

Artists to take in airs, paint in Teton Park

Who: 17 painters

What: Teton Plein Air Paint Out experience and auction

When: Reception and auction 3-8 p.m. Friday

Where: Four Daughters Art and Antiques

How Much: Free admission

Web: CiaoGallery.com

By *Emma Breysse*

Even for professional landscape artists, there's nothing quite like painting the Tetons.

"There's mountains all over the world, but this area rivals any scenery I have seen anywhere in the world," Colorado painter Marie Massey said.

Massey is a nationally known plein air painter and one of the organizers of this week's inaugural Teton Plein Air Paint Out. She and artist Michele Walters gathered 17 prominent plein air artists for a painting tour of Grand Teton National Park.

An artist painting "en plein air" does so outdoors in natural light. The artists participating in Walters and Massey's event specialize in plein air, working in locations across the West including Oklahoma, New Mexico and California.

"I think (an event like this) is a dream for plein air painters," Walters said. "I mean, it's the Tetons."

Artists gathered Sunday and will work through Thursday, painting some of the park's most famous vistas, from Schwabacher Landing to the barns of Mormon Row.

The public is welcome to watch the artist work and to even join them in painting, Walters said. The event ends Friday with an exhibition, reception and auction of work produced.

"The art world is kind of being shaken up because the economy is so bad," Massey said. "We really wanted this to be an opportunity for all of these artists to create and sell their work and also to really collaborate with the Jackson community."

Massey and Walters hope to attract sponsors by offering several benefits. Those benefits include, depending on the sponsorship level, the



Artists gathered Sunday for the weeklong Teton Plein Air Paint Out. Above is Marie Massey's "Blue Sky Country."

right to "name your painting" from among the artists and locations included in the Paint Out, and the right to view and purchase paintings before they are available at the auction.

The auction will be at Four Daughters Art and Antiques, across from The Bootlegger on Town Square. The event will begin at 3 p.m. with an artist meet and greet and the opening of silent auction bidding. A live auction will run from 6 to 8 p.m. Paintings that don't sell at the auction will remain on display until Aug. 18.

When it comes to the painting, Walters and Massey said they are excited to get out their easels.

"Plein air artists don't really do a lot of wildlife, but there is the opportunity here, where there just isn't in most other places," Massey said. "I'm hoping to do a buffalo."

Walters, a relative newcomer to landscape painting, said she is excited to take

on the challenge of painting the Tetons and improving her skills. While the other 16 artists specialize in plein air and landscape work, Walters has only recently started branching out from her surrealist roots.

"I was kind of anti-landscape, but the scenery here gets into your bones, especially the Tetons," she said. "Honestly, it took me seven years before I would even try. But I've painted at most of those places on our agenda and it is such a great challenge."

To watch or join the Paint Out, visit these locations at the following times: North Jenny Lake at 10 a.m. today and Mormon Row at 10 a.m. Thursday.

For information on the Paint Out, visit CiaoGallery.com.

Plein-air players

Along with organizers Michele Walters and Marie Massey, the following artists will participate in the Teton Plein Air Paint Out.

Cliff Austin
Skip Thompson
Michelle Murphy-Ferguson
Carol Hartman
Peggy Immel
Richard Szkutnik
Inka Zamoyska
Suzanne Morris
Barrett Edwards
Mark Akins
Aaron Cordell Johnson
Janice Trane Jones
Leila Martin