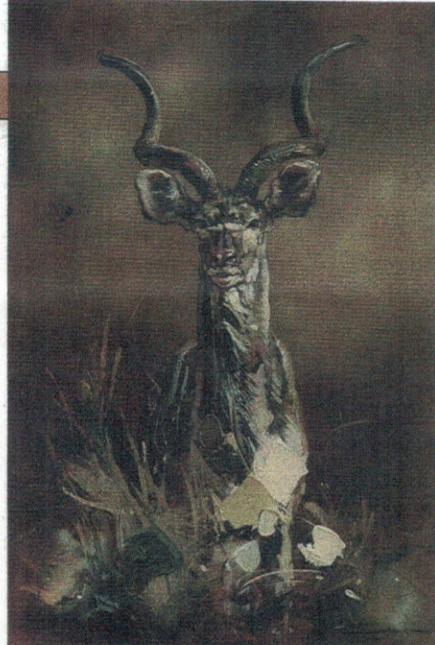


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More of Stroud's work can be seen at the Call of Africa booth at the 2013 Convention, and online at [www.callofafrica.com](http://www.callofafrica.com).

There is nothing meek or ambiguous about a charging elephant, especially when the tusker in question appears to be lunging off a canvas from South African painter James Stroud. His vivid wildlife portraits are so different from the flat surfaces of most sporting art that they could be best described as sculptures in paint. A topographic map is almost required to navigate through his dense canyons of texture and rivers of color.

It is no exaggeration to say that Stroud, who made a hugely successful debut in North America in 2007, takes an elbow-deep approach to laying down oil. In his distinctive style, he may be pushing various layers of paint thickly with a palette knife or using other tools, including his hands, to achieve distinctive visual effects such as portraying dust on a Cape buffalo, the spots on a leopard's coat or the flowing mane of a lion. Stroud has won praise from numerous collectors for making his subjects actually look – and feel – true to life.

“It excites me that someone is able to look at the animal image and be seduced by it, and then be able to look more closely at the paint itself and understand the actual physiology of the illusion,” Stroud says. Still, the dilemma for contemporary nature painters, Stroud explains, lies with deciding how to celebrate the environment and iconic African species without falling into cliché. “I see my work as an attempt to both affirm the natural beauty of the visual world and at the same time to dissect the assumptions that we have about what great art is supposed to be.”

A South African native, he grew up on a timber plantation in eastern Mpumalanga on the wild edge of Kruger Park. On a primal level, he had a front row seat to predators and prey. Mpumalanga was a crossroads for international hunters and photographers. Sketching both people and animals, Stroud went to a rural school where Afrikaans was the first language and English the second. However, the most important aspect of Stroud's work is the uniqueness and originality of the style and medium. Often referred to as the LeRoy Neiman of wildlife art, James has taken his work further by creating sculptural paintings in more true-to-life light and color. *GT*