

Water world

A&M Professor, Edwin Hoag, displays watercolor paintings at Local Color Gallery

BY SCOTT HARRIS
The Battalion



Local artist Edwin Hoag is making a big splash with his latest exhibit, Just Add Water. Hoag's exhibit is an excursion into the landscape and architecture from various spots around the world using watercolors.

With the exception of two paintings, all of his work for this exhibit has been completed since January and will be on display at the Local Color Gallery until April 2.

Besides being an accomplished artist, Hoag is also an associate professor of landscape architecture at Texas A&M University. Hoag said this will be his last semester teaching at A&M, however, because he is retiring to pursue his artistic career. He and his wife, Mary Jane, have opened an art studio in College Station where he will be working and teaching art classes.

Hoag said he relies on personal experiences for his paintings.

"I only paint what I have personally seen and experienced," Hoag said. "I try to relay these experiences, emotions and interpretations to the viewer."

Hoag said the works are based on recent trips to Italy, Mexico and Colorado as well as some local subjects.

"I use color sketches and photographs of my subjects for mood and atmosphere," Hoag said. "I check back on them for accuracy and detail because if you do it wrong you will hear about it."

Hoag said although he feels his work is representational, it does lean towards impressionism.

"There is much suggestion of detail in my work," Hoag said. "There are traces of impressionism, the viewer's eye completes the detail. It fills in the shade and shadow."

Throughout his years of painting, Hoag has worked with many accomplished artists such as Bruce Greene, Martin Greele and Don Andrews.

"The thing is to select people you can learn things from," Hoag said. "Within my circle there is no jealousy, we are in it for each other. We feel that 'your success is my success.'"

Even though Hoag has been affected by these artists, he said influence can come from anywhere.

"There are influences from all over," Hoag said. "If not, you're not looking for it

or seeing it."

Hoag's work is mostly of landscapes, but he said this is due mostly in part to his background — he has a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture.

He has started painting florals, but he just likes to paint, regardless of the subject.

"I am just in love with painting," Hoag said, "not subject matter painting, just painting."

Hoag said working with water colors is not an easy task.

"Painting with water colors is a crap shoot, every now and again you will bomb," Hoag said. "Some things are just bad, it takes awhile. Not every painting will turn out, but the percentage of good ones goes up with experience."

David Romei, the executive director of the Arts Council of Brazos Valley, said the title of Hoag's exhibit adds much to the work itself.

"The nice thing about 'Just Add Water' is that it is an understatement," Romei said. "The title is representative of his unique ability to make a statement. It is representative not of a full picture, but a small window, a small picture. It allows the viewer to conjecture wild stories and activities from small details in his paintings."

"In his paintings, he is saying 'I am not asking you to go with me to these places I am going, just to add water so the flowers

will bloom and maybe you will find the beauty and see how beautiful it is to me."

Romei said Hoag's work is representative of the kind of person he is.

"I see Ed as a man with a deep soul," Romei said. "His gentle strokes are representative of this, in his art, he is asking the viewer to join him for a moment, just for a little while."

There is a lot of truth in art and just a look at one of his paintings, and you will feel the truth and a calm."

Romei said "Just Add Water" is different than some of Hoag's other work.

"It is more nature oriented, some of his other works are more industrial and urban," he said. "These are softer and more gentle, bringing color to life."

"This exhibit is a unique opportunity for a first-time collector to acquire an original work of art at an extraordinary price."

Painting is Hoag's passion in life and is something he feels strongly about.

"I am not a philosopher or a poet. I am a painter," Hoag said. "I am a merchant of shapes, forms and colors. I paint what I see and what I feel. My goal is to communicate with the viewer. I strongly feel that a work of art is preceded by the art of work. Nothing of significance can be accomplished otherwise."



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRAZOS COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL

Above: Edwin R. Hoag, an associate professor of landscape architecture, has decided to leave school and take art on seriously.

Right: Hoag's painting, Idaho Winter, being displayed at the "Just Add Water" exhibit at the Local Color Gallery.

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