

Staging Art

Colorado Artist Chosen for USA Pro Challenge Poster Design

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When David Gonzales was just 1 year old, he was almost flattened by a truck on a street in Germany. It was a biker that swooped in to save his stroller from the oncoming disaster, as his parents, who had just turned their backs for a second, watched in horror.

Today, bicycles are integral to his life. He commutes everywhere on one and has spent many hours studying and then depicting the sport on paper. He recently put the connection together between his affinity for bikes and that narrow escape.

Now, the masses will be a part of it too.

It's Gonzales' art that graces the USA Pro Challenge's official poster. The seven-stage bike race produces a national poster that's sold and distributed throughout the event, taking place Aug. 17-23, and then each host city also creates its own picture. For Aspen's, Gonzales is also the artist.

"I was in shock," says the Manitou Springs-based artist, about when he found out his work would be seen by the hundreds of thousands, if not millions.

He uses oils, acrylics, watercolor, pencils, pastels, wood and bronze to portray everything from landscapes to action sports. His imagery is rich in Native American and Hispanic heritage, and bold in color and shape. But until last year, it was seen only in his town. He then submitted work for the USA Pro Challenge stages in Breckenridge and Woodland Park – and won.

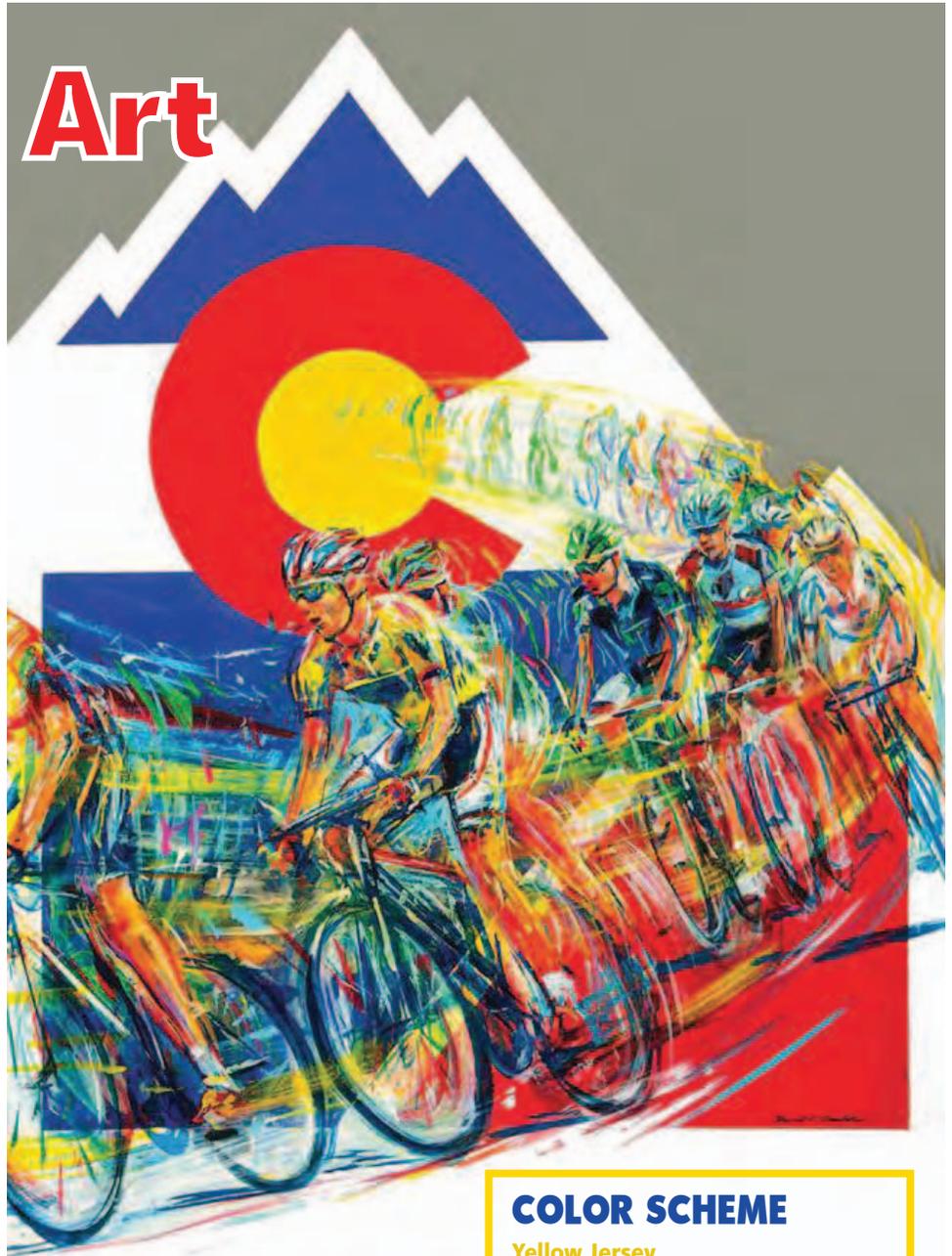
"So I signed on a with a local gallery there on a whim, and it was a huge success," he says.

That gallery in Breckenridge still carries his work, as does another in Sedona, Ariz., and now, the Aspen Art Gallery.

"I'm attracted to bright colors and vibrant art that pops and his art just jumps off the canvas at you," says Damian Guillot, Aspen Art Gallery owner. "You see how much movement he puts in the pieces."

That ability to capture things and people on the go has made him recently successful in the poster world. After he realized there was potential in creating art for event posters, he went on a spree. So far this year, his work has been chosen for the Pikes Peak Marathon and Ullr Fest in Breckenridge, along with the Copper-to-Aspen stage of the USA Pro Challenge.

"It's been one way for me to branch out of my comfort zone and do something on a mass level," he says. "A lot of artists don't know how to get their art out there, and that's one way of doing it. It allows a



great number of people to see your work, and it's a lot fun."

Gonzales will travel to Aspen next week to do a live painting at the Aspen Art Gallery on Wednesday and Thursday. Guillot recently opened a gallery in Denver, and the first piece to sell of Gonzales' work there was the original for the USA Pro Challenge Aspen stage, showing a peloton of riders coming down Independence Pass. The piece he creates here will be similar, and for sale. His posters will also be available for purchase throughout every stage of the event.

He won't travel to every city, but couldn't resist coming to Aspen. He's looking forward to capturing the riders as they come into town, using their speed as inspiration for projects yet to come.

And he now knows that bicycles will always be a part of those.

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COLOR SCHEME

Yellow Jersey

Awarded to the rider with the least amount of elapsed time over the entire race.

Sprinter Jersey

Awarded to the rider who accumulates the most bonus points, which are given based on sprint line performances, as well as finishing the stage in the top 15 places.

King of the Mountain Jersey

Awarded to the cyclist who proves to be the strongest climber through steep grades at designated King of the Mountain locations will collect points toward earning the climber jersey.

Best Young Rider Jersey

Awarded to the best rider under 23 years old.

Most Aggressive Rider Jersey

Best Colorado Rider