

BC3 grad's art draws on worldwide travels

Butler woman's creations appeal to all senses, curator says

March 2, 2018



Nearly 30 oil paintings created by Eileen Vaughn, of Butler, above, a Butler County Community College art student, are on display through March 31 at the Mary Hulton Phillips Gallery on BC3's main campus in Butler Township. A reception for Vaughn and her "Eclectic in Oil" exhibit will be held March 11 and coincide with the Butler High School Tornado Big Band's performance at nearby Succop Theater.

(Butler, PA) The gaze of world traveler Eileen "Tyke" Vaughn has fixated for 20 minutes or longer on a single masterpiece within the Louvre in Paris, the Uffizi in Florence, the Tate Modern in London, absorbing the mixture of color, the capture of warm and cool light, and the structure of detail that creates in this 67-year-old Butler County Community College art student "the envy element."

"I wonder how someone can actually produce something like that," says Vaughn, of Butler. "I am so enamored and taken aback by what can be produced with just paint and canvas."

Visitors to BC3's Mary Hulton Phillips Gallery this month can be enamored and taken aback by the oil paintings of landscapes and portraiture envisioned by Vaughn, many drawing on her travels to 46 states and to 30 countries.

Vaughn's is the gallery's second exhibit of 2018 and of a BC3 graduate who studied under David Ludwick, a fine arts instructor and the gallery's curator. "Eclectic in Oil" follows that of "The Right to Peaceful Assemblage" by Carol Griffiths, of Erie. Each graduated from BC3 with associate degrees in general studies, Vaughn in 1978 and Griffiths, in 2001.

Vaughn's exhibit is now open. A reception will be held 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. March 11 to coincide with the Butler High School Tornado Big Band's 2 p.m. performance at nearby Succop Theater.

Her display will be followed April 1 by BC3's second student art showcase since 2011, one that features up to 75 works of students from the college's main campus, BC3 @ LindenPointe in Hermitage and BC3 @ Cranberry in Cranberry Township, Ludwick says.

Vaughn resumed her education at BC3 following her retirement from the Slippery Rock Area School District, where she served 19 years as a special education aide through 2005. Within three years she enrolled in BC3 Lifelong Learning courses in advanced studio art, and has audited Ludwick's introduction to painting course five times for free as a senior citizen living within Butler County – but without earning academic credit.

Any resident of Butler County 62 years of age or older may enroll in BC3 credit classes on a space-available basis without paying tuition, course fees or an application fee. Those students must still complete an application for admission and are responsible for materials and textbooks.



"Canyon" is a 2013 oil painting created by Eileen Vaughn, a Butler County Community College art student and on display as part of her "Eclectic in Oil" exhibit at BC3's Mary Hulton Phillips Gallery.



"Tree" is a 2014 oil painting created by Eileen Vaughn, a Butler County Community College art student and on display as part of her "Eclectic in Oil" exhibit at BC3's Mary Hulton Phillips Gallery.

The “understanding of color”

Ludwick credits Vaughn’s mastery of the mixture of color, the capture of warm and cool light, and the structure of detail – techniques that may fixate the gaze of visitors to the Mary Hulton Phillips Gallery this month.

Vaughn has grown from a serious amateur – “somebody who understands the basics of color, but doesn’t have that extra step that makes their work unique,” Ludwick says – to being professional in her approach.

“And a lot of it has been due to her understanding of color,” he says. “That is probably the thing that has changed the most. Her color combinations in theory are a lot more complicated and sophisticated than what they were.”

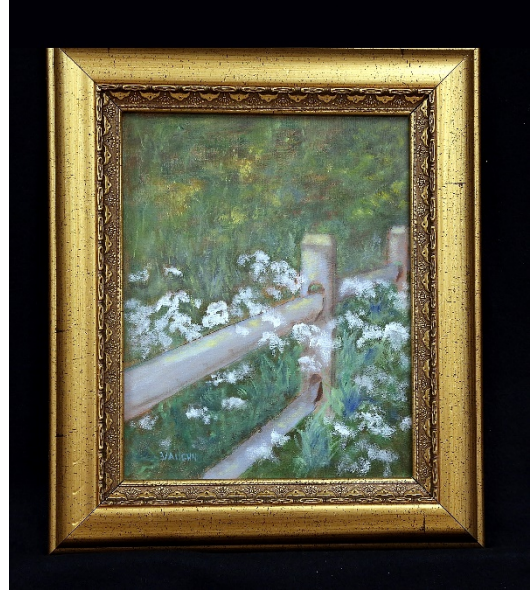
Among them, “Grand Canyon,” which followed her 2013 trip to Arizona, one of the 46 states that, short of New Mexico, Oregon, Texas and Washington, she has visited and from which she has drawn inspiration.

Warm yellows and oranges within the 16-inch by 20-inch painting suggest the afterglow of sunshine on a foreground rockface and, across the abyss, cool violets and grays add depth and shadow to a chain of cliffs.

“An invaluable thing to learn”

“Tree” – its focal point a barren trunk, bark stripped to the first limb – is one of 27 works Vaughn will display. The 8-inch by 10-inch painting, influenced by dark browns and hints of light violet, evokes melancholy, stillness and solitude, unlike “Summer Garden,” with its white pansies befriending a split rail fence, a sense of lushness and fertility evinced by a background tapestry of greens and yellows.

“Grand Canyon,” “Tree” and “Summer Garden,” Vaughn says, reflect the “value in a painting,” which, she adds, Ludwick emphasizes.



“Summer Garden” is a 2017 oil painting created by Eileen Vaughn, a Butler County Community College art student and on display as part of her “Eclectic in Oil” exhibit at BC3’s Mary Hulton Phillips Gallery.



“Winter Wonderland” is a 2018 oil painting created by Eileen Vaughn, a Butler County Community College art student and on display as part of her “Eclectic in Oil” exhibit at BC3’s Mary Hulton Phillips Gallery.

“The lights and the darks,” she says. “And where the focus should be. One of the first things he does when he starts a new class is to have students create a value painting in which they can use only black and white and three grades of gray. And you have to use those to show the different values. Once you start with color, you are using the same principle. Now you are not doing it in just black, white and gray, but you are adding a color. That is an invaluable thing to learn.”

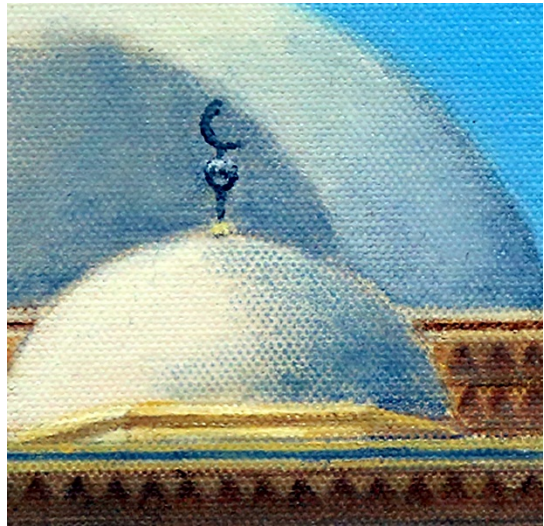
The development of Vaughn’s skills, Ludwick says, illustrate her understanding of warm and cool light and of color, “which vary a lot throughout the day and throughout the seasons,” he says. “It is not the same thing. Sometimes the same topic can be cool or it can be warm just from morning until evening.”

Her talents – inspired from trips to Belize, the Caribbean, South Africa, Russia, Scandinavia, the Baltics, Dubai, Central America, Africa and Mauritius, an island in the Indian Ocean – also illustrate her ability to portray on canvas that which appeals to senses other than sight.

“That comes through in a piece,” Ludwick says. “If you are a painter and have never been along the rocky coast of Maine, or experienced some of the places that Tyke has actually been to, all you can see is that artist’s abstraction of the subject.

“She knows,” Ludwick says. “She knows what the air feels like, she knows what the light looks like, what it sounds like.”

The Mary Hulton Phillips Gallery is open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.



“Dubai” is a 2013 oil painting created by Eileen Vaughn, a Butler County Community College art student and on display as part of her “Eclectic in Oil” exhibit at BC3’s Mary Hulton Phillips Gallery.