

Teton landscapes, painted in the Alps, return home

By Leonor Grave 7 hrs ago



Virginia Moore prepares paintings for her Cowboy Coffee show Friday at her studio.

RYAN DORGAN / NEWS&GUIDE photos

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Event details

Art opening: Virginia Moore's "Alpine Relativity II"

6 to 9 p.m. Friday

Cowboy Coffee, 125 North Cache Street

Free

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Virginia Moore was probably the most conspicuous passenger on her flight out of France last week.

A painter and documentary filmmaker, Moore carried seven rolled up canvas paintings in her hand luggage and a 45-pound suitcase storing eight hard drives on her trip to Wyoming.

She spent the last day of August in her friend's glassblowing studio stretching the canvases over frames to get her pieces ready for her second show at Cowboy Coffee. The show will hang on the walls of the shop through Sept. 28.

Moore hails from Virginia but moved to Wyoming when she was hired as a documentary filmmaker for WyomingPBS in Lander. She eventually moved to Jackson with her husband, who worked as a guide with Exum Mountain Guides, but last year the couple moved to Chamonix, France. Moore's husband works as a mountain guide in the French Alps and Moore works remotely as a producer for Content Lab Media.

It was from her new home in the Alps that Moore worked on the series of alpine paintings that make up her new show, the majority of which depict landscapes in and around Grand Teton National Park.

"These are all places that I went to, and spent time there, on my own or with friends," she said. "I either hiked up to that location, or camped out or something to get the light in the morning. So I feel pretty connected with those moments."

Those moments for Moore are rare but rewarding when they manifest and when the circumstances line up for her to be able to capture them to recreate in her art.

But even when she can't capture them, they help her establish a connection to the landscape.

"I'm often driving around in Wyoming, and it's absolutely gorgeous," she said. "And I'll be frustrated, because I'm not in a place or a position where I can stop and capture it. So I just have to let those moments go by and just appreciate them."

Working on Wyoming landscapes from such a distance proved trickier than Moore expected. It was difficult to not be able to look outside her window to see the landscape she was working to depict.

Friends would ask her, "Why are you painting the Tetons in the Alps?" and she couldn't help but wonder the same thing. Moore said she plans to work on a series of alpine paintings in the actual Alps as her next project.

Her style of painting lies somewhere between dreamlike and impressionist. Moore is drawn in particular to the softer lights of dawn and dusk in her paintings, and she typically starts the process of creating a piece by focusing on an image she is drawn to.

"I find my compositions and my subject matter more intuitively," she said. "I'll find a scene and a composition that appeals to me, and then I start the painting."

Only once she's painted a series does she begin to assess them and their qualities.

"They're obviously not photorealistic, but they're not necessarily 100% impressionistic," she said. "I think with the colors, there's a particular palette that's going on here, that's kind of playful. And I feel like there's a little bit of a dreamlike quality to the pieces."

"There's this sense of non-reality."

Moore's creative pursuits of painting and filmmaking, while not identical, complement one another. Painting, like film editing, begins with a broad idea, refined little by little until the piece is complete.

"You start with this vision that doesn't exist yet," she said. "And then you have to lay out a structure and a plan, and then you start to block it in."

Moore will linger in the Cowboy State a few more weeks before heading back to France. Her paintings are now out of her hands, and she is excited about seeing them find new homes.

"I don't get attached to my pieces to the point where I want to hang on to them forever," she said. "I really do want to share them with people, and that means a lot to me. When people connect with it enough to buy it, I'm super honored."