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ARTS



Courtesy photo

One of the paintings by Springfield artist Robert Kramer, who has an exhibition of his work at the Hult Center's Jacobs Gallery from Jan. 6 to Feb. 3.

Springfield artist uses home to evoke images

By Ming Rodrigues
Emerald Contributor

Something that's realistic often reaches out to the human race and strikes a chord in each of us. Even when it's art.

With Robert Kramer's paintings, you get the familiar feeling that you've been where he's been, met the same people and thought the same thoughts.

Following the American realist traditions of Thomas William Jones, Andrew Wyeth and Winslow Homer, Kramer's watercolor and drybrush paintings are not so much concerned with technique and design as with emotional impact. He works to create personal images of our relationship with the natural world.

"When we see something that's real, our senses are stimulated more profoundly as we're able to relate the subject to our lives," Kramer said. "This is not often the case with design that's not tied to something concrete."

Invariably, the in-touch appeal of his work owes a great deal, not to some far-flung inspirational corner of the world, but to his own neighborhood and the people who make up the small community in Springfield where he lives.

A local resident since

1963, Kramer's images depict life right on his door step — neighbors, family and friends, and the Oregon scenery and lifestyle. There's little in Kramer's work that is disconnected from his own way of life.

On this level, Kramer believes it's a lot easier to commit to working on something one's comfortable with or feels strongly about and this is why he made the switch from more than 20 years of painting in an abstract, non-objective style to a more conscious style just two-and-a-half years ago.

"I guess I became more aware of representational images and its emotional instead of decorative impact," said Kramer, who graduated in fine art from Cal State in Fullerton.

Rustic and meditative, the allure of Kramer's paintings is not how they jump out, bright and active, but in their muted moodiness. His use of light and darkness is particularly characteristic. He sees his subject for its obvious qualities at the same time as he interprets the image as it kicks around in his head.

"My pictures have a large chunk of what I actually see and I also inject light and

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