

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – June 20, 2017

## John Fincher: *Classics*

**Exhibition Dates:** July 28 – September 10, 2017

**Artist Reception:** Fri, July 28, 5 – 7 pm

**Gallery Hours:** Mon – Fri, 10-6

Sat, 10-5 Sun, 11-4

**LewAllen Galleries**

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*Burst*, 2016

Oil on canvas, 32 x 30 in



*Cold Wind*, 2017

Oil on canvas, 32 x 34 in

Santa Fe, NM – LewAllen Galleries presents an exhibition of works by John Fincher, opening on July 28<sup>th</sup> and extending through September 10<sup>th</sup>. The show will include new paintings and also a survey of selected classic works from earlier years, representative of this revered Santa Fe artist's style of realism and illustrating his facility with a wide range of image choice.

For more than 40 years, Fincher has been known for his legendary images of prickly pears, big skies, and landscapes of the Southwest, -- what he has called "trappings of the West." He blends lush color, nuanced line, and gorgeous light with quirky perspective and whimsical detail. But as this

exhibition also illustrates, Fincher has created fascinating work that features subjects far different from his regional "trappings."

This show includes examples both of his iconic Western imagery as well as selections drawn from the artist's personal archives illustrating other notable themes, such as his recently inaugurated and well-received *Botanica* series, as well as his forays into figurative paintings inspired by classical sculpture.

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Fincher's Western "trappings" paintings encapsulate references that are both familiar and totemic of the Great American Frontier and its mythic role as a reservoir of pride, strength, individualism and renewal. Distinguished by a singular blend of sensuality and authentic realism, his art explores diverse art historical and personal references to offer new understandings of America's natural and cultural landscapes. Exercising a profound economy of means, his works derive startling emotional resonance from a combination of rigorously balanced composition, nuanced brushwork, dramatic shadowing, and the application of intense points of contrasting colors to punctuate his iconic representations of the mythic American West.

The exhibition also includes major works from Fincher's newest series entitled "Botanica" that first premiered in the eponymous exhibit at LewAllen during the summer of 2015. The artist has created new works for it that continue to engage, from his unique point of view and with his own distinctive sense of composition and color palette, the ancient tradition of botanical art. That lineage includes the work of such historic masters as Leonardo da Vinci, Albrecht Dürer, Jan Brueghel and Pierre-Joseph Redouté. Fincher departs from the formality of the exotic or ornamental floral subjects used by these predecessors and propels it to a new level of contemporary vitality by featuring humble pictorial choices of seed pods, desiccated leaves, and flowers more associated with the desert Southwest than European gardens. His reinterpretation of the tradition's subject matter and arrangements extends and invigorates them with Fincher's innovative all-over compositions of elements cascading and floating randomly on subtle backgrounds of sky and water. These use luminescent color and close-up perspective that serve to valorize details of flora in much the same way as his "Western trappings" have done as touchstones of the American Frontier.



*Desiderio*, 1968  
Oil on canvas, 30 x 24 in

Additional works in this show include powerful forays into figuration in the form of paintings of imagery from classical sculpture and signature "shaving brush" paintings that, albeit in another way, also seek to examine and illuminate the iconic and the ideal in the minds of humanity throughout history.

Critics have noted the sense of history within Fincher's work; especially his forebears in American landscape painting. Dr. Andrew Phelan, Director Emeritus of the Oklahoma State University's School of Art wrote in 2004, "John Fincher has succeeded in reinvigorating Southwestern Art, but in the reverse way: by focusing, not on the landscape, but rather on the impact the landscape has on the soul." Art writers have also noted Fincher's extraordinary mastery of painting itself; his use of color, paint application and formal relationships; as Marilyn Bauer of *Western Art and Architecture* wrote in March of 2015 about his recent work, "Fincher's use of color is sophisticated, bold and subtle, all at the same time. There are rich, textural strokes of alizarin

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crimson overlaying burnt umber or cadmium light, but his complex process imbues so much more into each work.”

Born in Hamilton, Texas, in 1941, John Fincher earned his MFA from University of Oklahoma in 1966. Recently honored with a monograph published by Radius Books in 2012, the artist’s works have been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions and have been represented in important group exhibitions at such significant venues as SITE Santa Fe, the Aspen Art Museum, and the National Art Museum of China, Beijing. His work resides in major public institutions including the Smithsonian Institution, the Dallas Museum of Art, the Wichita Art Museum, and the Albuquerque Museum of Art & History, among others.



*Jardin Botanica PV, 2017,*  
Oil on canvas, 18 x 34 in