

ArtStory

Pursuing quality of life.

Todd Matson

Genre:

Oil - En Plein Air
(In Open Air)

*"I choose to paint at a spot simply because I like being there."
-Todd Matson*

Near the muddy banks of Chisholm Creek, requiring only a few brushes, a knife, and five paint colors, Todd Matson is focused and tuned to his task. A few hours later he hikes back to the car with two "keepers" in hand, then drives back to his rural Valley Center home. This is the life Todd Matson chooses - that of a plein-air (open-air) painter.

Galleries began displaying Matson's part-time work in 1983. Life circumstances converged in 1994, at age 34, resulting in the leap to full-time outdoor painting as a career. The vast majority of his works study the seasonal hues and tones of rural Kansas scenes, where his childhood roots even now are re-experienced in adult sketches. A stint living in New Mexico added the vibrancy and drama inherent in Southwest vistas.

Matson's preference for plein-air painting over studio work centers on his love for living while painting. "Good paintings make good memories," Matson says. "Sometimes it is the nice day or the exciting weather, or just observing a beautiful subject for several hours at a time. I choose to paint at a spot simply because I like being there."

The tension between transient painting conditions and timeless subjects demands control of drawing, color and composition. Matson works quickly to catch the sense of light and place in as few strokes as possible, as quickly as possible.

"Every painting is a new set of problems," says Matson. "I've heard people say that oil paint is forgiving, but I know very well how a spot of wrong color can easily become a nasty mess. Finessing is always preferable to muscling your way through. I've washed clean many a canvas because of one square inch of bad paint."

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