

November 6, 2016 through January 15, 2017

Prairie Plein-Air Invitational

organized by painter David Volbracht

About the Exhibition

Plein-air paintings are essentially works created in the "open air." There are many variations on this theme, but for this exhibition painter and organizer David Vollbracht of Medicine Lodge, Kansas, invited several of his favorite regional artists to participate. Each was asked to include two or three paintings that they had done outside and away from studio confinements. Many reflect the beauty of the diverse Kansas landscape, while others add human elements to the surroundings. Each work demonstrates a keen eye, the careful touch of brush to canvas, and an appreciation for what many take for granted.

Biographies and Statements

As part of a fourth generation farm family, Manhattan artist **Kim Casebeer** spent her childhood exploring outdoors and has felt a connection to the landscape for a long time. She travels across the United States to gather material, but believes the simplicity of the landscape near her home in Manhattan, Kansas has helped her find the essence of other places and focus on the importance of strong, simple design in a composition.

Casebeer is a Master Signature Member of the American Women Artists, and a Signature Member of the Oil Painters of America and Pastel Society of America. She has been featured in *SouthwestArt*, *Western Art Collector*, *PleinAir Magazine*, and *Art of the West*. Her work is published in *Art of the National Parks* by Jean Stern, Susan Hallsten McGarry, and Terry Lawson Dunn. Casebeer has been in many major exhibitions and received Honorable Mention in the annual *PleinAir Magazine* competition for 2012-2013. In 2015, she received the Impressionist Award of Excellence in the Oil Painters of America National Competition.

Casebeer works in both oil and pastel. She divides her time between the studio and painting outdoors en plein-air, and feels strongly that her plein-air paintings provide valuable insight when working on larger pieces and therefore keeps outdoor studies as reference. She has an uncommon command of color, light and atmosphere and using these skills, can direct a landscape painting to elicit an emotional response. She may have 8-10 pieces at various stages of completion in her studio at any given time because she needs to put them away at various stages in order to be able to get them back out and look at them with fresh eyes. Even though it takes time for each painting to reach its full potential, Casebeer keeps the brush work fresh and keeps the outdoor studies close in order to remind her of that spontaneity. When each painting goes out the door, it is the best combination of thoughtful composition, desired emotional connection, and spontaneity of moment.

Jim Clements, of El Dorado, is a western oil painter who considers himself blessed to be a working artist. "To me, painting represents ultimate freedom - so it's just natural that the wide open spaces, rich history and independent people of the American West translate so well to canvas. My desire is to honor the spirit of the West in each painting I do."



*Dusk from Coyne
Creek*



Farm House

Working in newspaper illustration and advertising over two decades kept his drawing skills honed. He also continually painted. "Observations of life, as well as painting from life, are critical to artistic advancement," he explains. He also gratefully acknowledges the advice, instruction and encouragement of many of today's best known oil painters throughout the years, which have been such an integral part of his own professional growth.

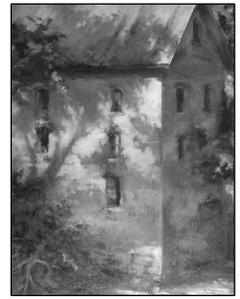
In addition to his website and galleries, Clement's award-winning work can also be seen at various art shows and western festivals throughout the year. His work is collected internationally and has won numerous awards over the years. His home and studio are located on the prairie in the Flint Hills region of south central Kansas.

Clements writes, "I am the sole creator of each of my paintings displayed. For painting supports, I either stretch linen canvas myself or use prepared cotton or linen canvas or linen covered panels. I also use professional grade oil paints and a variety of brushes.

"Depending on the subject I'm painting, I will either start with a loose charcoal sketch or direct paint, thinned. For more involved scenes requiring the use of reference photos (like running horses), I sketch them out in charcoal first. If I'm painting a live model or landscape on location, I'll use direct paint. Also for more involved scenes, I often like to block in the whole painting to make sure the color scheme in my mind's eye also works on the canvas."

Wichita painter **Elizabeth Corbett** has lived most of her life in rural Missouri and Kansas. She received a master of fine arts degree from Wichita State University in 1985. Inspired by nature and the magic of light, Corbett captures those fleeting moments in her paintings and pastels. She is a member of the Kansas Art Guild, Mid-American Pastel Society and Kansas Women Artist.

She writes, "Growing up in rural Missouri and Kansas, I spent a lot of time outdoors. It was nature's beauty that first inspired me, but it was often the light that I found magical. Today, whether I am painting the figure, cows, or the landscape, the light is a character of that work. My subject matter comes from my life, the things I see every day, the commonplace. With color and light, I strive to transform the mundane. I believe there is beauty in all if we look closely. It is my hope to convey more of a personal vision and less of a 'photograph' of that subject."



*Morning at
Cedar Point
Mill*

Staci Hartman, from Logan, is an emerging Kansas artist who paints primarily landscapes, florals and still life pieces. She works in studio and plein-air settings with oil and pastels. Staci has studied under several noted artists and is a member of Oil Painters of America. According to Hartman, "The challenge for me is representing the beauty, serenity and vitality of our world on canvas. It is always my hope that when someone views one of my pieces it will evoke a pleasing emotion for them. It is very easy for me to find a subject to be painted. We are surrounded in our world by beauty worthy of the canvas."



First Signs of Fall

Topeka artist **Cally Krallman** has been painting in the Midwest, both plein-air and studio, for over 25 years. Her work has been featured in many exhibits, both nationally and internationally including the Art In Embassies Program, The Salon International, Oil Painters of America Juried Competitions, Missouri Valley Impressionist Society, and American Women Artists National Juried Competitions. She is well known for her dynamic oil and acrylic paintings of the Flint Hills and Kansas prairie. Her paintings emphasize poignant sunsets and sunrises that define the Midwest. Krallman received a BFA in 1981 from Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas. She is a member of OPA, AWA, and National Oil and Acrylic Painters Society. Her work has been published in *American Art Collector*, *Plein-air Magazine*, and numerous other publications. Krallman is also a songwriter and enjoys curating exhibits of her fellow Midwestern women artists.



Pond Study

Joseph Loganbill was born, and currently lives, in Newton, Kansas - growing up in the surrounding countryside. He developed a deep appreciation for the prairie and began to draw whenever he could. After he graduated from Hesston High School, Loganbill attended Bethel College, studying art, history, and English. After college, he worked a variety of jobs unrelated to art, gaining life experiences on a ranch, in a furniture factory, in mental health, and in sales. He kept a sketchbook in which he drew regularly, never losing sight of his artistic dreams. On a sales call one day, one of Joseph's clients offered him a picture framing job. Over the next ten years, Joseph became a master framer and found his way back to the world of art.



*Sunflower Time
Along Sand Creek*

In the 1980s and 1990s, Loganbill took evening classes at the Wichita Art Association (now MARK Arts). Around 2000, he bought his first set of oils and began to paint in earnest. He also started to paint en plein-air in the local area. He produced hundreds of little studies and became an expert in on-the spot color mixing and has had solo exhibitions throughout the region.

In writing about his work, he states, "I strive in my own work to depict space, light, and emotion, in a kind of dance back and forth between intellect and feelings. This is the realm of poetry, where craft ends and art begins, becoming another language for our human experience."

Pleasant Hope, Missouri, artist **Devin Roberts** is primarily known for his blend of Tonalism, Emotionalism and Impressionism, both in his landscapes and his still life paintings. Although largely self-taught, he has been fortunate to study at Gage Academy in Seattle, as well as in various workshops under nationally recognized oil painters.



Beauty in the Abandoned

Roberts' technical process is ever evolving. He currently puts a focus on beginning his paintings from life, either from a study done on location or from life in the studio. He writes, "Painting out in the landscape is where I find the most joy, wonder and peace in my life. When I create an oil painting, the thing that remains constant is my desire to convey the sense of mood and mystery that I feel and, hopefully, take the viewer on a journey that results in a clearer vision of our beautiful planet. If I can help that viewer escape for a few moments from the monotony of their life, if I can take them out of their office or home and put them on the top of a mountain or beside the ocean, I have fulfilled my purpose."

Virginia Grass Simmons, from Wichita, is a native Kansan who has been commissioned for many works of art. She enjoys landscape painting in the beautiful Flint Hills and spends as much time as possible plein-air painting in this inspiring area. She has been accepted into many juried shows, both regional and national. Her painting, *Flint Hills Glory* was chosen as the winner of the Symphony in the Flint Hills juried art show and was the commemorative print in 2016.



*The Graceful
Cottonwood*

Other shows and exhibits she's had work included in are the *America the Beautiful* show at Southwind Gallery in Topeka, 2016; the *American Bison Show* at Beauchamp Gallery in Topeka, 2016; *Daughters of the Prairie*, 2013; and many others.

Simmons has been an oil painting instructor at the Wichita Center for the Arts (now MARK Arts) since 2008. She is a member of Oil Painters of America, Kansas Academy of Oil Painters and Wichita Women Artists. Additionally, she serves as the program director for the Kansas Academy of Oil Painters and is represented by Southwind and Beauchamp's Galleries in Topeka.

R. Gregory Summers of Overland Park writes, "We go outdoors to enjoy the land, or stay inside to avoid it. It is I, an outdoor artist, that brings the outside in." Born in the Flint Hills, Summers

began his professional career at Hallmark Cards Inc. A master engraver, he now paints primarily "en plein-air" across the globe. He is a former vice president of the Greater Kansas City Artists Association, co-founder of the Missouri Valley Impressionist Society, and Brush Creek Art Walk painting competition in Kansas City, Missouri.

"I am inspired by creation, and driven by the experience. I paint the land that I claim to be a part of. It is not to replicate the scene before me, more to bring back a piece of what took me there in the first place."



Fly Over Land

Independence, Kansas, artist **Cristine Sundquist** is originally from St. Louis. She began studying drawing and painting at the age of 12, with her early art education

coming from private art instructors and workshops at Washington University and the St. Louis Art Museum. She later studied Fine Arts and Art Education at the University of Kansas. Her appreciation for the uniqueness of people, as well as nature, is conveyed in each portrait or landscape painting. Sundquist has a constant fascination with solving the problems of light, composition, and color in each painting and drawing endeavor. She writes, "My work depicts primarily the Kansas landscape with an emphasis on the Flint Hills and Southeast region of the state. I strive to visually contradict the popular belief that Kansas is flat and uninteresting. It's the simple beauty of the area that keeps me painting day after day. Obviously the rolling hills and majestic skies provide daily inspiration for new work and drive me to solve the artistic issues of color and light, but the land provides more than that. My main goal for a painting is to have the viewer feel the peace and see the beauty that is so easily missed in our hectic lives."



Farm Pond

Medicine Lodge painter **David Vollbracht's** formal education in art started during high school with Art Instruction Schools. He then attended Colby Community College and Fort Hays State University. Through the years, his education continued with repeatedly studying works of artists he admired and attending workshops given by Clyde Aspevig, Wayne Wolfe and Howard Friedland. Aside from his numerous art shows and rewards, becoming a Signature Member of the Oil Painters of America was one of the highlights of his career as an oil painter.



Stormy Day at the Pond

About the works in this show, he writes, "The plein-air paintings in this exhibition were painted on location in separate areas of Kansas. They are my interaction with the land and my depiction of this on canvas in a direct and interesting manner – whether it was the light effects upon the land, interesting shapes, or an inner sense of beauty. *Stormy Day at the Pond* is painted at a pond near Medicine Lodge, Kansas and *Abandoned Farmhouse* was painted near Logan, Kansas.



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