



If you sign up for a painting in the Art Association's new show, you won't learn "whodunnit" until after you buy it. The sale takes place May 19.

## MYSTERY ARTISTS

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exclusively for the show will be for sale at \$99 each, making pieces by some well-known names – such as Audrey Flack, Peggi Kroll-Roberts, Donna Howell-Sickles, Marshall Noice and Thom Ross – affordable for many. Works will be displayed in a preview show before the sale from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through May 18 in the Center for the Arts' main gallery. The sale will be held from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. on May 19.

During the sale, browsers with a penchant for a piece can sign a registry sheet for a chance to buy it. Names for each canvas will be drawn, and once winners have bagged their bargains, buyers will learn who painted their piece.

A \$5 admission to the sale will enable the Art Association to raise funds for programming. "It will be a really fun event that also doubles as a fund-raiser for the Art Association," said Elisa San Souci, events director at the nonprofit organization. The Art Association modeled "Whodunnit" on a similar show and sale called "Secret" at the Royal College of Art in London.

San Souci issued 375 invitations to artists around the country in search of submissions for "Whodunnit." Of the 175 who responded positively, about 60 percent are from Jackson Hole, and the remainder hail from elsewhere. The miniature paintings are split between traditional Western themes like wildlife and landscapes, and contemporary, abstract styles.

"I was a little concerned it would get a little weighty on the traditional side," San Souci said, "so I was glad to see contemporary pieces, too."

Valley artists who contributed

works to the show include Kathy Turner, Fred Kingwill, Carrie Geraci, Suzanne Morlock, Ricki Arno, Mike Piggot, Miga Rossetti, Travis Walker and Susan Thulin.

Turner, co-owner of Trio Fine Art, pointed out that, of course, she couldn't describe her painting. She did admit that it depicts a landscape, "but because it's incognito, it made it fun to explore a different approach," she said. "It's kind of like being in a different city where no one recognizes you. It's freeing, in a way."

The wrapped canvases given to the artists – with finished edges, the canvases do not require frames – enabled some to paint the sides in addition to the front. The square format also posed a new challenge for Turner.

"Art is about problem solving, and the problem was about how to approach this 6- by 6- canvas," she said. Consequently, the show will be "just a wonderful way of getting to see so many different approaches to the same problem, and to see so much art at once."

The preview show will allow art lovers to browse the works at a more leisurely pace than that of the sale, which is likely to verge on frenetic. However, prospective buyers can only sign up for paintings on the night of the sale.

"There are not many chances to walk away with an original piece of artwork for \$99," San Souci said. "It's a real steal."

Turner enthused about the event's twin aims of making high-caliber art accessible and encouraging viewers to tap into their innate attraction to a piece.

"I really do like that it kind of brings high art down low," she said. "It's great that you don't know who did it because then it becomes art for art's sake."