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# Gifts worth giving

The small works in Bonner David Galleries *Gifts Worth Giving* exhibit in Scottsdale, Arizona, may take up less space than the gallery's usual offerings, but the artists who've made them poured the same care for quality, the same aspiration to produce a creative work, and the same concentrated methods into the more than 50 works on display.

Christi Manuelito, partner and art consultant at the gallery, says the small bronzes, paintings and porcelain pieces make quality art accessible to satisfy any palate or budget.

"It's good for the beginning collector to the sophisticate," Manuelito says. "Every piece is so uniquely different, from the subject matter to the medium. For people just starting out collecting work, a small work could be the first piece they get."

Most of the artists featured in the show have long histories with the gallery, such as **John K. Harrell**, who has about 20 pieces up in the gallery and features five small works in this exhibit. His 10-by-8-inch acrylic on canvas *A Friendly Café* was inspired by a trip to Paris and depicts a man reading a newspaper as his canine companion keeps him company. Harrell says he wants his paintings to tell stories and evoke emotions, no matter what size the canvas.

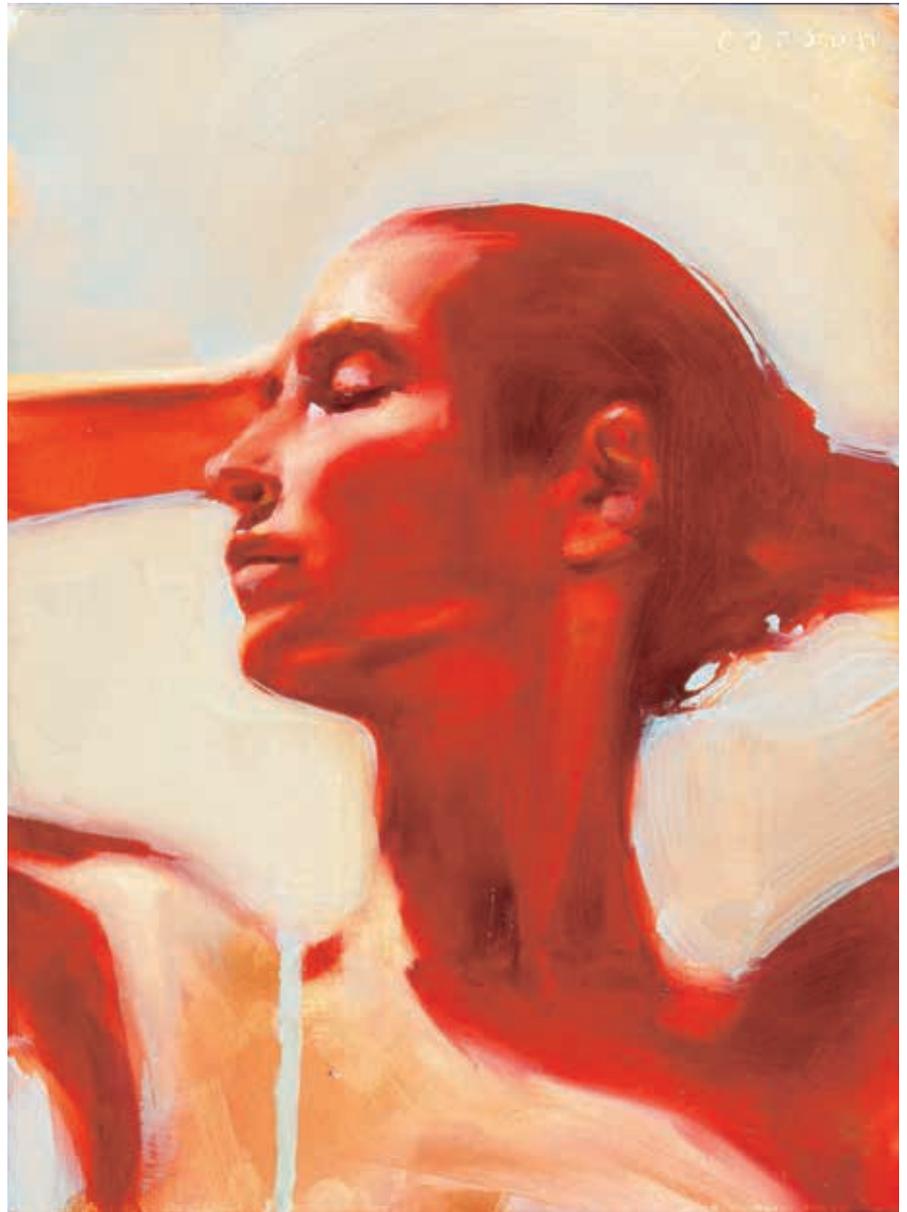
"I think the beauty of small works is they can have a huge impact," Harrell, owner of Brushstrokes Studio-Gallery in Denver, says. "It doesn't have to be big to get your point across. The trick for me is trying not to get too complicated or get too much in the composition. You have to really hone it down to be focused and powerful."

One example of honing in on the subject is found in *Splitting Hares*, an 8¼-by-7½-inch oil on panel by Goodyear, Arizona, artist **John Schieffer**. Schieffer, who has five small works in the show, bought a bunny statue several years ago and had wanted to feature it in a painting, which he did in an inventive way by adding photographic effects to the painting.

"Recreating in paint a lens flare, moving liquid or an area out of focus adds a certain atmosphere to a piece that makes us stop and try to focus," Schieffer says. "Only cameras can capture this, but expressing this imagery in paint adds another level of

emotional content."

He adds, "Doing work for a small work show is sometimes a challenge for me, but it does allow me to use some more simple, elegant design work that does not translate the same to larger works."





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1  
**Michael Carson**, *West Bound*,  
 oil on panel, 12 x 9"

2  
**John K. Harrell**, *A Friendly  
 Café*, acrylic on canvas, 10 x 8"

3  
**Melissa Peck**, *Sprite*,  
 oil on panel, 12 x 8"

4  
**John Schieffer**, *Splitting  
 Hares*, oil on panel, 8¼ x 7½"

Simplicity that packs a big impact is seen in Scottsdale artist **Michael Carson's** 12-by-9-inch oil on panel *West Bound*. Carson gets viewers to focus on the longing expression of his female subject, whose visage and neck are bathed in a red light punctuated by varied tones and dark shadows. It's one of about five of Carson's small works in the show, and he says simply the act of painting on a small canvas was "a new and freeing experience."

"The lack of negative spaces made the decision-making process much easier," Carson says. "I could concentrate on the face and make the technique

and brushwork very simple and obvious. The color palette comes easy at this size, as well."

While creating small works for this exhibit may have pushed some artists out of their comfort zones, the smaller pieces may serve to influence large-scale works in the future.

"I loved painting small and can feel a subtle shift in my work just from doing this," Carson says. "This is why it's so important to constantly mix up your routine. Small changes can start to take you in new directions." ●