

A life rearranged

By R. Scott Gerdes

When Pat Pendleton's husband and best friend of 30 years, Ted Lothamer, died from cancer about a year and a half ago, for all practical purposes she died too. The windows in her home studio were shut, curtains were drawn and her landscape oil paintings and oil pastels on paper sat unfinished, collecting dust. She knew Ted's death would take her somewhere, but to where she didn't know. That was until a seemingly insignificant act caught her attention, just when she hadn't been looking.

While cleaning off a large table in her studio, Pendleton took the nine-piece grid panels she had started and stacked them on end atop a ledge. She turned away and then something drew her eyes back.

"I liked the random order," Pendleton said in her studio that is now filled with light. "To me it symbolizes a life rearranged and I like it."

Her work, "Resurrection: A New Life," will be on display for the first time in Taos at the Apple Tree restaurant through Oct. 31. An opening reception is set for Sunday (Sept. 12), from 3 to 5 p.m. in the restaurant's Garden Room.

As I settled myself into the wide, cushy brown chair that Pendleton uses to sit in as she ponders a painting in progress, she reflected upon her journey from devastating loss, to the process of healing, to re-emergence.

"Art has always been my friend. Art saves lives," she began. "The art in this show has helped me come back to life and has given me a new purpose, besides being a grandmother."

While the new work features Pendleton's blazing trademark

colors, the theme is quite a departure that came from not only her grieving process, but from classes with Ed Heffernan and Gary Cook. They taught her a technique that uses grid construction — she became intrigued.

At the same time, Pendleton found herself looking to the night sky for inspiration, seeing a strong symbolism in that they represent all that we don't know and can't explain.

She adopted the stars as her own personal symbols. They appear in her new work and nowhere more grand than in her expressionistic piece "E-Motion2." But that's when it's hung in random order. Shift the panels around and you see a landscape she named after a quote by German poet Rainer Maria Rilke, "Over the Nowhere Arches the Everywhere."

"For me the abstraction is about a world that seemed predictable," the Georgia native explained. "That when rearranged is filled with unknowns yet, in some ways, is more beautiful."

Pendleton studied at the Ringling School of Art in Sarasota, Fla., and lived in Denver for many years where she raised a family and worked as a fashion illustrator. She is also an ordained community minister, which she explained encompasses more faiths and beliefs systems than nondenominational churches.

Her painting is her meditation. Her faith is her touchstone. And her beautiful backyard with a seven-circuit labyrinth made of stones is her place for seeking answers. The calmness, the softness and kindness of her nature coupled with the drive from feeling your purpose comes out loud and clear in Pendleton's work.

She looks forward to pursuing the way of making art through meditation and hopes there is a series of long panels waiting to come out.

Call 505-758-8900.



Artist Pat Pendleton next to her panels in the abstract arrangement "E-Motion Squared."

Courtesy of the

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