



Brooks Yates

Bonnie Gangelhoff

Capturing the beauty of another era

The talents of Brooks Yates are the perfect marriage between the right brain and the left brain. By day, Yates, a father of four, works for a health and wellness company in new market development. By night (and very early in the morning), he is a fine artist who creates moody, atmospheric landscape paintings reminiscent of Edward Hopper.

At 29, his day job takes him to far-off corners of the globe. Last year he traveled to Japan, Israel, Australia, and New Zealand. This year his itinerary features trips to Germany, Great Britain, and Portugal. As usual, he plans to pack a sketch pad and visit art museums along the way. In spite of his master's degree in business from the University of Utah, Yates says his first love has always been art. And like many artists, he can hardly remember a year when he didn't draw.

By the time he was in high school, he was in advanced placement art classes. During his undergraduate years in college he was introduced to Utah-based landscape painter Seth Winegar and eventually began studying and painting with him.

Although he paints still lifes on occasion, landscapes have always been his genre of choice. And he is dedicated to that pursuit. Before he heads off to develop new business for his company, his usual routine is to rise at about 4 o'clock in the morning, hop in his car, and head to a desired location along the Wasatch River or the Rocky Mountains to paint, sketch, or take pictures. In winter, however, he makes a beeline to his studio instead.

As a landscape painter, he tries to capture the "ethereal feel" of scenes in various seasons, from the bright colors of fall to the muted palette of winter. "The trees change with every season, from deep greens to oranges and red. The grass changes from deep greens to golds," he says. "It is breathtaking."

But his favorite subjects are the 19th-century houses near his home in Kayesville, about 40 miles north of Salt Lake City.

"They have a rustic, high-quality feel to them. You know that every brick was laid by hand and they are not cookie-cutter homes. You know individuals spent a lot of time and effort on these places," he says.

If there is something in the landscape that is detracting from the house, he will remove it from the painting. It's all about capturing the beauty of the handcrafted house and the surrounding scenery. His strongest desire is to convey a sense of serenity in his work. "I want people to feel a sense of peace because our lives are so hectic today," Yates says. "Fast food is getting faster and it's all about speed, communication, e-mail, and texting. Our lives are out of control."

Ironically, Yates has quite a busy schedule himself. When asked how he fits so much into his days, he replies, "I can sleep when I'm dead."

Maren Bargreen, owner of Gallery Mar in Park City, says when she visited Yates' studio she immediately fell for the raw energy and textures she saw in his works. "There is an unschooled freshness to his compositions and palette choices that make his works incredibly unique. I see elements of Wyeth in his artworks," Bargreen says. "I am amazed at Yates' passion for his work and thankful that he doesn't need as much sleep as the average artist. It's incredible that a man of 29, with a wife and four children, can allow himself to relax enough to hone his talents and paint such peaceful works."