

ARTS & CULTURE

'Plein air' painters captured Nebraska landscapes

ART SHOULD not be isolated from everyday experience," Eugene Kingman argued.

The artist, who also served as the Joslyn Art Museum's director after World War II, saw it as related to everything we do and fundamental to being human.

Nowhere was that perhaps more evident to Kingman, who died in 1975, than during the time he spent painting outdoors — "en plein air" — capturing the bucolic stretches of land surrounding Omaha as well as landscapes throughout the U.S. and Europe.

Some of those works will be on view starting this weekend at Gallery 1516 in "Plein Air Artists: Kingman-Dunbier-Gilder," a show that also includes the work of Kingman's contemporaries Augustus Dunbier and Robert Gilder. Together, the three comprise some of the finest plein air painters who have worked in Nebraska.

"These three artists all knew each other and were very well-known in the arts community," gallery director Patrick Drickey said of the painters, who were active from roughly the late 19th century well into the 20th century. "You really were not a member of society unless you owned a Gilder, Dunbier or Kingman."

Their popularity derived from each artist's considerable skill at distilling the feel of the landscape into a style that was inimitably his own. Gilder lived and worked in Fontenelle Forest in a log cabin he dubbed "Wake Robin," after a book on bird watching. His winterscapes, for which he became famous, beautifully depicted the majesty and solitude of the wooded area.

Kingman often captured the rural areas just outside Omaha. He kept a painting kit in the trunk of his car, and after finishing the day at Joslyn, he often headed west to spend several hours capturing farms, fields and barns dappled with sunlight — places long since lost to the city's urban expansion.

Dunbier considered himself an impressionist, and his paintings communicate the mood and feeling of a place as much as the physical landscape. His depiction of a



"Memorial Park," by Eugene Kingman

Harvest Festival in Brownville brims with activity, perfectly communicating the enthusiastic hum of the crowd.

What's particularly compelling about Gallery 1516's show is the timeless quality of some of the views the three artists painted. Dunbier's Devil's Slide at Hummel Park, Kingman's Memorial Park and Gilder's Fontenelle Forest images, while very much of their time, feel contemporary to today.

"These paintings are important to Omaha, the history of

painting in Omaha and to history, period," Drickey said. "They give us a good sense of where we were at the turn of the last century."

Gallery 1516, 1516 Leavenworth St. "Plein Air Artists: Kingman-Dunbier-Gilder". Opening reception: 6:30 to 9 p.m. Saturday. Through Oct. 13. gallery1516.org or 402-305-1510.

→ KIM CARPENTER

NEW THIS WEEK

Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, 724 S. 12th St. "Thinking Critically About Sound Art." Journalist and critic Geeta Dayal presents the interwoven histories of sound art and 20th-century experimental music and discusses the nature of sound. 6 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday. bemiscenter.org or 402-341-7130.

Cali Commons, 518 N. 40th St. "Open Life Drawing." Explore creative expression with life drawing and shared feedback and critiques. 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday. Donations accepted. calicommons.com or 402-513-2321.

El Museo Latino, 4701 S. 25th St. "Saturday Art Fun." Families can make an interactive Quetzalcóatl puppet, and then see where the feathered Aztec god of sun and wind is represented in the current Guatemalan exhibit "HUIPILES: Indigenous Textiles from Guatemala." 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Saturday. elmuseolatino.org or 402-731-1137.

Ginger's Hang-Up Custom Framing Studio & Art Gallery, 8455 Frederick St. "Eclectic." Features

paintings by Katrina Methot-Swanson, Courtney Kenny, Judith Anthony Johnston, Valerie Light Anderson, Debra Joy Groesser, Conrad Hinz and Cindy Mathiasen, pottery by Tom Quest, bronze sculptures by Pete Wroblewski and pyrography by Linda Hatfield. Opening reception: 5 to 8 p.m. Saturday. Through Sept. 30. gingershangup.com or 402-391-6440.

Harvester Artspace, 1000 S. Main St., Council Bluffs. "Eclectic Eye Candy." Features work by Brenna Nielsen, Sarah Selders and Patty Talbert. Opening reception: 6 to 9 p.m. Friday. Through Sept. 20. facebook.com/Harvesterartistlofts.

Joslyn Art Museum, 2200 Dodge St. "Everyday People: The Art of James E. Ransome." Ransome, who illustrated over 60 children's books, used vivid oil, acrylic and watercolor paintings to depict inspiring stories about unknown characters like Uncle Jed and Aunt Flossie and individuals who made history like Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, Louis Armstrong and Satchel Paige. Saturday through Feb. 9, 2020.

Also at Joslyn: "Free College Weekend: 'The Art of Seating.'" Free entry to the current exhibition for students with valid college ID. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. "Garden Yoga." Instructors from YOGA NOW guide participants through basic poses to help strengthen the body and center the mind. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Sunday. Suggested donation: \$5. joslyn.org or 402-342-3300.

KANEKO, 1111 Jones St. "Movement Series: Process." Tbd. dance collective discusses the development of past, present and future site-specific productions and choreographic work. 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Thursday.

Also at Kaneko: "Re-Purpose After Hours." Includes a visit to the exhibition, access to "tour only" experiences, insight into artwork, light refreshments and a "WASTE NOT" grab bag and a special gift from Kaneko. 7 to 9 p.m. Friday. Registration required. Members: \$20; nonmembers: \$30. thekaneko.org or 402-341-3800.

Le Ventre Collaborative Space, 1226 S. 20th St. "Anodyne: A Sensual Erotic Art Exposé."

Features a night of erotic art, including body painting, burlesque performances, etc. 9 p.m. Saturday. \$10-\$45. facebook.com/thedopestart or 402-708-1540.

Roberta and Bob Rogers Gallery, 1806 Vinton St. "The Ringo Starr Art Show." Features signed prints by the former Beatle. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday. rbrg.com or 402-496-4797.

Split Gallery, 2561 Leavenworth St. "Courtney Kenny Porto Summer Studio Sale." Features artwork in a variety of sizes, formats and price points. 4 to 8 p.m. Saturday. split.gallery.

Union for Contemporary Art, 2423 N. 24th St. "Plays Out Loud! 'Simply Heavenly.'" The musical comedy has a book and lyrics by Langston Hughes and music by David Martin, and is based on Hughes' novel "Simple Takes A Wife" and other Simple stories. The setting is Paddy's Bar, a refuge where the hard-working or out-of-work regulars all have a good enough reason to sing the blues. 7 to 8:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$5. u-ca.org or 402-933-3161.