



# The IAJRC Journal

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# The Paintings of Earl Klatzel

By Ian Tiele

The beautiful Buddy Bolden Band (1905) painting used on the cover of this issue was supplied by Canadian blues painter Earl Klatzel. This cover art fits in perfectly with the theme of this issue: New Orleans - which is not only the birthplace of jazz, but also the venue for the 2012 IAJRC Convention.

Earl Klatzel was born in 1957 in Calgary, AB where he attended the Alberta College of Art. Earl's straightforward look at life is characterized in the style and design of his artwork. The figure has always been the dominant drive in his work, but he has



**Earl with wife Tammy and some of his work**

expanded it into a visual history from where his portraits evolved.

Music and its history are the main theme to his portfolio, covering: Blues life, blues and rock musicians. Earl's knowledge of the music from listening to it for many years

gives him the ability to project the atmosphere and sound into his work, which brings the paintings to life.

Earl's technique with mediums give each painting a unique quality. His re-defined approach to painting allows him the versatility to achieve a greater visual depth and a more realistic appearance to his paintings. His eye for detail and color authenticity in images from the past produces a true picture of daily life from an era gone by.

Earl's love for the blues is evident and strongly reflected in his portraits of famous blues musicians and also in a series titled "The History of the Blues." He has portrayed such great blues musicians as Robert Johnson, John Lee Hooker, Muddy Waters, Buddy Guy and many others.

The "History of the Blues" paintings are of real people, places and architecture. Klatzel's use of muddy earthtone color brings reality to an era that was recorded in black & white photos.



**An Evening in New Orleans**



**The Funky Butt Dance Hall Patrol (1925)**

These black history paintings are a window in time that show the people and their surroundings that were the beginning of the blues.

Earl says that he has never experienced the Mississippi Delta as a mortal entity, but he feels that he has been granted the incredible journey through the music of the blues. His interest in both blues music and painting has set him on a path through the Delta, creating a visual history that stretches to Chicago. His paintings reveal a story of people and places that helped create the blues.



**Jax Juke Joint**

Blues is a feeling, a heartfelt passion of soulful sounds and lyrics. It's a music that has affected Earl deeply, and drives a passion in him to create an accurate visual story that will reflect the life and times of the early blues and its exponents. The power within each song was created from the joys and sorrows of regular people, and the simple existence of their everyday lives.

Only from black & white photography have we shaped our ideas of this period, but they portray a distorted and very static environment of the past. Klatzel's carefully chosen palette of rich muddy earth tone colors bring a natural warmth and realism to this period that recalls a more true perception of life in the south. The paintings release the smell of earth into the air, while letting the viewer enjoy the intermingling of dust and music from long ago. Every scene is researched for accuracy and rendered in colors to show an actual window in time.

These paintings evolved from collecting photo imagery from the Library of Congress in Washington. Actual street corners and roadside juke joints from the south harmonize with the real

people who walked them. This resource enables him to create accurate clothing styles, structural landscape and daily life from the southern states during the 1930s Great Depression. By using multiple photographs, Earl can construct a musical and social atmosphere on the streets, at roadhouses and in the cotton fields using the true people of the time.

Being an artist that paints blues music has opened the door around the world for Klatzel. From Europe to South America, Australia to Asia, he has come to realize that the music has become a universal language. It has brought people together from around the globe to interact through all language barriers. It seems the blues has no borders.

Earl's art is collected by corporate and private collectors in: Canada, the United States, Australia, Brazil and Europe.

While it is not possible to show the beautiful earthy color tones of Earl's paintings in this magazine (due to our black and white only format), you can however view them in all their colored glory on his website <http://www.earlklatzel.com>. Earl's work is available for purchase as prints or even special signed and numbered artist enhanced canvas prints with the addition of oils. You can contact Earl at 403-253-7899 or via his email [earlklatzel@earlklatzel.com](mailto:earlklatzel@earlklatzel.com).

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