

Wyoming Plein Air

TEXT BY REBECCA BARRETT
OWNER, THE LINK GALLERY, CHEYENNE



Rita Cirillo, "Brilliant Sky"

The Wyoming Plein Air painting event starts its third successive year on 1st August and runs through to 14th August. This event is a collaboration between The Link Gallery and Deselms Fine Art in Cheyenne and this year we have 70 artists from California to Connecticut and many states in between including local artists. The artists paint around Cheyenne and Wyoming for the two week event. The idea of the event is for the attending artists to paint En Plein Air, that simply means from life, no studio work or painting from photographs is allowed, in keeping with the longer established events held nationally.

The artists were juried into the event from a selection process earlier in the year and will spend at least three days of their stay painting in and around downtown Cheyenne. This gives the public and sponsors alike the opportunity to meet and chat with the artists, something that they all enjoy. This in turn raises the profile of the event, as well as the galleries and artists. Many artists spend longer than three days painting around Cheyenne and they also arrive at different times, so there are usually a variety of artists around town on any day of the event.

Artists finish painting on Thursday, 12th August and then will turn in their work to whichever sponsoring gallery selected them. The work is then judged and put on sale at the Gala Openings on Saturday 14th August and will remain available at the galleries until the end of September. On 14th August there is also another competition, a Quick Draw held outside the Cheyenne Depot Museum, which starts at 8:30 AM while the Plein Air judging takes place. For the Quick Draw, the artists have to paint what they can see in an hour and a half. We provide models and still lifes, but they can also paint the farmers' market which is in full swing then, or some of the historic buildings that they can see from there. The artists are timed and when the whistle is blown to signify 'time up' they take the resulting paintings to The Plains Hotel across the road where they will be judged and then auctioned. Anything not sold may be hung in the galleries as part of the Plein Air show.



P.W., Untitled

This year, we are lucky to have John Encinias, who is a nationally renowned artist, as our Plein Air judge. Born near Santa Fe, NM, Mr. Encinias began painting at the age of 15 and began work as a full-time professional artist in 1975. Describing his technique as 'impressionistic realism', he prefers painting from direct subjects. Mr. Encinias' work has been in shows at the National Wildlife Art Museum in Jackson, WY; the Loveland Museum in CO; and is currently being exhibited at the American Embassy in Rome, Italy, among many others.

The benefits to Cheyenne of the Wyoming Plein Air are many and varied and include both cultural and business benefits. The event helps to bring business downtown and also to raise the city's profile locally, nationally and internationally as an arts destination. Financially, using a conservative approximation of \$120 per head per night for accommodation, food and gas, (as per the Cheyenne Visitor's Bureau's advice) and logging the overnight stays of the 68 artists that came to paint around Cheyenne and Wyoming last year, in two weeks this event brought in around \$33,500 – and probably more – for Cheyenne hotels, camp sites, gas stations and restaurants. If you add up the nights spent by artists in Jackson, Cody, Green River and many other locations that they also travelled to last year, this figure may well be double that. The event obviously helps the local and state businesses, and thus the local and state economy. The event brings in sales and lodging tax and will do so again this year.

We have been lucky to have plenty of local media interest, with both the local TV and newspapers giving us plenty of coverage. In addition, we advertise in Southwest Art Magazine, who have also been our sponsors. Other sponsorship includes the Wyoming Arts Council, Cheyenne Downtown Development Authority, Cheyenne Visitors Bureau, Jonah Bank, the Nagle Warren Mansion and other local businesses. In addition we are delighted that, once again, we have been given permission for the artists to paint inside the State Capitol Building!

All the artists share that they have a great time here, and love the way they are greeted and looked after by the people of Cheyenne and Wyoming. Last year they also said that the social events we arrange were THE BEST that they had encountered in any Plein Air event anywhere else in the country! The social events are for the artists to enjoy after painting and to get to know new friends, as well as be reunited with old ones. This year's events will feature the same fun for everyone! In fact, we have been thrilled with the way the artists look forward to the event and their stay and reception here.

Schedule & Information

1 to 12 August. Painting Event commences, with artists painting around Cheyenne and Wyoming.

14 August: Judging of Plein Air at host galleries

Quick Draw outside the Cheyenne Depot Museum 8:30 AM to 10:00 AM

Auction at The Plains Hotel Cheyenne - judging and pre-auction viewing from 10:30 to 11:00 AM; Auction starts at 11:00 AM

Gala Opening and Awards Ceremonies at sponsoring galleries. Show open to the public from 1:00 PM; Gala opening and Awards from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM.

The Link Gallery

1609 Capitol Avenue Cheyenne, WY 82001 307 778 0330

www.linkgalleryonline.com

Deselms Fine Art

124 West Lincolnway, Cheyenne, WY 82001 307-432-0606

www.deselmsfineart.com