



Travis Walker's *View of Jackson, No. 22* is one of 25 new canvases to be unveiled Friday at Down Home Furnishings.

Walker paints the town in technicolor

Who: Travis Walker
What: "View of Jackson" show and reception
When: 5-9 p.m. Friday; show hangs through Sept. 14
Where: Down Home Furnishings, 66 E. Pearl Ave.

By Dina Mishev

Artist Travis Walker's last show was cut short when Betty Rock closed for remodeling. In his first show since, he appears to be making up for lost time: "Views of Jackson" consists of 25 new acrylic paintings.

Walker, a relative newcomer to the valley - he moved here from Kansas City just over a year ago - paints landscapes. "But not the landscapes you expect," he said. Instead of concentrating on the Tetons, Walker turns his gaze to the town of Jackson.

"I think most artists here focus on the stuff they think will sell," he said. "Of course, I'd like to sell some stuff, but it is not my primary goal. By painting the life of Jackson, I'm carrying over from what I did before I moved here."

Walker has spent time in Italy, sketching street life, festivals and groups of people. He returned from that trip with enough fodder for 18 months worth of paintings. "I saw so many things that

fascinated me there," he said. "Jackson is the same way."

That said, "Views of Jackson" consists of ranch scenes in addition to town life. Walker has spent the last year sketching and painting the 4 Lazy F Ranch, a huge, historic property south of town that will soon be made into a golf course. "I've been painting the old buildings out there and trying to capture the general feel of the ranch. I wanted to do this before the ranch got plowed down," Walker said.

Walker's town scenes are usually of deserted streets in the early morning light. While painters around the Town Square are a usual sight, Walker said he prefers to paint in private. "Trying to paint downtown is ridiculous," he said. "So many people bother you. I guess it would be all right if I were looking for attention, but I'm not."

Instead, Walker sketches scenes and retreats to his home studio to paint.

Between his 4 Lazy F scenes and his town paintings - the exhibition is about half of each - Walker said he is trying to show the two sides of Jackson.

"The ranch is the way it used to look and town is the way we're heading," he said. "I'm trying to interpret both and make both the ranch and town look old and new at the same time."

That's a hefty order, but Walker carries it

through with his blend of realism and expressionism. While places and buildings are certainly recognizable because of their shape and surroundings, Walker paints them in colors even Crayola wouldn't imagine. In "Cowboy Bar," one of the "new" scenes even though the bar dates back nearly to the town's founding, everything is a shade of green.

One the other hand, "Loveshack," a painting of one of the hay stacks from the 4 Lazy F, is done in vibrant, realistic colors.

Although Walker now works full-time as a graphic designer and paints in the mornings and on weekends, he painted full-time prior to moving to Jackson. "I survived solely on painting for about eight months here," Walker said. "But then I realized it is too hard to sell stuff year-round."

Walker earned a degree in painting and printmaking from Philadelphia's Tyler School of Art.

In addition to the shortened show at Betty Rock, Walker participated in the Fall Arts Festival's Takin' It to the Streets show last autumn. Takin' It to the Streets features work by selected local artists.

In the Betty Rock and Takin' It to the Streets shows, Walker painted acrylics on wood panel. "Views of Jackson" includes paintings on wood panel, canvas and paper. The pieces range in size from 6-by-6-foot to 6-by-12-inches.