

Shared viewpoint

Works by Dawn Chandler and Joan Fullerton exhibited at Stables Gallery

By R. Scott Gerdes

There is a hint of synchronicity at work between Taos artists Joan Fullerton and Dawn Chandler, not to mention a personal and professional compatibility.

"Interestingly, when I tell Dawn I have been working in a different color palette from my usual and that it is mostly in blue, she will say, 'So have I,'" Fullerton shared.

Of their kindred natures Chandler offered, "We both approach our careers as artists with a matched level of rigor and discipline. It further helps that we see eye to eye on the presentation and display of our work, preferring as we do to work in 'series' and then exhibiting the work in a professional manner."

About four years ago Fullerton, at the urging of a mutual friend, introduced herself to Chandler. A lunch at Fullerton's home and studio and Chandler's perusal of her work were the seeds that sprouted a new friendship — and an idea to show their work together. "Frustrated by the inherent limitations" of showing at a cooperative gallery, the pair began talking about a duo show and pondered, "Why not?"

"At some point that summer — likely over coffee or wine — we started fantasizing aloud about how

cool it would be to have a show of our own; a show in which could exhibit our more 'abstract' work, have more than just a single, limited wall, and have the time to really plan and organize it well," Chandler recalled.



"Before Trees" by Joan Fullerton

What culminated was "Reflections and Revelations" in 2006.

Their new works baring a mainstream of traditional landscapes to more "intuitive" pieces in mixed media will be shown together once again in the "Reflections and Revelations II" exhibit at Stables Gallery. An opening reception is planned for Saturday (Aug. 9), from 5-7 p.m.

Fullerton estimates that 70 pieces

in all will be on view with roughly 35 being her contribution. She is not bound by any subject matter or painting style. A former college art instructor and watercolorist, Fullerton answers only to her inner voice that has often been telling her to go abstract. Most of the time she is working with oils and the lush webs offered by mixed media. A sabbatical to Italy in 1999 and a trip to Morocco in 2003

are frequent influences in her work.

Of her new works she said, "I believe I have achieved significant growth in my content and my execution since our last show. Several of my paintings have really surprised me; I find I am still getting acquainted with them."

Because her exhibit in 2006 seemed a bit "heavy" to her, Fullerton envisioned creating works in a "lighter tone," maybe more "whimsical." Her latest pieces feature more cool hues, something she has not had the "calling" to use. That, she said, scared her a little bit because she saw unfamiliar colors. "I could count on one hand the number of paintings I have created with blue paint," she revealed.

The result of the unfamiliar is simplified images, strong contrasts of value, very abstract compositions with hints of recognizable objects.

Chandler also feels that her work is evolving: "At the heart of my 2006 body of work was my daily watercolor series, in which some interesting themes began to emerge. Some of those themes — the archway, the feminine form, among others — are investigated yet further in this new work."

Fullerton's favorite paintings are those that are not about her ... those that are less self-conscious.

"When I am able to let go and allow it, my art comes from a place beyond my 'little story,'" Fullerton revealed. "Maybe then it comes from the collective unconscious, or to borrow from Kahlil Gibran, 'from life's longing for itself,' when I can let go of my ego control, the paintings come through me but are not from me."

Chandler readily admits that being an artist is what defines her. "Even when I am struggling with a painting, rarely do I feel ill at ease there," she shared. "It's where I am supposed to be, doing exactly what I am supposed to be



Artists Joan Fullerton and Dawn Chandler

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doing."

Stylistically and thematically the painters are the proverbial two peas in a pod. Their shared inspiration comes from nature, interpersonal relationships and thoughts on senses and shades of self.

"Our choice of symbols and forms often echo and ricochet back and forth from each other's work," Chandler described. "Our work relates as we are both often drawn to similar textures and color relationships."

Exhibiting work to the public, Fullerton said, is the offering of "a visual experience not unlike meditation, a still moment in the midst of chaotic times." Creating her work is all about the release of self-expression, something she's been doing since the 6th grade.

"It is my way to synthesize human experience, learn about the world and myself," she elaborated. "My way to find 'the flow' where time and circumstance become irrelevant. And hopefully, with my art I am giving something back to the world."

Accepting that people's opinions of her work are just that, opinions, Chandler doesn't concern herself with reactions.

"Often times (a viewer) might not 'get' my work — but hell, sometimes I don't even 'get' my own work on every level," she expressed. "Indeed, sometimes I find myself — as Joan has men-



"The Passion Series, No. 3" by Dawn Chandler

tioned about herself — needing to take time to become 'acquainted' with my own work. But it seems to me that most people who take the time to really consider the work, to become acquainted with it, find at least something within it with which to relate positively. Looking at art, to really see it takes time and an open mind."

For more, visit online www.taos-dawn.com or www.joanfullerton.com.