



Mary Williams explains a work created by a Wood River Valley artist to part of the group from Magic Valley Rehabilitation Services.

Art Tour Provides New Experience for Adults

STORY AND PHOTO BY KAREN BOSSICK,
Eye on Sun Valley, August 17, 2016

Mary Williams gestured towards Hailey artist Mary Roberson's "Prairie Storm" painting as she addressed the 10 adults gathered around her.

"You can see the storm brewing in the background," she

said, describing how Roberson had used a lot of different colors to create the stormy look.

“Yeah, yeah. I see the storm,” replied Chris Henbest. Henbest paused at another wall hanging, which boasted 25 cubes covered in glossy reddish brown acrylic paint.

“Wow!” he said, as he admired Judith Kindler’s work.

It was a three-letter critique that Henbest and several of his colleagues from Magic Valley Rehabilitation Services would use several more times throughout the morning as they examined 52 works of art created for the Wood River Valley Studio Tour.

Wood River Valley Studio Tour Suzanne Hazlett invited the group to Ketchum this week for a tour of an exhibition being held at nexStage Theatre.

It was a new experience for those involved with the nonprofit organization, which provides job training and other services for young adults with disabilities like Down syndrome, blindness, post traumatic stress disorder and Asperger’s syndrome.

“Most of them have never toured a gallery or museum before,” said Susan Nickell, marketing director for Magic Valley Rehabilitation Services.

“It’s a fun activity, a chance for them to get out and do something different, added Sherri Albrecht, services manager. “Some of them like to do their own art—color, draw—so I think this will inspire them.”

Williams, co-director of the Wood River Valley Studio Tour,

told the group as they began that she'd ask them to pick a favorite piece and tell why it was their favorite.

“Think about what art means to you. What colors speak to you? Does a painting bring up a particular emotion?” she added, as they eagerly shook their heads affirmatively.

The group gave her their full attention as she described how Ketchum photographer Marc Longley photographed his subject through ice.

“If you look closely, you can see the bubbles in his work,” she said.

The onlookers were touched by Judy Pittman's portrait of a border collie looking up as if to say, “Can I go, too?” Roger White took a picture of Anne Jeffery's “Winter Feathers” to show friends back in Twin Falls. And Skyler Thomas boasted flat out that Ginny Blakeslee Breen's floral portrait was the biggest flower he'd ever seen.

“I love this piece!” he exclaimed.

Several of the participating artists were on hand to give brief spiels about their work.

Hazlett told how she painted her encaustic painting on a shallow box instead of a canvas and how she painted with melted beeswax. Ketchum painter Will Caldwell described how he painted the aspen near his home west of Ketchum.

“I like the gold—it's the color of the sun,” observed Skyler Thomas.

Deborra Bohrer told the group how she had recently started

painting sandhill cranes. Then she got a surprise as one timid man moved closer and closer until he could whisper approval of a painting she hadn't even thought about.

"I like your toes!" he told her, looking down at her red toenail polish.

When the tour was over the group retreated to the lobby of the nexStage Theatre where Hailey jewelry designer Lisa Horton and Susan Nieves showed them how to make zipper pulls and key chains with bottle caps, beads and other beads.

This being the first time to Ketchum for most, they also peppered tour leaders with questions: Where is Sun Valley? Where do people ski? When is the hotel being built across the street going to be done?

Asked if they would like to come back for another tour next year, they responded with a resounding yes.

"This was my first time to Sun Valley, my first time to an art gallery. It was fun," said Ed Hertel. "I really liked the sculptures. And I want to come back when I retire. I retire in 2018—then I want to come back because I can paint full time."

http://eyeonsunvalley.com/Story_Reader?StoryId=2972