

# Peculiar Peepers

## Diverse Artistic Eyes

By Renée Targos

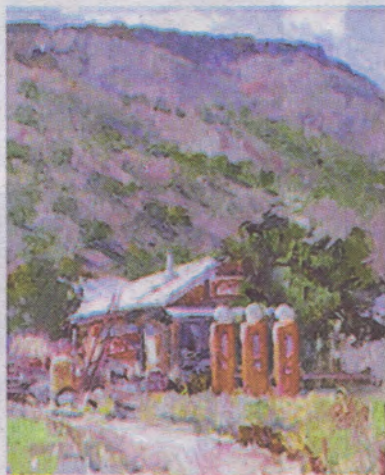
It would make sense that color- or legally blind individuals might steer clear of an art career due to a lack of visual latitude. *Art-Talk* found three artists who are up to the challenge and have navigated their way around the art world to produce brilliant colors and forms original to their range of vision.

The reason why colorblind artist Kemper Coley pursued an art career: "I guess stubbornness. I love to paint and the world is plenty colorful and beautiful to me."

With a love of drawing as a child, Coley found out at age 8 that he was colorblind. "I've had to develop my own color theory," says Coley. "I can't see red or green. Red stop signs look brownish to me. I can't see red roses mixed in with green leaves, because the value is the same. I can't tell where the roses pop up from the leaves."

But this doesn't stop Coley from taking on landscape painting. "If I'm uncertain about a color, I work a color until it blends into the object," says Coley.

As a former Colorado businessman, Coley has pursued his art professionally for the last 10 years in Taos, N.M. Devising a ph balance color theory using six hues in a range of acid to alkaline, Coley has adapted and continues to paint outdoors.



*Retired* (oil on panel, 24" x 20") by Kemper Coley.

When Moore was a student, he attended the Art Center School of Design in Pasadena, Calif. Moore says, "I took classes on it over and over again to learn natural color order."

While Moore has used a magenta contact lense to block out the green in one eye, which helps him to see the vibration between reds and greens with greater distinction, he says he relies heavily on his knowledge of color to create his paintings.

He also uses technology. After taking photographs of nature, he downloads images into Photoshop to identify colors. However, there are times when he will make mistakes.

"I thought I was painting a fall scene with a neutral color, but then my wife came in and gave me one of those

looks," says Moore. "I had been painting with green. I changed the painting from fall to early spring Aspens. It still worked because of the color order. At my show, it was the first painting to sell."

### From Light to Dark

After surviving meningitis in May of 2000, Atlanta, Ga., artist Allan Eddy lost 100 percent eyesight in his right eye, and approximately 80 percent in his left eye. Now looking through an upside down "U" shape in his left eye, Eddy says that he can no longer see reds or greens or focus on small de-



*Sunflowers* (oil on canvas, 36" x 24") by Robert Moore.

### Order of Color

Near the Snake River in Idaho, artist Robert Moore observes nature and due to his colorblindness, has studied the order of color so well that he's clearing up mysteries for other artists about it. "I have to understand it," says Moore. "When a teacher says a color is chalky, the color is out of order in high value. If it's muddy, its dark middle value is out of order. I can isolate those variables for my students."

### before blindness



Untitled by Allan Eddy.

### after blindness



Eddy's painting, *A Magic Act*.



Eddy's sculpture, *The Raven*.

tails. "I see through an island that is blurry and blue around my eye. On the flip side, blue and yellow almost glow, even from a distance."

Working as a professional abstract painter with full sight before 2000, Eddy had been a prominent painter, collected by singer/songwriter Elton John, and as a blind artist still continues to sell and push himself artistically in painting and sculpture.

"I was an artist for a long time, so I know how to mix colors from memory. I know those formulas for colors, and the more I work on a painting, the more sensitive I become to color," says Eddy.

While the state of Georgia doesn't acknowledge Eddy as legally blind due to his left eye's fractional sight, he says, "Any blind person has some kind of vision, either light and dark, it varies. I couldn't drive, as tempted as I've been. In my house and studio, I'm good, but as soon as I step outdoors in natural light, I have more of a problem than I know I do."

Similar to painter Chuck Close, who began painting with looser strokes because of developing multiple sclerosis, Eddy says he uses more open forms and less detail. However, he does use the same process in developing ideas for paintings by visualizing in his head paintings from dreams, nature and memories. ■