

Inspired by Beauty

Wednesday, 14 December 2016 | Written by Claire Colby

Artist Lisa Wiser takes the physical world and transforms it into scenes of tranquility

Sometimes it takes a well-travelled eye to appreciate the natural wonders of the familiar. Longtime Lake Oswego resident Lisa Wiser, 61, is Wilsonville Public Library's December Artist of the Month. Bringing her large, acrylic, sprawling landscapes, Wiser invites viewers to embrace themselves in the serenity of the paintings.

Having grown up in an artistically inclined family, Wiser always knew that she wanted to pursue art as a career. Beginning at the tender age of eight, Wiser had a natural talent and took to drawing and painting with ease.

Raised in a forested hideaway overlooking Oswego Lake that was designed by her architect father, Wiser often got outside with her three brothers, playing in the forest surrounding the house and getting inspired by the beauty of nature.

After graduating from high school, Wiser set off to the University of Oregon to study painting. But in the wake of her parents' divorce, her mother encouraged her to be more practical and pursue a degree in art education.

"At that time, my mom said that I needed to figure out a way to support myself," Wiser said.

Once she completed her degree in art education, she began teaching and subbing around the Eugene area. But Wiser found that her inspiration faded and her life became more about paperwork than art.

"I kind of lost sight of painting at that point when I was involved in art education," she said.

It wasn't until Wiser and her husband moved to a farm in Canby in 1981 and she got back into nature that the inspiration to paint returned to her.

"I had flexible hours," she said, "and that was really cool."

But as anyone who has lived and worked on a farm knows, the daily grind of farm life can wear at a person over time. In 2000, the opportunity to purchase the home that she grew up in presented itself and Wiser said that it was too good a chance to pass by.

Now comfortably situated back in her childhood home, Wiser splits her time between Lake Oswego and a cabin on Black Butte Ranch that she and her husband bought a portion of for their 25th wedding anniversary. Wiser likes to spend 7-10 weeks a year alone at the ranch to paint in peace.

"I am a person that sees inspiration in the physical environment," she said. "I prefer to paint outside but the weather doesn't always cooperate."



SPOKESMAN PHOTO: VERN UYETAKE
Artist Lisa Wiser has fostered her natural artistic talent since childhood, but she considers herself a lifelong student of art and painting techniques.

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Wiser's piece, Winters Touch, was painted outdoors in 17-degree weather in Central Oregon

But that hasn't stopped her from braving the elements to catch the right stormy light or to paint a wintry scene.

"I still go out in the snow and the rain," Wiser said. "One of the paintings is called Winter on Homestead Lake. ... I actually went out and painted that sucker in the back of my car. I got home and it said that it was 17 degrees out."

Braving exposure for a painting may seem a bit extreme to come, but for Wiser, it's all about the pursuit of the beauty of the moment.

"I'm hooked on beauty," she said. "I'm charmed by it... My intent is to really portray the light, color and mood."

As for the six-piece collection that she is showing at the library, Wiser says that the pieces are primarily her "plein-air paintings" that were created outdoors on site and some larger studio works of the Willamette Valley and Central Oregon. Wiser hopes that people will connect with her work and enjoy the splendor of the colors.

"A lot of people have been to these places and connect with them," Wiser said. "I would like for people to just come in and take refuge in these painting."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Wiser's piece, Eastern Clouds, is one of the pieces that showcases her love of capturing an interesting moment of lighting and mood in nature.