

Upcoming Events and Exhibitions



Clinton Dam
Peter Thompson, professor of art and former dean of the School of Fine Arts at The University of Kansas digital photograph



Kansas River Sandbars
Lisa Grossman, Lawrence artist
22"x34" oil on canvas, 2004

JUNE 1-JULY 16:

Exhibitions by Peter Thompson and Lisa Grossman will run concurrently this summer in the galleries of the LAWRENCE ARTS CENTER. A public reception will be held for both artists on Friday, June 4.

See pages 8-9 for more information about these and other upcoming exhibitions

Prairie River: Paintings and Prints by Lisa Grossman

- Exhibition: June 1-July 16
 - Public Reception: Friday, June 4, 7-9pm
 - Gallery Talk: Tuesday, June 8, 7:30pm
- Sea of Grass: Contemporary Prairie Paintings by Elizabeth Schultz**

Lawrence painter and printmaker Lisa Grossman will show new landscapes of the Kaw River Valley in the small gallery of the LAWRENCE ARTS CENTER beginning June 1. Grossman is well known in the region and across the country for her evocative and, in some cases, nearly abstract depictions of Flint Hills prairies. Recent exhibitions include *Plainscapes* at the Ruth Morpeth Gallery in Hopewell, N.J.; *Prairie Reverie* at the Strecker-Nelson Gallery in Manhattan, Kan.; *Twilight and Reverie* at the Dolphin Gallery in Kansas City, Mo.; and *Kansas Plein Air* at the Stephen Cohen Gallery in Los Angeles, Calif.

Grossman is using the Arts Center exhibition as an opportunity to explore both new subject matter and new techniques. For the first time she has video-recorded images from an airplane, breaking from her traditional plein air method of painting on location and adopting a new "plane air" method (she jokes). The video images and digital stills were shot at low altitude traveling 170 miles along the Kaw River Valley from Kansas City to Junction City before sunset. She watches the video in her Lawrence studio, pausing the tape when the composition suits, and works quickly from the displayed image before it moves on. She also is exploring printmaking techniques that utilize woodcuts, relief rolling on thin Japanese papers, and collage. "Having had three

major shows last year, I decided to give myself a couple of months this year to explore things I've wanted to do for a long time. Using dark, monochromatic color, duotone effects, multiple images, details and water media on paper are some examples," she says.

Since moving to Lawrence eight years ago, Grossman has painted the Kaw River many times but first thought of depicting it from the air during a commercial flight from Los Angeles to Kansas City. As the plane passed over the Kansas River at Lawrence near sunset, she was struck by the sight of the river, calling it a "shining ribbon, ... a line coming through the prairie." Since then she has been studying the river's transformations and speaks of the "spirit of the living river that is still there, despite everything we've done to it." She adds, "There is beauty close at hand but we don't always see it."

While her work is inspired by the landscape, it rarely is a direct representation of a particular location. Grossman's practice is to overlook — or, more accurately, to look through — at least some evidence of the human-made, focusing on the sense of space, light and color before her. *Kansas City Star* art reviewer Kate Hackman writes, "A sense of timeless essence is furthered by the fact that Grossman leaves out any evidence of human presence. Telephone wires and architectural structures are overlooked in her desire to focus exclusively on the natural landscape" ("Room to soar among spacious skies, Lisa Grossman's *In the Open*



River Bend East of Lawrence-June
Lisa Grossman
22"x24" oil on canvas, 2004

affirms relevance of simple landscape paintings," Nov. 3, 2000). While this statement feels true, Grossman's recent river work does show subtle signs of human impact, including urban and agricultural patterns, roads and bridges as a result of her shift in focus from the sky to bird's-eye views of the land. Increasingly, Grossman's work is becoming a poetic advocacy for environmental awareness and stewardship.

Grossman explains, "I see my work as a sustained meditation on open spaces, as a celebration of their sublime beauty, as an expression of my deep concern for their survival."



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