



Questa artist wins prestigious Wyoming award

By R. Scott Gerdes

Cami Thompson is an artist of the oils. She has an eye for nature and wildlife. She resonates its silent beauty through light and color.

She calls herself a conservationist. Now she can add "selected artist."

The prestigious art competition out of Jackson, Wyo., "Arts for the Parks" recently announced that Thompson has been chosen for the 2004 Arts for the Parks "2nd 100" contest. Two of her works, "Chasm" and "Timberline" were accepted. Both paintings reflect Colorado scenes.

Thompson moved to just north of Quеста about 3½ years ago from the environs of Aspen, Colo., where she now "keeps a low profile."

Her education came from Hope College in her native state of Michigan and she also studied at Kendall School of Design. While it's nature that draws most of her attention, the self-proclaimed rock hound and former rock climber also paints people and street scenes. As a matter of fact, there isn't a genre Thompson wouldn't consider tackling, except for still lifes.

"I did enough of those in school," she laughed.

Her painting style is unique in that

from far away the image looks realistic, but upon closer inspection looks abstract. It's a mystery she can't explain. For the "Arts for the Parks" competition, she wanted to submit something matchless done in her style, which ended up appearing abstract. In her mind, that's "unusual."

The special New Mexico light has captured her, as it seems to do with many artists. The way light bounces off rocks, intrigues her the most.

"I am moved by shapes and color. I speak rock. I love nature," explained Thompson who studied rocks for many years. "Rocks are basically blobs when you paint them, but there's just a way that light hits them that is so special. I think it comes from the color of the earth here that is reflected in the sky."

"Arts for the Parks" is designed to promote and support National Parks through the work of artists who have captured on canvas and paper some of the parks' most dramatic and enticing visions. The top award winners won't be announced until the Awards Ceremony and Banquet to be held Sept. 18 at Jackson Lake Lodge in Grand Teton National Park.

Of her acceptance into the competition Thompson said, "I was blown away because I know that this is not an amateur deal. I'm very, very surprised."