

## TWO NEW MEXICO DRAWINGS

Some Notes By John Lawson

June 2007

### SQUARE STATE - ZUNI STYLE

Colored pencil on a copy of a Rand McNally travel map.

In 1977 I "discovered" that the north-south and the east-west boundaries of New Mexico are equal in dimension, forming a square shape, unique among the states. I "proved" my theory, by drawing a precise square on a large copy of a very accurate U.S. Geodesic Map which allows for the change in latitude and longitude as the rectangular grid is laid over the curving surface of the earth. The square motif became the frame for a series of drawings using a single-radius pattern of intersecting circular shapes. In this drawing, the pattern within the circle reminds me of the geometry used by many Native American potters in their designs over many years. The fact that I'm still painting these segmented circular shapes shows how limitless the variations are which can be produced within the system. The three exits from I-40, identifying Tucumcari today, are colored red, yellow, and blue on the map and continues the town's reason-for-being as a crossroads.

### NEW MEXICO SUNRISE / SUNSET

Colored pencil on paper

After 9/11 sent the Cartesian order of my paintings into a spiraling movement, I have been using more straight lines than curves to define simple shapes which relate to each other and the shape of the canvas. This little drawing is based on my recently completed oil painting (18"x46") of the same subject. Somehow the simple (but not simplistic) geometry reminds me of the triangular patterns of many Navajo rugs, but that's not what says New Mexico to me. The 3-D rendering of the sky in this drawing contradicts the flat surface of the paper, unlike the rug whose design remains flat and two-dimensional, and only represents my nostalgic memories of dawn and dusk, my two favorite times in those long-ago Tucumcari days.