

Swartz's faith guides her in artistic journey



Park City artist Susan Swartz has painted in oils, watercolors and most recently acrylics. Her painting, "The Waters Edge," demonstrates her tendency to paint things found in nature. Swartz's work can be seen at the Phoenix Gallery in Park City and Susan Swartz Studios in Deer Valley.

ART BY SUSAN SWARTZ, PHOTO BY STUART RUCKMAN/UTAH HOMES & GARDEN



Nature's beauty is found in the little details

By **CASEY R. BASDEN**

Of the Record staff

Susan Swartz draws inspiration from her faith in God. It is her faith that moves her to paint the natural world around her. It is her faith that guides her. It is her faith that has made her journey possible.

Swartz comes from a family of musicians and artists, so it is no surprise that she inherited the artistic gene. But, it was not until she began taking art classes in high school that her true talent was recognized.

To further enhance her skills, Swartz continued her studies, ultimately earning an art degree from the Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. Soon she began receiving national recognition for her work.

That is when she first noticed a change in the way she painted. According to Swartz, "I began to paint for the judges. I began to see there was politics in everything. I was struggling with what I was going to paint."

Swartz then had what many would call a revelation. It happened during a skiing trip at Sun Valley, Idaho. It was a cloudy day, yet the sun was trying to peek through. While on the chairlift, Swartz turned to look into the valley and saw a beautiful white blanket of snow. "From that point I decided I was going to paint what God created," says Swartz.

Through the years she has moved from oils, to watercolors to acrylics, but her focus on nature remains the same.

The artist's life began in Pittsburgh where she eventually wound up in New Jersey before making her way to Park City. For 25 years now Swartz has been a part of the Park City community. It was only eight years ago that her family built a home in Utah's popular resort town.

Vail, Colo. was being eyeballed as the family's next place of residency, but there was

The Park Record

Wed/Thurs/Fri, April 28-30, 2004

Faith and artistry work together

• Continued from C-1

something missing in Vail that Park City seemed to provide. According to Swartz,

"There was a sense of values that we wanted to pass on to our kids ... We felt the town offered that."

Since moving to Park City, Swartz not only works as a painter, but she also works independently as an interior designer. With no formal training, interior design is something the artist simply has an eye for.

And, although Swartz balances her time between two professions, art seems to be the craft taking up most of her time. She likes to work in four-hour segments, putting in between eight and 12 hours a day

when she is lucky.

The hard work she invests seems to have paid off over the years. Through some unexpected good fortune, Swartz was named one of the official Olympic artists for the 2002 Winter Olympics.

According to Swartz, "I was having a showing at the Richard Thomas Gallery and a fellow by the name of Jack Schaar [of Fine Art Limited] came in and needed an environmental artist. I was having a showing, so, I was at the right place at the right time."

As an official artist, Swartz received commissions for two works and the cover for the Cultural Olympics guide. Her work is now exhibited at the

International Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland as well.

There is not one specific group of people buying Swartz's work. She paints for the home, she paints for the corporate office. In fact, the artist already has early-stage collectors.

Scott Anderson, president of Zions Bank has been a long-time fan, and recently celebrated the unveiling of six of the artist's works that will hang in the new bank lobby in Kimball Junction.

For Swartz, one of the most rewarding aspects of her job is having the opportunity to meet the people that purchase her work. From them, she gets to learn what they like about a particular piece

and where they would like to hang it. "You get to know where your piece is going," says Swartz.

When the artist began her family, she made the decision not to work and, instead, to focus on raising her son and twin daughters. Now that she has returned to work, Swartz says, "I feel God is rewarding me now for the decisions I made ... It's been amazing. I'm really being blessed."

Susan Swartz's art work is displayed at the Phoenix Gallery, 508 Main Street in Park City, and at her home studio, Susan Swartz Studios, in Deer Valley. To reach the Phoenix Gallery, call 649-1006. To reach Susan Swartz Studios, call 615-2022.