

Landscapes range from real to surreal

By KEVIN COSTELLO
CORRESPONDENT

Regardless of time, circumstance and style, landscape artists essentially respond to the majestic complexity of nature.

They either record it with the pristine clarity of realism, subjectively as a metaphor of the self, or as a meditative stimulus to poetic abstractions.

Like other independent genres reappearing in the 16th century, landscape painting practiced in the classical world vanished with that world's disintegration.

As a mode of visual expression, contemporary landscape painting has shaped our understanding of our environment, and in recent times, made us conscious of the fragility of the biospheres contained within.

TICKETS

Lots of Landscapes

On display through July 30 at Allyn Gallup Contemporary Art, 556 S. Pineapple Ave., Sarasota. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays-Saturdays. Call 366-2093 or access www.miramararts.com.

"Lots of Landscapes" at Allyn Gallup Contemporary Art features 17 artists responding in very different ways to this common ground.

James Couper is an un-

abashed romantic painter. "Joe River Camp" is a large, horizontal triptych that takes viewers from two identical views of the Everglades at two different times of day in the lower panels to a third, crowning, arched panel of the night sky above.

Couper reflects on the ubiquitous quiet of that immense river of grass surmounted by the Milky Way. It is an eloquent evocation of our particular place in this world and universe.

William Nichols' painting, "Pond Reflections," is a fine example of post-photo realist sub-

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COURTESY PHOTO

William Nichols' painting, "Pond Reflections," is a fine example of post-photo realist subjectivity.

A bounty of landscapes

LANDSCAPES FROM 29

jectivity. His thinly applied glazed pigments give the experience of confident execution, while his representations, although initially realistic, on close inspection have the character of expressionism.

Nichols' luscious views of nature, for all their bucolic exuberance, equally reflect classical poise and a conscious geometric order behind the foliage.

Greg Edmonson has contemporized Cubism, creating landscapes at dawn or dusk to silhouette a copse of trees. Each painting is composed of several illusionist rectangular panels, and each panel reflects a slightly different view of the landscape, as in a broken mirror.

His art is a fusion of romantic subjectivity and analytical geometry so well conceived that neither dominates the piece — each complements the other.

It is the genuine authenticity of these artists' visions that unites and enlivens the experience of this exhibit. As summer begins, these shaded ponds, night skies and imaginary places suggest cool clearings for the mind.