



Light and Space

New work by Mike Pease

The Oregon landscape continues to be a vital source of inspiration for many artists. Mike Pease, an architect and artist recognized as a pioneer in the use of colored pencil in fine art, is among them, as evidenced by his outstanding new work at the Alder Art Gallery in Coburg. The show runs through Nov. 18.

Pease is a realist in much the same way the Impressionists were realists. His subject matter is the world around him at a given moment, given certain light conditions, and his object is to record this perceived world in terms of its light and dark values.

"It's so easy," Pease said, "to get hooked on color when what really matters is the light and dark issue which is the structure of the picture. It's increasingly clear to me that in landscape what I care about is not just the

physical components but light." To study light and value in a chosen landscape, Pease first starts with a watercolor sketch, a medium that requires him to deal with the image as a whole without focusing on detail.

Pease shares with the Impressionists the use of unmixed primary colors over a light background but goes further in that he derives all the colors of the prism out of a palette limited to three pure pigments only, blue (cyan), red (magenta) and yellow.

Pease's colors are applied with visible strokes rather than blended in smooth overlapping layers as is more often the case with this medium. This allows for optical color mixing and also produces an impression of vigor and spontaneity. Pease's drawings are alive with color and texture.

In this particular group of works, pencil

marks come in several kinds, depending on the overall goal for the piece. "In this show there is a kind of debate going on about how best to look at a subject," Pease said. The two Fall Creek pieces illustrate that debate clearly: in *Fall Creek, Summer*, I have used small, careful strokes to slowly and deliberately capture the richness of detail in this scene; in *Fall Creek, September*, I have used broad, quick strokes to capture the overall sense of the scene, deliberately avoiding detail."

To further explore the image as a whole, Pease's pencil marks have lately extended beyond the regular hatchings that are still to be found in *Fall Creek, September*. In some of his paintings, he now has recourse to broad squiggly marks, and this is when his work is at its most impressionistic (the two *Columbia River* pieces, *November Woods*, *Skyros*).

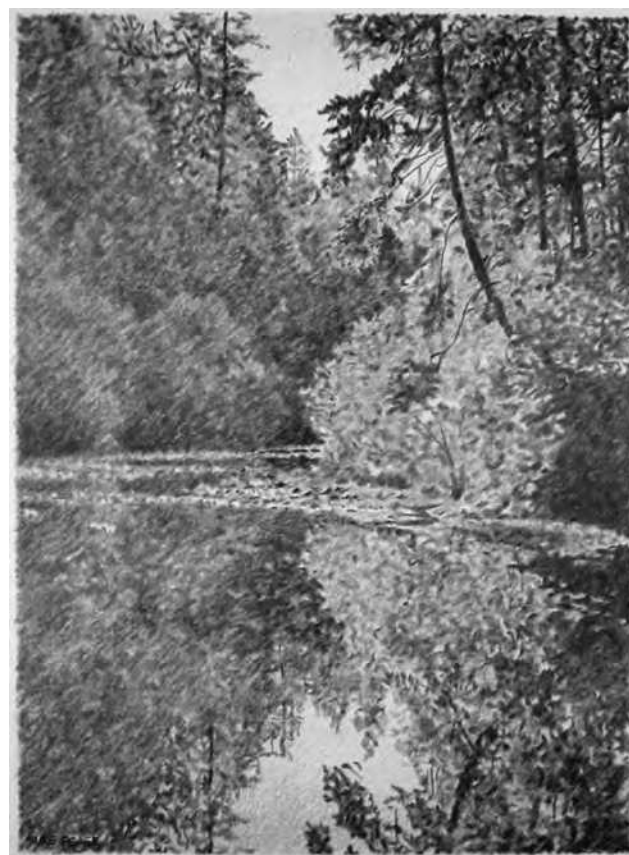
However, Pease's work always retains a measure of objective realism absent in impressionism. His compositions are centered

and classical, with traditional visual angles. Perspective is not flattened; instead, illusion of depth is emphasized. The landscape retains an architectural solidity. For Pease is not just concerned with light but with space and its construction.

Size in and of itself has an inescapable impact and Pease's use of a very large format — unusual in the medium of colored pencil — is a striking development, especially when his large panels are combined into triptychs.

Walking past one of these triptychs is akin to catching the view out of a triple-paned window — and what a view it is. *River Bank Path* begs us to go out there, inhabit that space, walk in it, leaves crunching underfoot, pungent earthy autumn smells in the air. And all around, that peculiar Northwest light, which, for all its different qualities, seems to arouse American painters the way the Mediterranean light did Europeans.

The exhibit runs through Nov. 18. Don't miss it. **EW**



(Artwork by Mike Pease, clockwise from top left)
Mountain Meadow, Colored pencil landscape
Fall Creek, September, Colored pencil landscape
River Bank Path, Colored pencil triptych





MAUDE KERNS art center

DIA DE LOS MUERTOS



Fiesta del estreno y recepción:
Viernes, el 21 de octubre, 6:00 – 9:00 de la tarde

Altars de comunidad y arte en exhibición
del 21 de octubre al 11 de noviembre

La exposición fue financiada parcialmente por una beca de Lane County Cultural Coalition.

Opening Fiesta Reception:
Friday, October 21 6:00-9:00 pm

Community Altars & Artwork on Display
October 21 through November 11

Exhibit funded in part by a Lane County Cultural Coalition Grant.

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