



Cash Loans by Luis Ramirez

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: *Flowing Colors: 2016 Hidalgo Watercolor Society Exhibition*
Where: UVAL, Kika de la Garza Art Center, 921 E. 12th Street, Mission.
When: Through Feb. 2. Hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10am to 6pm: Saturday, 2-6pm.
Contact: 956 583-2787

Flowing Colors

This year's Hidalgo Watercolor Society exhibit, co-organized by Dennis Glover and Luis Ramirez, was looking very sparse until almost the last minute. Much of the society's membership is made up of winter Texans, many Canadians, and they didn't arrive in the Valley as early as has been their custom. "We do rely on winter visitors," explained Glover. "I'm here year 'round, and we paint on Fridays and Wednesdays, but there's just a handful of us who do that. All of a sudden everybody showed up and we had plenty of paintings; when the winter Texans come down it's a full house." Seventy-eight works comprise this show and the works are typically weighted toward scenic views, floral depictions, and some wildlife. *Flowing Colors: Hidalgo Watercolor 2016 Exhibit* is on display at the Kika de la Garza Fine Art Center in Mission.

Watercolorists have traditionally been attracted to the scenic outdoors for their inspirations, and the majority of the Hidalgo watercolor painters are no exception. The variety of scenic locations in this show may be puzzling at first, until one understands that many of the artists are indeed from outside the Valley, and they also tend to travel a lot. They are sharing other parts of the world that they have had the fortune to experience. Freddie Harmon's "White Synagogue" is a good example. The ancient ruin belies its original stony pallor and becomes alive with softly glowing tints, as though bathed in the warm afternoon sun. Pam Rosenquist offers a contrasting watercolor technique with her watercolor, "On the Road to Tulum." In this work, Rosenquist plays with roughly textured areas against the smooth sky to create an interesting Quintana Roo shoreline scene. The watercolor medium is unforgiving; each stroke matters, unlike oil or acrylic that allows discrete over-painting to successfully obliterate accidents and mistakes. Not so with transparent watercolors. Each stroke reveals the artist's clarity of

thought and brush skills. Realism is the favored style of expression in this show with interesting variations of personal techniques interjected into the paintings.

The winter Texans fill the space with interesting and well-executed paintings, but the local members also provide a solid core of good watercolor works this year. Luis Ramirez visually comments about McAllen. His watercolor, "Cash Loans," offers a unique corner-view of a building partially blocking the *cash loans* sign. Moving to McAllen seven years ago, Ramirez was startled by the visual impact of the town. "Having come from other places," he explained, "I've never seen so many restaurants, retail stores, and loan shops." He sees McAllen as a world of stores and loans. Another of his watercolors, "Acme McAllen," captures the flavor of small store in an older neighborhood.

Flowing Colors is an exhibit designed for casual viewing and offers its audience a pleasant respite from everyday stress. Take your time to study these precisely painted works.

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