

Time stands still with BC3 instructor's first exhibit at gallery since 2011

Sept. 26, 2018



David P. Ludwick, a Butler County Community College fine arts instructor since 1998, is shown Wednesday, Sept. 26, 2018, with "Tranquility in Gold," one of 21 western Pennsylvania landscapes in "Recent Paintings by David P. Ludwick," his first exhibit at BC3's Mary Hulton Phillips Gallery since 2011. A reception for Ludwick will coincide with the opening of his show from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. Friday at the gallery on BC3's main campus in Butler Township.

(Butler, PA) Sixty-eight-year-old David P. Ludwick removes an 1871 pocket watch once carried by his grandfather, then father, and within the Erie National Wildlife Refuge he's been visiting for inspiration and stillness for 25 years, notices the shadow of a bald eagle darkening the glade depicted in "Time Peace, Guys Mills, Spring."

"Occasionally you see will one go down and grab a fish," Ludwick says. "They are just magnificent."

He notices being noticed by an observant deer. How the oblique morning sunrays caress a stand of intermingled elms and hemlocks. The crescendo of operatic birdsong. The aroma of earth.

“Part of what attracts me to this place is that you start out with kind of an idea of what you are going to experience and encounter and sometimes, when you get there,” Ludwick says, “it takes on a different theme.”

“Time Peace, Guys Mills, Spring” is among 21 western Pennsylvania landscapes in “Recent Paintings by David P. Ludwick,” his first exhibit in Butler County Community College’s Mary Hulton Phillips Gallery since 2011.

“I know this countryside,” Ludwick says. “What I am trying to do in my painting is to get onto canvas some of what I am feeling when I am there.”

Ludwick, of Shenango Township, Lawrence County, is a BC3 fine arts instructor who since 1998 has taught introduction to art, sculpture, creative thinking, drawing and painting. A native of Ford City, Ludwick earned a bachelor’s degree in art education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania in 1973, taught art in the Cranberry Area School District in Venango County and served seven years as director of the Hoyt Institute of Fine Arts in New Castle beginning in 1980.

A reception for Ludwick will coincide with the opening of his show from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. Friday at the gallery on BC3’s main campus in Butler Township. The Mary Hulton Phillips Gallery recently showcased “Solace in the Abstract,” the first public exhibit by 2016 BC3 graduate Nick Kahle, of Clarion, whose works included depictions of violence against women.

“I go there to clear my head”

Ludwick’s exhibit, created with knife, brush and finger techniques since January, marks the first time he has presented his impressionistic works on double-thick gallery canvas rather than within traditional frames. The show will continue through Oct. 26.



“Time Peace, Guys Mills, Spring,” an acrylic western Pennsylvania landscape painting by Butler County Community College fine arts instructor David P. Ludwick, is shown Monday, Sept. 24, 2018, in BC3’s Mary Hulton Phillips Gallery.



“Ethereal in Oil Impasto,” a western Pennsylvania landscape painting by Butler County Community College fine arts instructor David P. Ludwick, is shown Monday, Sept. 24, 2018, in BC3’s Mary Hulton Phillips Gallery.

Twelve of the acrylic or oil impasto pieces in “Recent Paintings by David P. Ludwick” are 6 inches by 6 inches. Nine are 36 inches by 36 inches, including “Time Peace, Guys Mills, Spring,” in which puddles of morning sunlight submerge the season’s first sprouts of green grass carpeting the floor of the Crawford County trail flanked by old-growth hemlocks and elms.

“I go there,” Ludwick says, “to clear my head.

“You might be stressed when you get there, or have something on your mind, but it is pretty hard to be stressed walking through there. The first thing I do is take my pocket watch out and leave it in the car. I want time when I can get away from having to be anywhere. When you get there you just get lost. It’s inspiration for me.”

As are vistas he has experienced, captured and included in the show, from the Ellwood City-New Castle area to southern Erie County. Much of the work in Ludwick’s show illustrates the environs of the Interstate 79 and Interstate 80 corridors.

“We have four distinct seasons that contribute to four very different bodies of work,” Ludwick says. “I would not want to be somewhere like Florida where it is 12 months of pretty much the same thing. I like the changing of the seasons. That the trees change. I like the early springtime buds coming out as opposed to late autumn, when the final leaves are hanging on and they become a nice, deep, rich terra cotta color.”

Acrylic paint, Ludwick says, allows him to re-create the serendipitous undertones evident in what he has viewed in western Pennsylvania counties by spraying thin mists of water onto the canvas.

“That feeling of the sunlight coming through the woods on the trail, I can get that in acrylic,” Ludwick says. “But I cannot get that same thing in oil.”

Viewers “can bring their own interpretation”



A detail of David P. Ludwick’s “Ethereal in Oil Impasto” is shown Monday, Sept. 24, 2018, in Butler County Community College’s Mary Hulton Phillips Gallery.



“Snowsong,” an acrylic western Pennsylvania landscape painting by Butler County Community College fine arts instructor David P. Ludwick, is shown Monday, Sept. 24, 2018, in BC3’s Mary Hulton Phillips Gallery.

“Time Peace, Guys Mills, Winter” is a companion to “Time Peace, Guys Mills, Spring,” which with its whites, violets, ultramarine blue, crimson, burnt umber and yellow ochre evokes a wispy serenity along the same clearing on the one-mile Erie National Wildlife Refuge trail.

“This was one of those rare winter days with sun and heavy snow,” Ludwick says, adding that the painting uses a complementary color scheme between yellow and violet and various mixtures of both.

“There were great patterns of light, a painter’s dream. For a landscape painter, snow tends to simplify things. It covers a lot of the unnecessary detail. And you see the patterns of light and dark a lot more than you do during the summer.”

Other works include “Ethereal in Oil Impasto,” “Winter Whisper,” “June’s Awakening,” “Snowsong,” “Verdant Breeze” and “Serene Summer.”

Viewers of his show may experience the same tranquility he’s found in western Pennsylvania, Ludwick says.

“I hope that the very reason I go there is what they are going to sense,” Ludwick says. “If they feel a little bit of what I feel when I am there, that is what I am after. They can bring their own interpretation to it based on their experiences.

“I don’t want to define everything. I want to suggest and create an impression, and then let the viewers look at the painting and let them bring their own interpretation to it.”

BC3’s fall 2018 student art showcase follows “Recent Paintings by David P. Ludwick” in November.

The Mary Hulton Phillips Gallery is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. by appointment only. To schedule an appointment, call the BC3 Education Foundation Inc. at (724) 287-8711 Ext. 8161.



“Serene Summer,” a western Pennsylvania landscape painting by Butler County Community College fine arts instructor David P. Ludwick, is shown Monday, Sept. 24, 2018,