

## About the Artist

*Nathan Florence*

Nathan Florence is a Utah native who studied art at Swarthmore College in Philadelphia and at the International School of Art in Todi, Italy. He lives in Salt Lake City with his wife, Marian, and two children and chairs the art department at the Waterford School in Sandy. David Dee, director of the Utah Museum of Art, describes Florence's paintings as "both intellectually and visually captivating. His paintings combine extraordinary skill and old-master quality painting with a contemporary consciousness."

The texture and color preparation of the surfaces he paints on play an important role in his paintings. For many years, he prepared the surfaces of his canvases by doing richly colored abstract paintings with obvious texture from brushwork, palette knife, or other tools. Onto this surface, he would then paint his composition in various degrees of opacity.

Recently this surface preparation has expanded to include prepared printed cotton. The patterns of the cloth come through the paint in the same way as the abstract surfaces. Often areas of the prepared surface are left unpainted and thus become elements of the composition. Examples are the red tree in *One Tree* or the pattern in *Bring Me My Spear: O Clouds Unfold*. (See color reproductions at [www.nflorencefineart.com](http://www.nflorencefineart.com) and [www.dialoguejournal.com](http://www.dialoguejournal.com).)

The subjects of Florence's paintings vary widely from his small landscape paintings, which are painted on location, to his large figurative compositions, which are painted in his studio. Florence's paintings express his own faith and deal with contemporary social issues—for example, *Let Us Go To and Build Us a Tower* alludes to the tower of Babel (Gen. 11) and traditions of portraying this story, including Pieter Breughel the Elder's *The Tower of Babel*. It addresses contemporary issues of consumption and greed by constructing the tower completely out of luxury SUVs. In the middle background, a man stands on a Hummer, which serves as his personal Rameumptom, his hands stretched upward in his prayer to thank God for making him better than his fellow men, his car proving his status. Florence feels that the underlying colors and patterns inform the paintings in a sometimes unconscious way, much like the way our faith and beliefs inform our lives.

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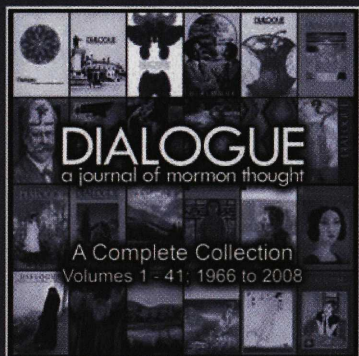
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