

Anton Pavlenko

Capturing raw beauty

ARTIST Anton Pavlenko describes himself as “still a kid” because he would rather be “playing outdoors than in the studio.” In other words, he would rather paint landscapes in the open air than paint still-life or figurative works while trapped inside. Pavlenko, who calls Portland, OR, home, is quickly gaining attention for his loose, expressive depictions of natural wonders. Last year he garnered four top awards at plein-air events across the country, ranging from Plein Air Richmond in Virginia to Sonoma Plein Air in California.

A native of Ukraine, Pavlenko moved to the United States in 1990 at the age of 5. As a teenager he began studying oil painting by reproducing works by French Impressionist Claude Monet and Russian Impressionist Isaac Levitan. Today, although he travels to various plein-air shows, he is most fond of painting not far from his front door in locales like the Columbia River Gorge, a place that for him sums up all the raw and wild beauty of the Pacific Northwest.

In his painting *THE CHICKEN COOP*, Pavlenko depicts a weathered structure

in Yamhill, OR, bathed in late-afternoon spring light. Yamhill is near Portland but, at the same time, reminiscent of a faraway place in the artist’s memories. “This is one of those rustic scenes that remind me of villages in Ukraine,” he says. “It’s hard to find really raw scenes like this lately. Many farms and landscapes look very trimmed and manicured.”

Water and trees are common elements in Pavlenko’s portrayals of the landscape. “I like the way water integrates with the landscape, and it isn’t rigid or static,” he says. “I also enjoy panting scenes with trees because they are the most gestural and humanlike element in the landscape.”

A firm believer in painting *en plein air*, Pavlenko says he wants to feel “the way the sun burns in the heat of the day or cold wind howls and stings in the winter. Overall I’d love for someone to look at my paintings and simply experience a glimpse of what it feels like to be human,” he says. “That’s what I like to feel when I view art.”

—Bonnie Gangelhoff

representation

Brian Marki Fine Art, Portland, OR, and Palm Springs, CA; **Ryan Gallery**, Lincoln City, OR; **DragonFire Studio & Gallery**, Cannon Beach, OR.

upcoming shows

Los Gatos Plein Air, Los Gatos, CA, June 19-20.

Solo show, **Annie Meyer Gallery**, Portland, OR, June 26-July 31.

Plein Air & More, DragonFire Studio & Gallery, June 26-28.

Pacific Northwest Plein Air, Hood River, OR, August 3-31.

Two-person show, **Brian Marki Fine Art**, Portland, OR, September.

Sonoma Plein Air, Sonoma, CA, September 14-19.

Stormy Weather Arts Festival, DragonFire Studio & Gallery, November.



▲ *Crooked River Canyon*, oil, 16 x 20.

◀ *The Chicken Coop*, oil, 12 x 16.