



Dad's Garage by Pam Rosenquist

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: *Hidalgo Watercolor Society Annual Exhibition*
Where: UVAL, Kika de la Garza Art Center, 921 E. 12th Street, Mission.
When: Through Feb. 8: Hours are Tues, Wed and Thurs from 10am to 6pm; Fri 10am-2pm; Saturday, 2-6pm.
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The Decision of Watercolor

BY NANCY MOYER
SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

The *Hidalgo Watercolor Society Annual Exhibition* is currently on display at the Kika de la Garza Art Center in Mission. About thirty artists are participating this year and showing up to four works apiece. While always an interesting show, this year we find increasingly refined individual perceptions emerging above typically rendered traditional imagery. As usual, the exhibit is divided into separate motifs such as flowers, wildlife, and architectural charm, but some of the paintings seem to defy the categories through sheer personal acuity.

Despite its effortless appearance, watercolor is an exacting medium demanding an ongoing stream of correct decisions from its practitioners. There is no covering up the wrong color choice or the brushstroke that didn't move just right. With the innumerable decisions inherent in the execution of the technique, the choice of subject is often a simple, singular, decision. But not in this show. Most of the watercolors still feature a central direct view of their subject, yet fresh perceptual decisions are apparent from a few artists.

Unusual close-ups by Dennis Glover and Lawrence Spencer held my attention for longer than the standard gaze. Drawing from two differing genres, boating and cowboy, Spencer took both inspirations beyond their typical perceptions. With his "Boat in Snow", he depicts only a small section of the vessel not engulfed in snow. Without the title, it would exist as an abstract shape. He demonstrates with this painting, along with another snowy landscape watercolor, his mastery at creating white space as unseen object. The snow is at once snow, background, and unpainted paper. Spencer's "Resting Wrangler" relaxes on a fence railing, showing neither head nor shoulders. Segments of white background hold the image suspended in the picture plane.

Dennis Grover captures our attention with his attention to glorious detail, sometimes in unexpected places. His "Yellow Tail Fly" is a surprisingly dramatic study of unexpected subject matter combined with obsessive observation. Grover also demonstrates patient, analytical, observation in "Pancho's Saddle, where he has transposed leather and silver into watercolor.

Different states of mind are successfully projected in this show, all staying on the positive side of life and celebrating their subjects. Pam Rosequist's "Waiting for the Weekend" evokes peaceful anticipation, and her sensitive perception of "Dad's Garage" evokes nostalgia. This latter painting is notable not only for her unusual viewpoint, but also her command of technique in communicating worn paint and wood. "Just Picked for You" by Carol Hanson is a brilliant miniature watercolor that might be overlooked, but shouldn't be. Its abstracted flower shapes and flowing ink lines show pure joy.

Plan to visit this show and spend some time with works that excel in their skill and thoughtful composition. And keep in mind the importance of necessary drawing skills that form the shapes of these images. Hidalgo Watercolor Society members can draw!

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