

Arts & Entertainment

Section

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The Durango Herald

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Monday, September 9, 2002

Silverton artist captures stunning vistas

Red Canyon Gallery exhibits landscapes by Judy Graham

By Judith Reynolds
Special to the Herald

Silverton landscape artist Judy Graham has a passion for mountains. It shows in her bravura style, a breathtaking boldness that tends to focus on the sky.

"Scenes from the High Country" is an exhibit of new work by Graham at Red Canyon Gallery through Sept. 25.

The dozen paintings at Red Canyon are all recent work, completed in the last several months. It's worth a careful look to see how the artist develops broad meadows, massing clouds or late streaks of light in the sky.

Over warm-toned underpainting of burnt orange, purple or green, Graham

Review

"Scenes from the High Country," new paintings by Judy Graham, on display through Sept. 25 at the Red Canyon Gallery, 131 E. Eighth St. Call 382-9855 for information.

layers passages of spontaneous big-brush work. Up close, this tangle of strokes creates texture and richness – what, in the field, is known as active, not passive, surfaces. From a distance, the effect is one of energy, movement and transitoriness.

Graham's titles suggest that she is a committed realist, telling us exactly what she sees and where she stands: "Silverton Caldera from Molas Pass," or "Starvation Pass from the Ute Lands," for example. Even "Kendall from the Wingate" reveals that Graham paints in midwinter, looking out of a window in the bed and breakfast she owns on Snowden Street. "Kendall" borders on abstraction. Its huge pink and gray sky fills the canvas; only the tip of Sil-



DUSTIN BRADFORD/Herald

Judy Graham's oil "Sunset at Eumont's Knob" is on display at Red Canyon Gallery as part of her show, "Scenes from the High Country."

verton's great mountain weights the lower edge.

Five paintings of horses complement the landscapes. Graham employs her signature brushwork in these as well, even in two small pictures of reclining horses. Since I'm not a horse fanatic, the most appealing of the group to me is "Rio

Grand Pyramid with Horse." It has an unusual, off-center composition: a high meadow stretches out under a cloudless sky with a lone horse in the extreme lower right corner. For me the subject is really a sunlit, high-meadow landscape painted with a freedom and confidence that's exhilarating.

Graham is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin and holds a master of fine arts degree from the University of Chicago. She has also studied art at New York University, Parsons School of Design and the School of Visual Arts. She's exhibited in Wisconsin, Illinois, California and Colorado, which now includes her affiliation with Red Canyon Gallery of Durango.

People who do business at the Bank of Colorado on Main Avenue know her work by the 10 commissioned cloudscapes that dominate the first floor.

If you think landscape as a subject has been exhausted, here's yet another artist who brings a fresh eye and an unhesitating touch to the field.

Graham even manages to give one sunset, the oldest trick in a landscape artist's deck of cards, a new twist. "Eumont's Knob" doesn't show the sun setting, only reflected light on wispy clouds of paint.

Judith Reynolds is a freelance writer who specializes in the arts. Reach her through Herald voice mail at 247-3504.

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