

ArtStory

Pursuing quality of life.

Doug Richards

Genre:
Oil Painting

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Doug Richards knows better than anyone that plumbing isn't the most creative job, especially after 30 years in the business. But this 52-year-old Wichita native – who also has a degree in psychology and is just shy of a master's degree – is also an artist at heart. Richards realized he needed a way to express himself outside of the day-to-day grind of work. The task was finding the right outlet.

For more than a decade, Richards plowed away trying every genre of art under the sun. Woodwork, colored pencil, watercolor, leatherwork, loom beading, ceramics, even stained glass though he eventually had to quit for logistical reasons.

"I ran out of places in my house to put the stained glass," he laughs.

Three or four years ago, Richards explored a medium he had always admired but never felt he could learn – oil painting. "I always wanted to but I guess it was kind of difficult. I was born and raised here and 40 years ago if you wanted to learn how to paint, there wasn't

really a place to go except to enroll in the university."

The growing Wichita art community allowed him to foster his interest. He took classes at CityArts and Wichita Center for the Arts and hasn't been able to put down his brush since, sometimes devoting more than 20 hours a week to his newfound passion. "I like the vibrancy of colors. It's taken me a long time to figure out where I'm going with it," he says. "I'm definitely going to stick with oil painting."

He started painting landscapes, mostly of mountain vistas from one of his favorite spots on earth, Rocky Mountain National Park. Though Richards has developed a steadfast love of oil painting, his creativity continues to evolve in terms of subjects.

"I think I maybe want to start painting portraits," he says. "What I'm really drawn to in the human face is that you can't fool anybody. In a landscape you can get away with a lot. The challenge of a human face...you have to really get it right."

