

about the artist...



Carel Brest van Kempen



Carel Pieter Brest van Kempen grew up in Emigration Canyon, Utah, an ideal place to walk and explore and indulge his youthful fascination for the wild and its varied inhabitants. As a boy, he took up falconry and herpetology and later studied biology. It wasn't until he was approaching his thirtieth birthday that he decided to pursue an art career. It was then that he felt his skills had reached a point at which it was conceivable that he could be successful as an artist. Although Brest van Kempen had studied perspective in a high school drawing class and had gotten pointers from other artists, he is otherwise self-taught. Once he decided to devote himself exclusively to painting, he gave up his falcons, his beloved dog and reptiles and lived in his van for several years to paint, often for up to 100 hours each week.

Brest van Kempen's meticulously executed paintings explore the rich variety of nature. He believes that chief among nature's hallmarks is its diversity and he complains that as a whole, wildlife art is a poor reflection of that diversity. "I'm trying to do my little part to help fix that," he laughs. Art is a secondary passion only to Brest van Kempen's fascination with ecology, and he sees himself as a visual storyteller. "As I explore the planet's ecology, it conjures a flow of scenarios and stories in my imagination. My paintings are a means for me to realize these narratives and to work out their details. I try to say as much as I can about how the particular subject lives and interacts with its environment and other organisms." His ability to do so with authenticity is the result of intense field research. Brest van Kempen spends as much time in the field as possible, studying the habitats of his subjects. Often, conditions are far from ideal, but his sense of adventure outweighs any difficulties.

Brest van Kempen is highly regarded by his peers. Among them is Carl Brenders, who owns a Brest van Kempen original and who remarked, "Carel Pieter Brest van Kempen will make history in wildlife art. He is pure, and all of his heart and soul are in his work."

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