



Don Sahli: 'Just a painter'

Colorado oil painter visits Beaver Creek Fine Art until Sunday

By Caramie Schnell
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Colorado oil painter Don Sahli believes that every child is a great painter. It's when we grow up and become adults that we stifle our artistic side. Sahli has been painting since he was 17 and refuses to abandon his passion. He's spent his entire adult life painting and teaching others to do the same.

"Some see art and painting as luxury, something that is not needed every day," he said. "Art and painting to me are more like a sustenance, which is needed; art and painting are like the need for bread and water."

Sahli's work is reminiscent of the Russian masters — not surprising, considering he studied under famous Russian colorist Sergei Bongart for three years before Bongart died.

Today through Sunday, Sahli, an Evergreen resident, will be showing his work at Beaver Creek Fine Art. He'll also spend time painting outside around Beaver Creek Village and inside the gallery.



Don Sahli, page B7 "Nearing the End of Autumn," by Don Sahli.

SPECIAL TO THE DAILY

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The artist: "I just paint and just try to paint the way I am and the way I feel. Yes, you can call me many things — a colorist, an impressionist, a humanist, a Russian impressionist. I have been called much worse, but in the end, I am just a painter."

The evolution: "I remember in kindergarten, we took those scrappy, rough, brown paper towels in the towel dispenser by the fountain, (and) we wet them and laid them out flat on the desk. We then took the colored chalk and began to draw and scribble. The colors were amazing, and it was great fun and visually exciting — I was hooked! My parents always gave me many paints and colors and crayons to work with. ... I was always allowed to make a mess. I don't remember a time when I was not an artist."

The medium: "I am an oil painter. It is very tactile. It is very forgiving. I can control it upside down and back the other way. It has been my tool for 30 years. I know its properties, personalities and secrets. When I think that I know it all and have experienced it all working with oil, then 'it' happens, and I find myself at square one, like I have never touched the paint before, and the whole wonderful journey begins again. I like the smell, the texture, the color, value and temperature of oil paint, ... and I really like how it spurts out of the tube with a gasp of liquid color."

The process: "Any artist, musician or creative person does not need wait for any certain mood. Is it bogus to sit around and wait for the muse to sing? Or the inspiration to

i If you go ...

Who: Artwork by oil painter Don Sahli.
Where: Beaver Creek Fine Art, 210 Offerson Road, Beaver Creek.

When: Today through Sunday. The artist will attend the show from 4 to 8 p.m. each day.

More information: Call 970-845-8500, or visit www.beavercreekfineart.com.

appear? Do you sit around and wait for hunger to eat? No, of course not. If you want to live, you eat. ... If you want to be an artist, you paint. ... No one allows this to happen; you just do it."

Inspiration: "The act of mixing one color into another is exciting. The view of the sun rising with slight pinks is exciting, even in the morning when I do not want to be up. ... The way someone views a painting that I have done is compelling. They stand there and ponder, leaning their head to one side. To hear that my image made them think, made them feel something and gave them an emotion — a positive emotion — is stunning."

The fun side: "I have not become a true (art) collector because if I did, I'd lose it all — my house, my car, my family. I would be addicted to (collecting) and want it all for my walls."

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