

Coni Grant paints outdoors to help conserve the landscape

By GENA AKERS

Published: June 26th, 2010, Valley Courier, Page 8



Painter Coni Grant captures the beauty of the Soward Ranch at RiGHT's June 12th Plein Air Paint Out, celebrating conserved ranches along the Rio Grande.

SOUTH FORK "To go to a place means to paint in that place." says Coni Grant, local artist, teacher, and in 2010, a new participant in the annual "Keep the Rio Grande Grand Fine Art Benefit Sale" hosted by the Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust (RiGHT) on Saturday, August 14 from 6 to 9 p.m. at the South Fork Community Center.

Supporting RiGHT's conservation efforts for the working ranches and scenic beauty along the Rio Grande comes naturally to Grant, as she developed an eye and a heart for the West at an early age. "Plein air painting is not only my 'niche,' but also my favorite way to work. You can't do this and not love to be outside in the landscape, urban or natural."

Grant grew up in California , exploring wild places with her father, a naturalist and wildlife photographer. Fueled by her love for the outdoors, she earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Graphic Design from California State University Long Beach. After graduation, Grant worked as a graphic designer in California's Bay Area for 20 years. "But," she notes, "I was always a painter before designer."

Having done design work for clients such as Levi Strauss, Los Angeles Master Chorale, Visa Corporation, and Southern Pacific Railroad , Grant honed her ability to identify and recreate in her work the impressions she saw and felt. "Now that I paint full time, I still use my impression of how things feel and look. If it's a hot day, I want to feel and see that in

my work."

In the last 13 years, Grant has lived and painted in California , Kansas, New Mexico, Montana, Newfoundland, and now here in Colorado where, she says, "I am as easily found in the foothills of the

Sangre de Cristo mountains as I am among the industrial buildings of Alamosa." Grant identifies Plein Air painting as painting at its most raw, "pitting artist against the elements, extreme weather, wildlife, and even sometimes the public." From painting in the sunshine of Morro Bay and the freezing wind in St. Johns, Newfoundland, she sees in her work the evidence of "frozen hands dragging stiff paint over the board or rain marks and grit blown into the paint. This is Plein Air."

"When I look at my paintings , I don't get the feeling 'oh wow, that is the painting .' I see and feel the moment and the place I was in. I see and remember the impressions I had."

Grant is proud to now live in and paint the open spaces of Colorado and to help conserve them through her art work. "I believe strongly in in particular, have a great the mission of RiGHT. In wealth of land- a resource California, so many open well worth preserving." spaces are continually swal- To learn more about Coni lowed by urban sprawl. Grant and her artwork, visit Since my dad worked for www.conigrant.com. For the California State Park Service, I was lucky enough to spend several years living in the redwoods along the northern coast. I learned at a young age that natural places and wild places need our protection to survive into the future. Colorado, and the San Luis Valley more information about the more than 20 participating local and regional artists and to reserve a ticket for the August 14th "Keep the Rio Grande Grand Fine Art Benefit Sale" , visit www.riograndlandtrust.org or call the land trust's Del Norte office at 719-657-0800 .

[Email Article](#)

[Print Article](#)

[Close Window](#)