

Matt Flint

Capturing the rhythms of the natural world

His father once made testers for radar guidance systems. His sister is a nuclear power plant engineer. A second sister is a meteorologist. Wyoming painter Matt Flint grew up in a science-oriented family in rural Missouri. But when his interest in art started to blossom in high school, he says, his family was supportive of his natural talents. "My parents told me, 'Whatever you choose, do your best.'"

Flint took their advice and followed his dreams. Today he is a full-time artist and associate professor of art at Central Wyoming College. As this story was going to press he was preparing works for a group show this month at Gallery Mar in Park City, UT. The painter's major artistic concerns haven't strayed far from his student days at Central Missouri State University, where he earned a degree in fine art. "I've always been interested in texture and light quality. And there's always been an ebb and flow between abstraction and representational styles in my work," Flint explains.

His imagery usually features abstracted versions of animals, plants, and figures that dwell within simple geometric planes. Flint's mission is to capture the rhythms of the natural world by layering paint and creating rich, weathered textures that are scratched and scored like the landscape itself, which is constantly changing and re-forming. The results are haunting, multi-layered pieces that can also evoke the dusty, earthy palette of the Wyoming landscape.

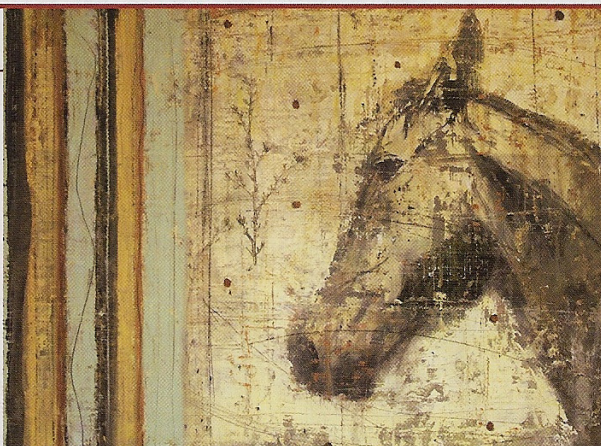
Flint uses an array of artistic tools. At times he employs standard implements like brushes and putty knives, but he also is fond of turning to kitchen gizmos like pasta makers with rollers and serrated wheels. "They make a great line," he explains.

Preliminary sketches, however, aren't part of his creative recipe. Instead he prefers to work out every thought directly on the piece itself, forming what he calls "a roadmap of the process." Thus, he is likely to begin a piece by painting a familiar image such as a plant. But this first image is likely to vanish or eventually be partially hidden, buried by the layers of paint that follow. "I like to get the base down and lay in an animal or some sort of mark, and then the real conversation starts," he says.

Flint, in fact, describes creating a work as a conversation between him and the work-in-progress. And in his case the dialogue is usually spontaneous, if he has his way. "The painting has to just happen. I want to be surprised. If it doesn't take a lot of turns, it is too easy," he says.

While an image may stand out in a painting, Flint wants viewers to spend some time to discern the many things going on beneath the surface. "We spend so much time looking at the landscape out a car window or at images on a computer," he says. "I really want people to slow down and pay attention to natural things." —**BONNIE GANGELHOFF**

◀ **WANDERERS, OIL/ALKYD, 40 X 35.**



▲ **WAITING, OIL/ALKYD/PENCIL, 22 X 30.**



▲ **SOLO, OIL/ALKYD/PENCIL, 35 X 29.**

DOSSIER

REPRESENTATION

Gallery Mar, Park City, UT; Visions West Gallery, Bozeman and Livingston, MT, and Denver, CO; Lyndsay McCandless Contemporary, Jackson Hole, WY; Stewart Gallery, Boise, ID; Legends Santa Fe, Santa Fe, NM; Soho Myriad, Atlanta, GA; www.mattflint.com.

UPCOMING SHOW

Group show, Gallery Mar, March 22-April 11.