

ART TALK

Art News Worth Knowing

August/September 2006

RISING STARS

Dazzling
Summer Shows

Nancy Guzik
Interview

www.art-talk.net

Presorted Standard
U.S. Postage Paid
Phoenix, AZ
Permit No. 592

feature

Theories abound on what causes artist's career to skyrocket. From having celebrity collectors to receiving media attention or studying with a master artist, *Art-Talk* investigated five claims of what ignites the jump into fame.

By Courtney Bonnell

THE BIG *Blast Off*



The Dandy by CJ Wells

④ **Celebrity Collectors**

Artist CJ Wells, who exhibits her Native American pieces at Downey Gallery in Santa Fe and Turquoise Tortoise Gallery in Sedona, is no novice when it comes to celebrities grappling for her work. Having Dwight Yoakam, Sylvester Stallone and Robert Redford purchase several pieces, often in person, doesn't faze Wells.

"I don't care if the King of England comes over and buys [my work]," she says. "I concentrate more on my collectors who have like 11 of my pieces."

Wells says she was reluctant at first to meet Redford due to other obligations, but after they met at a gallery in Santa Fe in the mid-80s she called him "a really nice guy," and he went home with three of her paintings.

All in all, Wells doesn't believe celebrities like Redford add more prestige to an artist.

For the most part, Sherer agrees with Wells. He says after a celebrity purchases an artist's work at his gallery, he hasn't experienced a surge in interest for that artist. But he has noticed celebrity collectors add "notoriety and credibility to an artist. It shows the artist is known by people and adds another comfort level to purchasing."