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Nature in the Abstract: Thought-provoking paintings of Upstate New York by Timothy Rodrigo

Written by Gallery Coordinator Karen Jean Smith

Marcellus resident Timothy Rodrigo brings his unique interpretations of New York State landscapes to Baltimore Woods Nature Center this winter. The public is invited to the opening reception on Saturday January 10 from 2:30 until 4 when visitors can meet the artist, enjoy refreshments and view the exhibit.

From January 10 to February 28, Rodrigo's abstract depictions will be on view in the John A. Weeks Art Gallery within the Interpretive Center. The building is open Monday through Friday 9 - 4 and Saturdays 10 - 4. Admission and parking are free and a portion of the sales proceeds will go to support the mission of Baltimore Woods Nature Center.

"This exhibit of paintings is a pleasure to see on any day of the year but the exuberance in Tim Rodrigo's color palette makes it a particular gift to oneself on a gloomy winter day. Because of the style of painting, viewing them also includes an element of entertainment, like solving a puzzle. " states Art Gallery Coordinator Karen Jean Smith.

At first glance, Rodrigo's work may appear to the viewer to be simply a collection of shapes, each of which is alive with color, yielding a pleasing and often joyful whole. As with many abstract paintings however, the viewer is challenged to look further and find the original subject. Rodrigo invites us to examine his work from a distance to see the images that he portrays. Fog along a river or a small waterfall among the trees on a hillside may then emerge from the canvas.

The pictorial language of Tim Rodrigo is a blend of graphic design (a past vocation) and fine art. He cites the Hudson River School which features realistic, yet idealized landscapes of the 19th century as integral to developing his artistic style. Additionally, art movements of the early twentieth century such as Cubism and Fauvism, both of which rejected longheld traditions in Western art, are evident in his approach to perspective, shape and color.

"Each painting is an attempt to recreate a visual experience with nature. " states Rodrigo. "My palette varies based on the juxtaposition of colors and shapes. . . In the majority of paintings blue is indicative of water; this hue tends to anchor the work and allows for greater flexibility with other hues. All that said, ultimately weather, sky, trees, water, rocks or shrubs are used to capture a sense of the

sublime. To me they are shapes and color placed to illustrate a response usually peaceful and maybe hopeful."

The artist shares with you this quote by late 19th/early 20th century artist Paul Cezanne: "I owe you the truth in painting and I will give to you....For progress to be made there is only nature, the eye becomes educated upon contact with it. It becomes concentric through looking and working."

While unique in style, all of the work in this exhibit is true to the Nature Center's goal of showcasing artwork based on nature in New York State. Local residents will especially appreciate *Moonlight in Marcellus*. The Adirondack and Catskill Mountain areas, along with additional places around Central New York, are also represented.

As for the choice of medium, Rodrigo has found acrylic paints to be most suitable for his goals. He remembers being introduced to acrylics as a young man when he saw a demonstration by an up-and-coming manufacturer. At that time, acrylics were beginning to be used in art circles. Today, decades later, he employs this medium because it is opaque, yielding intense color, and because it dries quickly which affords him the ability to create hard edges.

Now retired, Timothy Rodrigo was most recently Professor of Painting and Graphic Design at Onondaga Community College. He has worked as a graphic designer for both General Electric and Russell Sage College and also taught graphic design at the latter. In addition, he was Instructor of Art History at Green Mountain College. His paintings have been exhibited at the Arnot Art Museum, the Schweinfurth Art Center and Memorial Art Gallery as well as sales galleries in Albany, Rochester and Buffalo.

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