

## Television

Grab that DVR remote! Lots of new shows today and Wednesday. **PAGE 3E**

# STYLE

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## ARTBEAT

# Zen-like artwork colors exhibit

ELLIS WIDNER  
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Some artists are uneasy about putting titles on their paintings, not wanting to reveal much about the story that may, or may not, be told in the work.

George Dombek, the Goshen-based artist known for up-close and vivid watercolor paintings of stones, blossoms and rusty objects from junkyards, understands this.

"I like to leave it open for people to interpret it," Dombek said during a reception Thursday at Greg Thompson Fine Art in North Little Rock. The gallery is hosting "Water Color Series," a striking and brilliant show of more than 30 pieces of the Arkansas native's work. It is the Thompson gallery's first solo artist show.

"I try not to think about titles too much," Dombek said. "For me, they're pretty random; I read the *Tao te Ching*; it's a source of inspiration. Sometimes I pull titles out of phrases that I can relate to."



Courtesy of George Dombek

Detail of *Rain*, a 40-by-60-inch watercolor painting by George Dombek

So, when it comes to the paintings and art teacher, reading the titles is often a fascinating experience that could reveal more about Dombek than it does about the work that meets the eye.

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## Art

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Consider: *Quiet Breathing, Eternally Present, Add to the Inner Freedom, Makes the Whole World Kin, Rapture on the Lonely Shore, Brought Into Their Proper Perspective and Set Things in Order Before There Is Confusion.*

Thompson calls Dombek's work Zen-like, a description that seems apt.

Dombek paints with the precision of an architect as he seemingly taps into the spirit of a contemplative. When examining the gorgeous blossom titled *Red*, a 40-by-40-inch painting, it is clear that Dombek sought, and succeeded, in extracting the essence of the flower in his painting and its title. Its purpose, intentional or not, may well be to inspire us to discover our own.

A little humor seeps in here and there, too, as in *Fish de Tree*. Dombek fashioned a fish out of sticks and painted it into a canvas of bare trees, the few leaves being the same watery blue of the fish's eyes. One work shows an affection for the nudes of the French artist Jean-Dominique Au-

guste Ingres with another stick creation — a woman in repose, posed in the trees. The color of the few leaves are the same as her lips.

Among other highlights of this show is the magnificent *Rain*, a 40-by-60-inch work of a section of grass with exquisite crystal-like droplets. By painting this intimate view so large, we experience an almost hyper reality as he illuminates a beauty that eludes the initial perception of familiar objects, a beauty the artist illuminates as he takes time to look ... to contemplate ... with sharp lines and dramatic shadings of color.

The aforementioned *Red* embraces the viewer with its luscious, wide-open petals. There are several variations on *Rain* and *Red*, with vivid orange, yellow and touches of blue and green.

The stones paintings, particularly *Rapture on the Lonely Shore*, seem to be out of some fantastic, perhaps metaphorical stream bed you want to wade into. The shadings of color, the texture you know would feel rough and cool in your hand or on your feet, the patterns and striations that flow and spiral, invite us to stop and savor the moment. And the next.

"*Water Color Series*," paintings by



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/BOB COLEMAN

George Dombek sits in his studio at Goshen.

George Dombek, Greg Thompson Fine Art, 429 Main St., North Little Rock. Through Nov. 14. Hours: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday. [gregthompsonfineart.com](http://gregthompsonfineart.com) or (501) 664-2787.

### HERE AND THERE

Terry R. Bean's oil paintings and sculpture at Cantrell Gallery are as familiar as the Little Rock skyline and as unfamiliar as Chinese musicians.

*Ancient Music* is a triptych in oil of traditionally clad Chinese musicians. It is rich in color and movement; one can

almost hear them play. Bean's color palette, especially on the faces, is very interesting. He uses greens, blue, rust, yellow and red to show shadow and light in the faces.

Two views of the Capital Hotel Bar in Little Rock recall a number of cafe scenes by European painters. In *Second Stage*, four curious patrons look off to the viewer's left, their attention diverted ... by what? A customer talking loudly or acting out? A waitress dropping a tray? A celebrity sighting? A man and woman at the other end

are clearly enamored of each other, while a woman sits alone at the bar, perhaps lost in thought, next to an empty seat. Is she waiting for someone to join her, or hoping someone will? The smaller *Capital Hotel Bar* is closer in tone to its subject, it's darker than its companion piece. While *Second Stage* is intimate and light, *Capital Hotel Bar* is darker and distant.

Don't miss the fanciful *Peabody Icons*, the ducks presented in swirls of blues, yellows and reds.

Terry R. Bean, "Featuring Little Rock," Cantrell Gallery, 8206 Cantrell Road, Little Rock. Through Oct. 31. Hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday. [cantrellgallery.com](http://cantrellgallery.com) or (501) 224-1335.

Utility and art can co-exist beautifully, as "Woodworking From the Museum School at the Arkansas Arts Center" shows. With works exhibited at the main gallery at the Arkansas Studies Institute, these faculty and student woodworkers skillfully use grain, stain and form to create utilitarian objects, from pens to furniture that can take your breath away.

Some high points: a mahogany and maple table by

Mike Jones with rounded, almost lyre-shaped legs at each end; a walnut, granite and brass table by Jon Bates that echoes the Mission style; and James F. Argo's walnut bench with its top cut into a fish-like shape.

Greg Nichols' simply designed cedar table lets the wood's grain, knots and varied coloration speak for itself.

Susanne Roberts' *Feline Garderobe*, made of various woods, has a striking beauty and a utility indicated by its title: It is a cat privy for the litter box with a shelf for supplies. A side opening provides feline access.

If painter Georgia O'Keeffe had taken up woodworking, she might have produced something like E. Kim Fifer's *Enclosed Form*, made from redbud wood. The delicate opening to the vase-like shape echoes some of O'Keeffe's undulating floral images.

"Woodworking From the Museum School at the Arkansas Arts Center," Arkansas Studies Institute, 401 President Clinton Ave., Little Rock. Through Oct. 24. Hours: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday. [butlercenter.org/art](http://butlercenter.org/art) or (501) 320-5790.

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