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FEATURED

Anoka plein air painter displays work at Rumriver Art Center

Paige Kieffer Jan 29, 2019



Paul T. Boecher, an Anoka plein air impressionist painter, is showing his exhibit "A Sense of Place" through Saturday, Feb. 16.

Anoka plein air impressionist painter Paul T. Boecher is displaying his exhibit "A Sense of Place" through Feb. 16 at the Rumriver Art Center, 2665 Fourth Ave., Suite 103A, Anoka.

Boecher, 77, has been a painter since he was 12-years-old. He was taught painting in high school and while attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Boecher said he had an instant connection with painting. He primarily paints with acrylic and watercolors but has also worked with oil and pastel paints.

“Painting really allows me to capture a mood and get a viewer involved in a story or a sense of place,” Boecher said. “There’s a lot of atmosphere in all my paintings.”

Boecher has also been a sculptor as long as he’s been a painter. He often works with wood or clay as a sculpting medium.

In the 1980s Boecher rarely painted or sculpted because he was busy running his own advertising agency in the Twin Cities. In the early 1990s he lost his advertising business because he hadn’t updated it with the rise of computers, he said.

A friend of Boecher’s commissioned him to make a sculpture in 1992. Since then he’s been working as a fine artist in Minneapolis and now Anoka, where he lives and has a studio.

“That set me on a whole new path,” he said.

Boecher describes himself as an impressionist painter. He not only admires Impressionist painters like Claude Monet and Pierre-Auguste Renoir, but he also found inspiration from Hudson River School landscape artists. These artists often practiced plein air painting, which is the act of painting outdoors.

“People often ask me why I don’t just take a picture rather than paint something outdoors,” Boecher said. “If you take a picture, you lose that sense of actually being there. When you’re painting outdoors you get to use all your other senses to add more sense of place to your painting.”

He said experiencing natural elements like wind, light, noise, taste and feel in real time helps add more to a piece.

“When you’re painting plein air, it affects you as an artist visually and sensually, and it allows you to really put yourself into that painting,” Boecher said. “Ultimately the viewer gets a chance to see that beauty you’re looking at.”

Boecher has created plein air paintings at a number of locations including in Anoka, Roseville, Wayzata and Hudson, Wisconsin. He has also done pieces in the city of Ten Sleep and Yellowstone Falls at Yellowstone National Park, both in Wyoming

For the past two years, Boecher has taught plein air painting at the Rumriver Art Center. He routinely takes his students to places to do plein air paintings around Anoka and the greater Twin Cities.

"I love sharing plein air painting with my students and see how far they progress throughout the classes," he said.

"Paul does a great job at not approaching a painting with a set idea, but instead lets the painting speak to him each time," said Rumriver Art Center Director Larry Weinberg. "He has a unique way with his art, and he's also able to translate that through not only his artwork, but his teaching as well."

Boecher's "Sense of Place" show now on display at the art center is a retrospective show with pieces going back to 1965. It opened Jan. 12, when Boecher unveiled his most recent painting, "A Woman's Work is Never Done."

Boecher's exhibit includes more than 20 paintings and sculptures, many of which are for sale. His wife, Kathy Boecher, also wrote a number of poems for the show that correlate with the exhibit, including her poem "A Sense of Place."

"With this show I want people to know the importance of getting away from their daily hustle and bustle and really taking the time to experience the beauty that is out there," Paul Boecher said.

To learn more about signing up for a class with Boecher, visit the Rumriver Art Center website at rumriverart.com or call 763-323-8830.

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