

Art Adventure | Sam Dalkilic-Miestowski



Artist profile: 'Landscape' Mark VanderVinne

Mark VanderVinne may be new to The Steeple Gallery, but the talented artist is not new to the art scene in Northwest Indiana.

As shown by the following paintings, VanderVinne specializes in landscapes blending realism and some impressionism in colors reflecting light and emotions.

The artist shared his thoughts on his pathway to creating fine art. He was born and raised in the town of Eldridge, Iowa. For most of his youth, his large back door looked out to the farms and rural scenery not far away. He remembers standing at the glass door admiring the way the light changes from season to season and even within the day. Mark believes it was in these moments that his love and admiration of light and the landscape were formed.

Changing from major to major while attending Central College of Pella, Iowa, he decided to

honest in technical skills and understanding of light and color. It forces me to quickly capture the essence of a scene," he said, though he believes the safety of the studio is where he can spend time with a piece to really hone in on the mood and the best way to express it. He continually strives to have three essential criteria in his work: Mood, competency of Skill and Self-Expression. He believes when all three of these criteria come together a remarkable piece of art is born.

JoAnne and Dave Shafer of Munster recently attended a May 9 reception at the Steeple Gallery and had this to share on Mark's work, "When we first saw Mark VanderVinne's en plein air paintings, we immediately admired the artist's blend of impressionism and realism.

"Later, we met Mr. VanderVinne at the recent show, and we recognized his enthusiasm for painting. We are certain his work will increase in



take a life drawing class. The professor took him aside one day and told him he needed to go to art school. Mark was surprised by this, but took his advice and attended the American Academy of Art in Chicago where he graduated in 1991.

While he has drawn for as long as he can remember, Mark didn't start painting until much later.

For Mark, learning how to paint really didn't start until art school. "I learned more in the first month than I had in the 19 years it took to get there," Mark said. At the Academy, Mark practiced the fundamentals of art daily, taking classes in many different media as well as in illustration and advertising.

Mark works both en plein air (in open air/outside from life) and in his studio. While most of the fieldwork is used for studies and memory of a moment or location, he believes it is vital to his art. "Working outdoors keeps me

value as his reputation spreads."

While based in representational painting, Mark's influences are many and varied: From the Dutch landscapes of the 17th Century to the Tonalists of the Hudson River School to the French and American Impressionists to Contemporary artist.

In fact, he likens his own style as Tonal Impressionists, and admits, that's probably not exactly accurate. However, it does convey the idea that the Eastern and Western American painting theories are met in the Midwest, where Mark was raised, lives and paints the local landscape.

Mark VanderVinne has won several awards including the Curator Choice Exhibitor for his painting, "A Cold Day," in the 2005 Winter Around the Coyote Festival in Chicago.

He also was a finalist in The Artist's Magazine National Competition Finalist, Landscape



Photos provided to the Star

Artist Mark Vander Vinne, an Iowa native, took up landscape painting after attending the American Academy of Art in Chicago. The award-winning artist will share his views on art at a seminar to be held at the Steeple Gallery in St. John on July 18.



Category for his painting, "Lingering On" in 2006. And most recently, VanderVinne won an award for the Richeson 75 Finalist, for the oil painting, "Wind & Wander" and "Moonlight Lullaby."

VanderVinne will be giving a color theory art lecture sponsored by the Steeple Gallery and the St. John Parks Department July 18 at the Steeple Gallery. This class is open to anyone just curious about art. We encourage those who have a thirst for knowledge to sign up for an enlightening lecture.

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Office location
112 W. Clark Street
Crown Point, IN 46307

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CROWN POINT STAR
An Independent Newspaper

Issue No. 21
Published weekly at 112 W. Clark Street, Crown Point, IN.
Entered as periodicals.
Postage paid at Crown Point, IN 46307 (USPS 302-060) under act of Congress of March 9, 1879.

Postmaster: send address changes to P.O. Box 419, Crown Point, IN 46308-0419.

See terms and conditions relating to advertising orders, page 9.

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Some thoughts from Mark Vander Vinne on understanding color.

“For many people there seems to be an underlying mystery as to how color works. Some are able to use color well, but can’t explain why colors are harmonious.

“Others struggle with color, never being able to quite grasp its secret. This lecture will delve deeply into the exploration of color and its many aspects, beginning with defining what color is and its properties;

how we perceive color; a discussion of various color systems (including one with a five-color wheel); and finally ending with how to create color contrast and harmonies.

“Whether you are just starting out or have been working with color for a long time, this presentation will help you make sense of the use of color in your own artwork.”

This program is open to everyone and is offered at the Steeple Gallery 11107 Thiel



Photos provided to the Star

Landscape artist Mark Vander Vinne will discuss his use of color and the many aspects of the use of color in works of art shown in his works featured on page 2 and here. He works both out-of-doors and in a studio to recreate his personal impressions of nature which are often reflective of the changing seasons.

Street, St. John, acting as host for the event.

The lecture is from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., July 18. Fees are \$25 for St. John residents; \$28 non-residents.

Sam Dalkilic-Miestowski can answer questions at (219) 365-1014, or e-mail samowner@sbcglobal.net.

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