

March 2017

**Artists' Profile this month:  
Dena Peterson  
Scroll down**

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## **From the Allen Fine Art Studio**

Finished!

Strength doesn't come from what you can do.  
It comes from overcoming the things you thought you couldn't do.  
Unknown



"Resolution" 24x24 Oil Canvas

Recognize it?!



I love it! I think I have overcome the "Block"!

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Leslie Allen



Jean Apgar

*Online Exhibit: March 1, 2016 to April 30, 2017 at [www.waow.org](http://www.waow.org)*

An Online WAOW show of art in 2D and 3D  
March 1, 2017 to April 30, 2017  
[WAOW.org](http://WAOW.org)

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See if you recognize this installation piece in Canada!



I'm pleased to see it hanging over a piano; to me art and music go together (although when I was in High School we weren't allowed to study both!).  
I always paint to music.

And close to the piano:



This is a very early Plein air piece. (About 1990) A blooming bush in the canyon near Golden, CO.  
I remember climbing down into the canyon and painting near the creek.

(You know I would go anywhere to paint flowers that catch my eye!) It was with a group of artists taking a workshop with Rich Hilker. (deceased) Unbeknownst to everyone, he knew he had a short time to live and he chose to retire from his job as an airline pilot and paint Plein air! I remember Richard as a very kind and giving person.  
And he was very talented! We have two of his paintings in our collection.

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**This Plein Air painting has a new home in Alabama!**



“Poppies and Cornflowers” was painted in Taos, NM in the beautiful garden of the Casita where we were staying. It was after the 2012 PAAC Show that I had worked on all year and after the opening was over, it was so relaxing to just paint at my leisure, with Dave reading on the porch of course!

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**This painting below, painted in my favourite Plein air location, Lair O' The Bear, west of Morrison CO,**



looks great in its new surroundings!

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**Artists' Profile this month:**  
**Dena Peterson**

I've known Dena for several years; so long that I don't remember when or where we met! Not only is she an accomplished painter but she is one lovely lady. We are thrilled to have two of her works in our collection.



Colorado painter Dena Peterson recently spent five months in Poland working on the world's first fully painted feature film about Vincent Van Gogh, produced by Oscar-winning studios Breakthru Films and Trademark Films.

- The first question everyone wants to ask is.....how did you find this opportunity, or how did they find you?

I saw the Facebook trailer for the film and was so intrigued by the hand-painted nature of this film. Unlike any other! My daughter, Emily, told me they were still looking for artists. I went to the website and sent an email expressing my interest along with a link to my website. A couple months later, they emailed me and said they felt I would be a good fit and could I come and take a 3-day test at the Gdansk studio. I discussed it with my husband, Olon, and we decided I should go for it! I booked a flight there, passed the test, then went back to begin a 3-week training period before I started the actual work for the film. It all happened very quickly! I was paid enough to just cover living expenses while I was there, but not the travel. I am still working on paying off that debt!



Dena at Work



Starting Over



The Gendarme

- Has the film been released?

There is still not word as to when the film will be released. They just finished some post-production work about two weeks ago. They most likely will have its debut in a film festival this year, either Cannes or Sundance (which I think has passed), but I do know they plan for it to be released this year sometime. Film festivals give it exposure and then is more likely to be picked up by a distributor. There is an email list on the website where people can be notified of release dates and locations, [www.lovingvincent.com](http://www.lovingvincent.com). And see [IMDb.com](http://IMDb.com)

- You had to go to Poland for three days to test; what did the test consist of?

The test was three days of learning how to use the PAWS...painted animation work station, and the training was more of the same. Mostly to learn how to do the animation of the paintings. We all painted a scene of Armand, the main character and we did about 7 frames, not even one second of footage.



The PAWS

- Did the actors sit for you?

The process is a bit complicated, but it's basically started with the first frame of a previous filmed scene...so no, the actors were filmed before doing the actions of the scene, then we painted from that. We could stop each frame to paint it.

We took a high res photo of that painting, then scraped it off and repainted it based on the new movements of the character.



Douglas Booth AKA Armand visits



Close up: Armand in the Garden



We all painted on exactly the same sized boards under similar lighting conditions. Every second of film footage required 12 paintings. Depending on the length of a scene, we were painting from 50 to 200 frames per scene. So it was very tedious. Often, our supervisors and ultimately Dorota Kobiela, one of the directors and head painter, had to approve most of the paintings, so there was a lot of waiting time, as well. She had great attention to detail. I was chosen by her to paint her favorite scene, "Wheatfield with Crows", where Armand throws a stick into the field and the crows fly up and away. The first frame took me a week and she was very meticulous about it being just right, as it is based on one of his iconic paintings. But I was so honored that she trusted me with it!

The film required over 65,000 paintings. If laid down side by side, they would cover the entire island of Manhattan as well as England. I painted five scenes for the film...three with the Gendarme (the guy with the guns on the wall), a scene of Armand speaking in the garden with Dr. Gachet, and Wheatfield with Crows. I figured that I painted over 250 paintings, which equals about 21 seconds of film time for the 5 ½ months I painted there!





Painting Wheatfield with Crows

- You also explain the process on your blog... <http://www.denapaints.com> for those who might be interested.

The work was hard, but I want to emphasize that it was extremely rewarding! To see our work actually moving was amazing! We only got to see a rough cut of the film when we were there. The animation was not yet finished and there was no music. I am as anxious as anyone to see the finished film!

- How has the experience influenced or changed your own artwork and how that is reflected in the paintings that you have created since your return?

Although I was painting in Poland for 8-10 hours a day, it was a very different type of painting than you might think. Yes, we were expected to paint in the "Van Gogh" style...his later style, which is the setting of the film. This included thick brushwork, matching the colors on his original work, broken

color, sometimes an outlining of figures or other objects, directional brushwork, etc. That all depended on the scene we were creating and which of his original works it may have been based upon. The animation of the scenes was a very different animal. It required great attention to detail, especially for a portrait that was speaking...close attention to the movement of the lips, eyes, etc. This is very different from my style and approach to painting. So, I don't feel that it has really changed the way I work for my own paintings. I like Van Gogh because I love the thick brushwork, strong color, and spontaneous way he painted. I may be more aware of pushing that in my own work, but that has always been my goal, anyway. One thing I talk about when I speak about this experience is the problems I had personally with the attempt to "copy" his work. It is impossible to truly copy such greatness and such spontaneous brushwork. We were inspired by him and I believe we do justice to his work. But I also believe very strongly that we must always be ourselves in our work. We can learn from others and be inspired by them, but I can only ever be Dena Peterson in my paintings, as you can and should only be true to you when you paint!

- Agreed!

Two of Dena's recent paintings since returning home



Red Headed Visitor



Frozen Lake [Hunter-Wolff Gallery](#)

- Now that you are back home and have had time to let it all sink in, would you have done anything differently during your time overseas.
- Did you make friends with international artists?

I wish I would have had time to travel more in the area; however, we were there to do a job and they weren't able to give us much time off. As far as the work, I think I put everything into the project that I could. I do wish I could have gotten to know some of the other artists better, but, again, we just were so focused on the work and finishing the film that I was exhausted at the end of every day. I am happy to have gotten close with my roommate from England. She and I often shared a drink after work and had time to vent about the difficulties as well as to have a lot of laughs, too. Would I go back and do it again? I probably would! It was an amazing and unique project in which to be involved.

Yes, I am friends now with artist's from all over the world! As I mentioned, my roommate was from England. We later had two others join us, one from Mexico and another from Edinburgh. But I keep in touch by Facebook with many. Artists were from Canada, Spain, Poland, Ukraine, France, India, Iran, Czechoslovakia, Ireland, Russia, Serbia, Hungary, and Greece.

- How long have you painted? What/who influenced you to paint?

I've been a serious painter for 25 years. I have always drawn and painted since I was a young child. One of my first exposure to art was from a game called "Masterpiece". I would take out the cards with the paintings on it and just study them, not really playing the game at all! I later bought a book on French Impressionism and had posters of Renoir on my bedroom walls. My parents weren't artists,

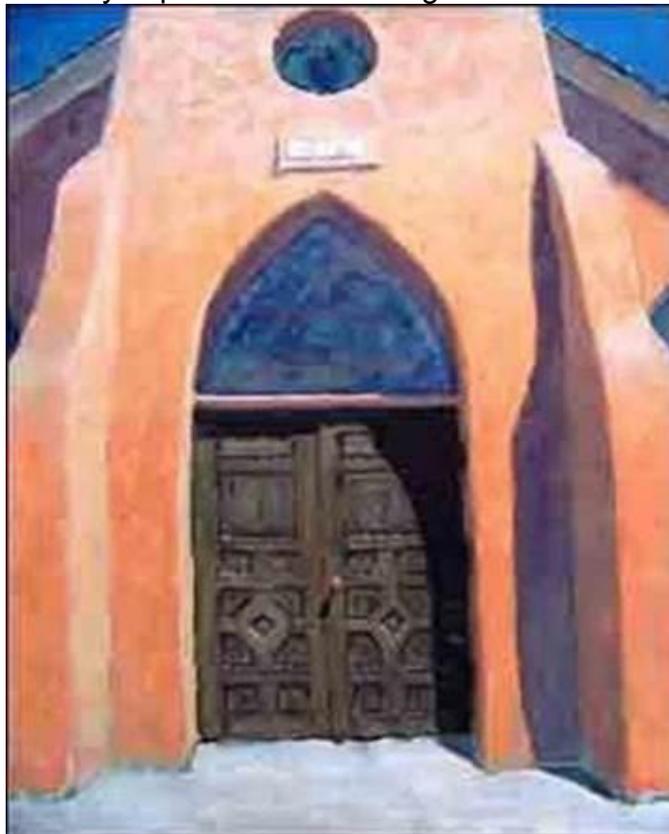
however; but, through books, I found my way to art. They were encouraging, but when I was in school, the smart kids were not encouraged to pursue art, which was unfortunate. I received a BS in Psychology and a MS in Counseling. All the while, I kept drawing and painting and taking classes. I basically raised my kids on my own, so had to put a career on the back burner for a while, but continued to find ways to study with some of the best teachers around that I could find, including at the Loveland Art Academy, the Denver Art Students' League, and at the Scottsdale Artists' School. I spent a year studying with Kevin Weckbach, a protégé of Quang Ho and I feel this really took my work to a new level.

- What percentage of your work is Plein air/studio?

I continue to paint both plein air and studio work about equally, always exploring new ideas and concepts in painting. I recently was taken on by Hunter-Wolff Gallery here in Colorado Springs. Van Gogh never believed in painting for others, but stayed true to his own vision during his lifetime. This may be why he only sold one painting while he was alive, but he is now appreciated for his unique vision. If studying him and his work has taught me anything, it is that we must always strive to find our unique way of seeing the world. That's what I hope to keep doing!

- Tell us what awards you have won and your Group Affiliations.

I've won many regional and national awards at a variety of exhibitions. I'm maybe most proud of being accepted in the Birds in Art International Exhibition and traveling show the first time I entered. I've also done some public art in Loveland, CO and was the chair of the Women Artists of the West National Exhibition in San Diego, CA several years back. I am a Signature Member of WAOW and the American Impressionists Society and long-time member of OPA. I am also a member of PAAC. I recently returned from doing a workshop in Naples, Florida as well as a presentation to the Kensington Country Club about my experience on "Loving Vincent".



An Adobe Welcome Oil 30"x 24" (One of my all-time favourite paintings of Dena's!)  
Available at Hunter-Wolff Gallery, [www.hunterwolffgallery.com](http://www.hunterwolffgallery.com)



Magpie in Snow Oil on Linen on Panel, 16" x 20" Accepted for the Birds in Art International Exhibition

- I have a presentation I've worked up about my experience in Poland. I've given it twice so far and am scheduled for two more in Colorado Springs. It's been very well-received, even though I am an introvert! so if you could let folks know that may be looking for something like that, I'd appreciate it!

Dena will be doing a presentation around the **Plein Air Artists Colorado 2017 Annual National Juried Exhibition**. The date is September 7th, the day before opening night. The presentation will be in Boulder. Details to Follow!

This would make a great presentation for the **2017 WAOW National Show in Maryland!**



Looks like Dena packed the house! Contact her if you would like to arrange a talk for your art group:

**Contact the artist about all work**



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