

# Community

TheMesaTribune.com | @EVTNow f/EVTNow

## Mesa artist finds warm reception in Montana

BY DAVID M. BROWN  
Tribune Contributor

Mesa artist Linda Glover Gooch is traveling north this summer and taking some cool canvases.

“Intertwined with Living Waters: The Art of Linda Glover Gooch” is featured at the Hockaday Museum of Art in downtown Kalispell, Montana, through Aug. 1.

Occupying a 1904 Carnegie Library building on the National Register of Historic Places, the museum celebrates the cultural life of the Flathead Valley and the artistic legacy of Montana and Glacier National Park.

It is named for artist Hugh Hockaday (1892–1968), who had moved to the area after a career as a commercial artist.

Included in the exhibition are some of Gooch’s oil paintings, field studies and sketches focusing on water in various forms – including rivers, fog, snow and clouds.

Inspired by Arizona and Montana landscapes, her art depicts the Salt River, Grand Canyon and Glacier National Parks and Flathead Lake in northwest Montana, about 20 miles from the museum.

“I consider the exhibition a divinely inspired journey,” said Gooch, the museum’s “Timeless Legacy Patrons Choice Award” recipient in 2017 and 2019 that is part of its annual exhibition and fundraiser, “A Timeless Legacy: Women Artists of Glacier.”

Gooch said her exhibited work “consists of depicting the Earth’s most valuable asset, water, the source which all life needs to survive.”

“My intent is to express the life-giving force that nourishes the earth as it spreads across the land,” she said. “There is a deeper spiritual meaning to me which pertains to my faith, but on the surface level, water can have a calming and peaceful effect to humankind.

“On the creative side, it’s just beautiful and inspiring to paint.”

Museum curator Pat Roath said Gooch “feels strongly about the therapeutic ef-



Mesa artist Linda Glover Gooch prefers to work en plein air and has found inspiration in her many trips throughout Arizona, studying the Grand Canyon and the state’s dramatic skies. (Facebook)

fects of painting ‘plein air’ – that is, “outside on site” – and of creative endeavor in general.

“The theme of water was chosen by her to tie her deep reverence for her subjects together with that healing force — water as the representation of what ties all life together,” Roath added.



Linda Glover Gooch titled this painting “Nature’s Ballet.” She is a featured artist at the Hockaday Museum of Art in Kalispell, Montana. (Courtesy of Linda Glover Gooch)

Born in Banning, California, Gooch moved to Mesa in 2001. She and her husband Joe have a daughter Lindsey and son Seth and two grandchildren, all living in the city.

In addition to the Hockaday exhibition, Mountain Trails Gallery Sedona, in the Tlaquepaque Arts & Shopping Village,

shows her work. It can also be seen at her Mesa studio by appointment (goochstudio@gmail.com).

In 2008, she had a life-changing religious experience and four years later became an associate pastor at Christ to the Nations Church in east Mesa.

“By doing

so, my art changed as well,” she said. “I now paint from a different place inside of me, with His help. I do believe His life in me comes out in my work.”

For example, in “Nature’s Ballet,” painted in studio from a photo of trees taken at the Salt River, she “saw the water . . . as a continuing force,” Roath said.

“Sometimes it nourishes them, sometimes it pushes and reshapes them, yet they are still standing and established,” Roath said. “It’s a reflection of living a life of faith, maintaining balance and always established by your roots.”

In college, Gooch took art-education classes and, beginning in 1984, taught art workshops, including at the Scottsdale Artists’ School. For 30 years, she has preferred to work en plein air.

“Multiple trips and many hours on location throughout Arizona, studying the Grand Canyon and the dramatic skies of Arizona are the basis for much of my work,” she said.

Alyssa Cordova, executive director of the Hockaday, said, “Linda’s time spent in nature comes through in subtle but important ways such as capturing the color of light on mountain snow peaks or the movement of clouds over a grassy plain.

“Visitors will also enjoy a rare sneak peek into her artist process, as the exhibition includes several studies and sketches for her larger works as well as two displays of her outdoor painting supplies and easels.”

Gooch describes her style as Impressionistic with realistic refinement. “I don’t go for photo realism because I love the medium of paint. I want to see the texture,” she said.

Roath added, “Linda’s plein air sketches reflect the immediacy of her environment with their impressionistic freedom and quick strokes.

“But she is fully a 21st century artist with her dramatic formats and ‘real’ landscapes,” she said. “Her palette is that of nature, but it’s also imbued with her own sense of wonder and delight with the scene she is describing with her paints.” ■