

Artist strives for balance through painting

By Josh Nichols

Staff writer

If a person took the time, he or she might see beauty in things usually taken for granted.

It might be discovered that if put in the right light and looked upon at the right angle, a common object can become surprisingly fascinating, if not even stunning.

Local artist, Carol Thompson, has discovered this phenomenon.

So she paints simple, beautiful objects. Still lifes featuring pitchers, dishes, candy and flowers, often times intertwined, are all part of her repertoire.

These paintings, 21 in all, will be on display this month at the Haydon Gallery, 335 N. Eighth St.

Ann Pagel, gallery director, described Thompson's work as "very fresh" and "pleasant to look at."

"Her paintings always seem harmonious and balanced," Pagel said. "That is comforting to people."

What also may be found comforting is Thompson's subject matter.

Paintings in this exhibit include "Three Kisses," which is a painting of two Hershey Kisses in a dish and one oddly sitting on a jar.

Another is "Tricycle with Shadow," which is a large 48-by-42 picture of a bright green tricycle casting a shadow larger than the object itself.

There are numerous other pictures of different flowers, fruits and dishes.

One particular fruit, the pomegranate, is in numerous pictures.

These colorful objects are combined in numerous ways, and drawn from many angles, but each composition is thought out carefully.

"The crux of her work is the relationships of elements and colors," Pagel said.

According to Thompson, more time goes into the thought and preparation for a painting than the act of painting itself.

"I spend way more time thinking than painting," she said.

The reason she uses so many flowers in her paintings is a result of the inspiration she draws from living on an acreage.

She described her life as very balanced, which comes through in the careful attention she pays to geometric relationships and unified compositions in her paintings.

One characteristic that can be seen in all of Thompson's paintings are distinct shadows cast by the main objects.

When she sets the still life up in her studio, she said she plays with the lighting until it casts the glow she wants.

She then looks at the still life and her canvas and with chalk begins drawing the horizontals and diagonals.

Along with the careful geometric composition, another characteristic that makes Thompson's paintings unique is the bright, lively feeling that comes across when viewing.

A method she uses to provide this effect is a red underpainting she does in all of her work.

She paints the entire canvas red, and then paints the still life and background over the red.

When one looks closely, he or she will see little bits of red that still show through.

Pagel said the technique gives Thompson's paintings a springiness and depth, unlike many other paintings she sees in the gallery.

"It's very balanced and easy on the eye, but it's the little quirky things she adds that makes her work unique," Pagel said.

These quirky things include using objects such as Hershey Kisses and Tootsie Pops and positioning them in an odd way.

Pagel said the reaction to Thompson's colorful geometric compositions has been positive.

Many of the paintings have already sold and more than 300 people turned out for last Friday's opening reception for the exhibit.

Thompson said she owes a lot of her success and ability as an artist to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Skeptical of being a non-traditional student, she returned to school after her

children had grown, and earned her MFA at the age of 50.

She has no regrets.

"My experience at UNL was invaluable," she said. "I'm so glad I did that."

She also is happy to be able to do what she loves — painting.

"I love doing my work and have a wonderful time," she said.

She sums up her feelings about painting in the press release for her exhibit.

"Painting, for me, is fundamentally about relationships," she said. "I look at the world differently now that I paint. I am very aware that everything is relative. In life as in painting, if one thing changes everything else is affected. Decisions and accidents are very important to both."



PREVIEW

Paintings by Carol
Ronin Thomson

WHERE: Haydon Gallery
335 N. Eighth St.

WHEN: Through April 29,
Monday - Saturday, 10 a.m.
to 5 p.m.

COST: free

THE SKINNY: Artist
displays colorful, everyday
images.



Courtesy Photos

