

Windows to the Divine

Space Gallery, April 12-28

A HEFTY DOSE OF art appreciation and altruism form the heart of a biennial fine-art exhibition and sale hosted by Windows to the Divine this month at Space Gallery in Denver. The show opens on Thursday, April 12, with a ticketed evening gala—just one of several lively events the Denver-based foundation has in store for its Collectors for Connoisseurship Arts Weekend. Proceeds from art sales and weekend events help support Dominicans in the Denver area who serve the elderly and homeless.

“We are utterly unique as a nonprofit that is promoting art *and* supporting the community with a faith-based element,” says Shannon Robinson, chairperson

and president of Windows to the Divine. Among its numerous missions, the philanthropic foundation aims to support fine artists, educate art collectors, and ultimately inspire everyone to contemplate—and tap into—the rewarding connection between art and spirituality. “We’d like to see a total renaissance in collecting art, an egalitarian movement where art is not just for the elite, but for *everyone*,” enthuses Robinson. “Art makes everyone’s life better.”

This year’s show, titled Impressions, Markings & More, celebrates the enduring contributions of 19th-century French painter Edgar Degas, often regarded as a founder of Impressionism. While pre-

vious exhibitions have paid tribute to realism, highly realistic artworks won’t appear among this year’s loose and expressive showcase, which features everything from impressionism to abstraction. Nearly 50 esteemed artists contribute works to the juried event, including Scott Burdick, Ulrich Gleiter, Ron Hicks, Huihan Liu, Jill Soukup, Clive Tyler, and Karen Vance. Fittingly, many of the 100 works on view salute Degas in some way. Landscape painter Albert Handell, for example, elected to submit several pastels rather than oils, and other artists bring works that are much more impressionistic than their typically “tighter” style, notes Robinson.



Terrie Lombardi, Peonies Simply Divine, pastel, 12 x 12.



Ardith Starostka, Muse in Pink, oil, 14 x 11.



Stephanie Hartshorn, Silos and Barn, oil, 12 x 12.



Ron Gerbrandt, Simple Steps, oil, 11 x 14.



▲ **Beth Sistrunk, Follow Me, oil, 12 x 16.**

► **Susiehyer, December Creek, oil, 16 x 12.**



A high point of opening night is the presentation of the Fra Angelico Artist of the Year Award to contemporary impressionist Dan McCaw. Named after early Italian Renaissance artist and Dominican friar Fra Angelico (1395-1455), the award is bestowed upon a master artist who follows in the footsteps of the “praying painter” by inspiring the community through his or her artwork. Adorning the walls of the gallery entrance are five new paintings by McCaw, all of which exemplify his artistic approach and style. “I have to fight for the life of every painting I do,” explains McCaw. “I dismantle, eliminate, distort, and exaggerate my subject matter in order to express

something closer to my own true nature. It may be something indefinable that lies beyond the subject’s likeness that holds my interest—you only know it when it just feels right.” On Saturday at 1 p.m., McCaw and his sons, artists Danny and John, give a public talk about their work and creative process.

The show, which coincides with a Degas exhibit at the Denver Art Museum and continues through April 28, presents artworks at varying price points, including entry-level, to attract first-time collectors, says Robinson. “Our goal is really simple, and that’s to encourage everyone to collect art. If we could

produce this sort of movement where everyone believes they are entitled to owning original art, I believe everyone would be better off, both mentally and spiritually.” —Kim Agricola

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