

**ARTICLE NICOLETTE TOUSSAINT
PHOTOGRAPHY BY WES MAGYAR**

Locally-born Painter Achieves National Stature

Andrea Kemp:
Extraordinary
Moments in
Ordinary Life

"Beacon", 16" x 16", oil on board.

"Transcend", 12" x 9", oil on board.

"Painting White", 24" x 36", oil on board.

"What Lurks Beyond", 36" x 36", oil on board.

Painter Andrea Kemp, whose "Cowboy Coffee" painting graces the cover of this magazine, says that her work "strikes a balance between visual depiction of the world I live in and what seems unique about it to me."

Kemp's subjects—a boy transfixed by fireflies, a bicycle mechanic fighting the wind, a still life of white roses on a tiled table, a heartbreaking dead bird—speak of bittersweet moments. These are the poetic moments of everyday life that can be missed in the blink of an eye.

Now in her thirties, this locally-grown virtuoso has garnered two one-woman shows, a "Best in Show" award from the 2012 American Art Invitational at Saks Galleries in Denver, a 2014 article on "Painting Fundamentals" in *International Artist*, and coverage in four different stories in *Southwest Art Magazine*.

Kemp grew up in Glenwood Springs, and her work was recently featured in a four-person show at Carbondale's Launchpad Gallery. Entitled "Renascence", that exhibition featured Kemp's work along with paintings by Western Colorado master realists Daniel Sprick and Dean Bowlby, plus marble sculptures by Gregory Tonozzi.

Kemp, who has studied with both Sprick and Bowlby, says that while she was a student at Glenwood High School, a teacher suggested that she take a figure-drawing class at Colorado Mountain College. The class was taught by Dean Bowlby. Dan Sprick sometimes dropped in as a guest instructor.

That year, a student who had been arranged to shadow Sprick in his studio was a no-show; Kemp jumped at the opportunity to pick up the broken date. "I watched him paint for a day and it was mesmerizing. It was magic," she marvels.

In addition to earning a bachelor of fine arts from the University of Utah and studying at the Lyme Academy of Fine Arts in Old Lyme, Connecticut, Kemp benefitted from painting with Sprick in his studio during the summer and on weekends. She spent time outdoors, painting plein air with Bowlby. She even tried sculpting marble with Greg Tonozzi, who is her cousin. "That was fun," she says. "But it takes awhile and it's very physically demanding. Marble is a hard medium; it will break apart if you're not strategic about it."

Although Kemp prepares to paint by sketching charcoal and graphite studies, and even paints some watercolors, the works that she shows and sells are realistic oil paintings.

She thinks that some painters are more artistically-driven while others are more craft-driven. "I have always loved the process of two-dimensional production," she says, "So what it comes down to for me is the craft. I have always loved paper, paint, charcoal, pencils and markers. I like to create things with my hands."

Kemp, who now lives in Golden, Colorado—near enough to Denver to be close to important galleries and still near enough to the mountains to feel at home—has exhibited in galleries in Santa Fe and has shown her work at the Saks Galleries in Cherry Creek in Denver for the past eight years.

Currently, Kemp is painting "mostly people, and focusing on the figure." Her favorite subjects include open-ended narratives depicting people and objects with strong emotional tones.

Inspired by the culture and history she absorbed during a recent teaching stint in Italy, she's currently working on a series of paintings portraying the famous Palio di Siena. Kemp's Siena series includes a bareback horserace, drums, flags, medieval costumes, hundreds of spectators and lots of color. Along with her own teaching this year in Italy, she also accompanied Daniel Sprick, assisting with his summer classes in Rome.

"For a long time, you need to paint just to hone your craft," she says. "Then, after six or seven years, you get to a point of wanting to find what inspires you. I try to paint things that

are probably not amazing to other people, but are scenes from my life. I have to paint them in a way that makes them seem amazing to other people."

"I try to paint what I know; to show everyday life in a light in that makes things glow and shine where they would be otherwise be lacking in luster."



"Blow Away", 48" x 24", oil on board.



"Shapes and Notes", 12" x 16", oil on board.