

A different landscape

■ New Mexican artist's dream-like abstracts on display in Edmond.

By M. J. Van Deventer
Staff Writer

When Dick Evans enrolled in Texas Tech University, he wanted to be an architect. But when he took a design and drawing class, he started thinking about a career as an artist. It took him a while to commit to art, but when he did, he knew he had found his life's calling.

His abstract landscapes are on view through Thursday at Shadid Fine Art in Edmond, after a formal opening June 5. This is Evans' sixth year to show at the Shadid Gallery and he said, "I don't know any other city that has embraced public art like Edmond has. We love coming to this area every year." Evans and his wife Susan, a sculptor, live in Santa Fe, N.M.

His work also is exhibited at the Joyce Robbins Gallery in Santa Fe, and the Tory Folliard Gallery in Milwaukee, Wis.

Evans transferred from Texas Tech, which, at that time, had no fine arts program, and moved to the University of Utah, a college known for its art curriculum, and earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in fine arts there.

The classroom always has been a stimulating experience for Evans and after graduating, he returned to Texas Tech to teach for four years. He and his wife are natives of New Mexi-

co, and they returned to the small town of San Juan, where they converted an adobe house into a studio.

After a year, teaching beckoned again, this time at the University of Tennessee. Later, he taught for 12 years at the University of Wisconsin. But, he came to realize that as much as he loved teaching and nurturing students, the easel was calling louder. He returned to his roots in New Mexico.

Evans' work is abstract, usually based on the landscape, but in a broader sense than a photographic image of plains, mountains and trees. "My art is an impression of the way I see physical things. There are many painters who do realistic landscapes very well, but I look at things and present them in a different way," Evans said.

Evans is a studio painter. "I tried painting *plein air*—in the field painting. There was just too much information and I couldn't process it all. But I'm looking at things all the time."

In 1990, Evans committed to creating art full time. That is always a career gamble, but Evans said, "We've been blessed with the opportunity to make our living creating art."

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In his studio, Evans often remembers the teachings of his mentors. "As a student, I had a number of professors I admired. Now, I realize just how much they did for me — how much personal care they extended to me." Among the nationally-known artists whose works he admires are Mark Rothko, for his bold colors; Edward Hopper, for the sense of quiet he infused in his paintings; Anselm Kiefer, for the emotion and gesture found in his paintings and Milton Avery and Albert Pinkham Ryder.

"I like paintings I can respond to with my head and my heart," Evans said.

When Evans is not painting, he's fly fishing. He will spend a whole day in the Pecos Wilderness, angling by a stream, enjoying what he calls the intense, but poetic, aspect of fly fishing. All the while, he is looking at nature, mentally recording inspirations for the next painting.

"Ideas for paintings are like dreams," Evans said. "They come to me as something to be investigated. Art enriches us all. That's why it's so important in my life."