

**CONTACT**: **Suzanne Camarata**

 **info@galleryflatrock.com**

**For Immediate Release**

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 **info@galleryflatrock.com**

**What**: “The Quarantine Painters” exhibit: Plein air painters gather at a distance during COVID-19

**When**: July 9-26; TBD opening reception

**Where**: The Gallery at Flat Rock, 2702-A Greenville Highway, Flat Rock, N.C.

**How** **much**: Free and open to the public

**Information:** galleryflatrock.com, 828-698-7000

**The Quarantine Painters**

*Plein Air Painters Gather at a Distance During COVID-19*

The Gallery at Flat Rock is excited to present an exhibition of the work of six landscape painters that have been meeting regularly “*en plein air*” during this time of social distancing as a way to encourage their personal creative work. The six Western North Carolina artists—who include Scott Boyle, Jim Carson, Gary Cooley, Mitch Kolbe, Rich Nelson, and Richard Oversmith, have been regularly meeting for socially distanced outings in locations around the Asheville and Hendersonville areas.

“We have talked about doing this for a long time, but it took the quarantine to get us to actually do it,” said Carson. “The socialization alone is worth the time, since painters quite often paint in isolation, but during the Shelter in Place period, it has been even more important. It has motivated me to get out of the studio and paint outside.”

The “Quarantine Painters” exhibition will highlight paintings created by each of the artists during outings this spring. The group has gathered to paint in locations as various as an upstate South Carolina peach orchard, Henderson County apple orchards, at the Rocky Broad River, in Hickory Nut Gap and downtown Asheville, and at Asheville’s Beaver Lake.

**The Gallery at Flat Rock Presents “The Quarantine Painters”**

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All six artists are members of PAPSE (Plein Air Painters of the Southeast), and are solidly mid-career professionals, mostly working in oil paint. Kolbe, who is used to painting in group sessions *en plein air*, noted how this group is different. “What is new is the caliber of artist that paints in this group. All professional and highly skilled,” he said. “Talent like this feeds on itself—I would imagine much like a group of really good musicians jamming with one another.**”**

While each artist may choose their own individual (and socially distanced) vantage point and compositional layout, there’s plenty of sharing of ideas happening during their outings.

“It’s been refreshing to paint with other artists in a group setting again and bounce visual ideas off one another just by observation,” said Kolbe, a resident of Fairview and the fifth member to join the group. “We have always respected each other’s boundaries by social distancing.”

Cooley, a Hendersonville-based painter and GFR artist, said the group plans to keep meeting regularly, “COVID or no COVID.” For Carson, a Saluda resident who is the other GFR artist featured in the show, the value is beyond simply meeting to paint outside.

“When I do paint outside it is usually in a festival setting or a PAPSE event, and in those cases, there is pressure to ‘get a good one,’” said Carson, who lives in Saluda. “Here, we are free to experiment, to do something a little different, and even fail without shame.”

The Gallery at Flat Rock represents finely curated art and craft, and is located in Flat Rock Square at 2702-A Greenville Highway in Flat Rock, North Carolina. Gallery hours have been adjusted to Thursdays - Sundays, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. or by appointment. To learn more, please visit the gallery website at [galleryflatrock.com](http://www.galleryflatrock.com) or call the gallery at 828-698-7000.

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