

# the Art Cellar

## Lowell Hayes



In the late 1950s and the subsequent two decades, while a student, getting married, starting a family, involved in social activism and short careers in the church and in urban housing, Lowell Hayes made art in almost any style from abstract to realistic to pop, op and conceptual. Even before that he sometimes stuck objects into paintings and built up surfaces deeper than impasto.

Moving back to the high country in the early seventies Hayes began to work through his aversion to the landscape genre. The beauty, forms, implicit energy and atmospheric of the mountains demanded the development of a whole new approach to landscaping painting; something more immediate, less objective, more touching but less sentimental, less easily taken for granted.

In 1981 The National Museum of American Art in D.C mounted the historic exhibition More Than Land and Sky, Art From Appalachia. Hayes work A TVA Commonplace was made famous by its use as a media image for that show, nationwide and regionally, and the artist appeared with the work on the Charles Kuralt's Sunday Morning on CBS, was interviewed on NPR, by the New York Times and Art in America. The exhibition traveled for three years throughout Appalachia, including twelve major museums from New York to Alabama. The Tennessee State Museum purchased A TVA Commonplace and later featured it in a statewide tour.

Hayes works full time to supply the demand for his landscapes, which have evolved into a truly unique bas relief style combining realistic painting and building up images with sticks, stones and anything that works. Hayes says hes trying to go right through sentimentality (about nature) to actual emotional connections for at least contacts.

Lowell Hayes was born near old Butler, Tennessee (before Watauga Lake) in 1936. He has a B.A. from Lynchburg College and a B.D. from the University of Chicago. He has lived Valle Crucis, North Carolina since 1972.