

On the Wall

Artistic adventures and those close to home

Whether in the dead of winter, Monsoon months or the warm days we've been gifted recently, adventures await under every stone in the welcoming mountains of Flagstaff, around every bend of the Colorado River and beyond. The air, and of course the time, are prime to finally say, "Yes!" to that journey begging to be embarked upon, whether on First Friday ArtWalk's weathered path or a surprising trail a little further into the beating heart of home. One question remains of this proposal: What will you say?

From Big Sky to big river

To say Ani Eastwood employs an eye for detail would be an extreme understatement. Whether her rich works in oil paint document the spirit and tone of the Grand Canyon or the rivers and fields close to her Montana home, all lend testament to the land from which she draws inspiration and awe, the river that dictates her life.

As a motor craft captain with Grand Canyon Expeditions, based in Kanab, Utah, Eastwood's job is constant, as she and her crew prepare meals, lead hikes and boats. It is a treasured life for the young captain and her husband. While charting the river's course, there is no time to paint field studies. Armed with her camera she drops into the Canyon and snaps dozens of shots of what could become a future painting: Hance and Crystal rapids or

Torweap Overlook. Once home in Missoula in the off-season between October and mid-April, Eastwood is able to gather her photos and paint for six hours each morning, with many paintings consuming one year from hand-building the canvas to signing the work.

Eastwood's keenly self-explored technique represents her fascination with Renaissance painters and the Balinese style of painting that caught her eye while visiting Indonesia with her father as a teen, and later returning as an apprentice at 20. Her oil-based work at times assumes a dark, contrasting quality, picturesque pastels or vividly imagined scenes which connect the haunting, jaw-dropping experiences Eastwood and countless others share with the Canyon and the roaring river below.

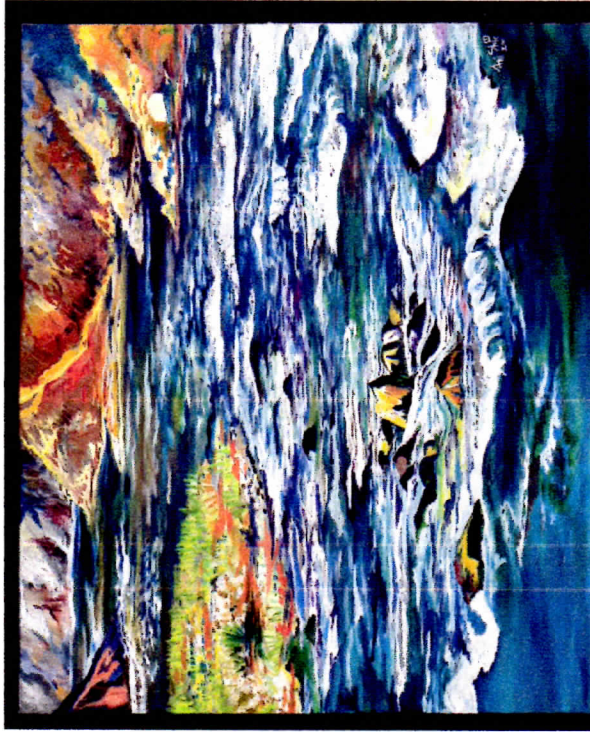
"When you work and live down in the Canyon, you realize it is not all beautiful vistas and fluffy clouds down there," Eastwood says. "There is power in the monsoons and some of the major rapids that could take a person out and show you who is boss. This rugged, survival-mode beauty is what draws me so much to the place. It is not all easy and butterfies down there, but instead a testament to the power and humility in an environment we are only guests in. You have to stay sharp and focused."

With her work and life on the river clearly adopting the strenuous nature of the river, Eastwood's work is compiled for herself and her love of the landscape, but also so other guides

and explorers of the Canyon's culture can clearly identify lines and rocks used to navigate the treacherous rapids as they hurtle downstream.

"If the boating community can't say 'That's Hance,' then I'm not satisfied with the painting," Eastwood says.

noting her works help create a visual account of the Canyon's ever-changing formations, "if they didn't get the same feeling, like I didn't



Hance Rapid, Mile 77.5, Colorado River by Ani Eastwood.

get it right, then I wouldn't be satisfied. It's a way to be a part of that community here." Identify with Eastwood and the Canyon at Will McNabb Fine Jewelry Studio, 18 N. Leroux, from 6-9 p.m. 213-1572. www.anistubefineart.com.

River Life

Amy Martin, an Arizona native hailing originally from the southern part of the state, identifies with the desert landscape which courses through her veins by nature, yet no connection is as powerful as the one she's forged with the Grand Canyon and the mighty Colorado River.

This juxtaposed connection with water and the aridity of the Southwest has inspired her creative endeavors that began in paint and continue into her photographic work, especially with her collection, *River Life*. For the adventure-seeking traveler, activist for non-profits like Save the Confluence and

others based in Haiti and Uganda, or as a Parks Service Ranger, Martin notes the majesty of the Canyon and water's scarcity drew her in. "I have worked for the past 10 years in different capacities on and along the Colorado River. It is a place and a life that I dream about when I am away."

Whether navigating the river's rapids with a rafting crew or exploring on her own, Martin documents the human connection to Grand Canyon and her photographs, she says, represent small images of a giant canvas that is larger than humanity and far more than a simple snapshot. She prints these "extensions" on canvas, which adds to the texture and tone.

"The bottom of the Grand Canyon is a remote place, not that many people get to it, and I just felt compelled to create the strangely beautiful images to let others experience what I was, and to celebrate the place," Martin says, noting the river culture network shared between backcountry guides



From *River Life* by Amy Martin.