

## Oregon vineyards on canvas

*It's show time for Willamette Valley artists. You can see their work on studio tours and at shows in and near Corvallis*

**U**NDER AN OLD OAK tree that commands a phalanx of vineyard trellises, landscape painter Michael Gibbons stands at his easel mixing colors, finding just the right hue for mud. He's one of a half-dozen artists—most of them gazing west—who are scattered through the vineyard's gold-green rows. In the distance, white-gray clouds swab the Coast Range foothills that reappear as lavender on some canvases, slate blue on others. Closer in, above a muddy pond, a field of dry weeds creates the illusion of salmon pink fog.

The rain has slowly been letting up. "It's getting lighter and lighter," someone remarks. "Yep, and I can see there's another painting waiting, just waiting," Gibbons responds with a faint smile.

Since 1990, two dozen or so artists have been meeting



**WATERCOLORIST** Linda Fire demonstrates her techniques at Corvallis Arts Center.

twice a week to paint at vineyards around the southern Willamette Valley. Some are beginners; others are full-time professionals like Gibbons, an internationally collected plein air (outdoor, on-location) painter whose works can fetch several thousand dollars apiece. Their approaches vary widely; what they share, Gibbons says, is "an appreciation for this place."

That appreciation comes full circle this month when the Vineyards & Vistas project culminates in a series of shows in galleries and temporary exhibit spaces, as well as wine tastings and self-guided tours of artists' studios. Most events are tied to Artwalk, October 24 and 25 in downtown Corvallis, Philomath, and Albany. Also, five major shows are scheduled to coin-



ROBERT HUNT

**SHELTERED FROM DRIZZLE,** Michael Gibbons paints in vineyard of Springhill Cellars near Albany.

cide with Artwalk weekend; most will hang a month or more and are clustered in October and November.

Some of the shows deal exclusively with works produced

at the vineyards; others are unrelated to the on-location workshops. Studios open for touring during Artwalk include those of a photographer, a fiber artist, and a glass-

blower as well as painters in various media. The tours provide a chance to see works produced by the Corvallis-area art community and to meet the artists.

The Artwalk and wine tastings will begin by 10 and continue until at least 5 Saturday and Sunday. Maps will be available at many public locations in the three commu-

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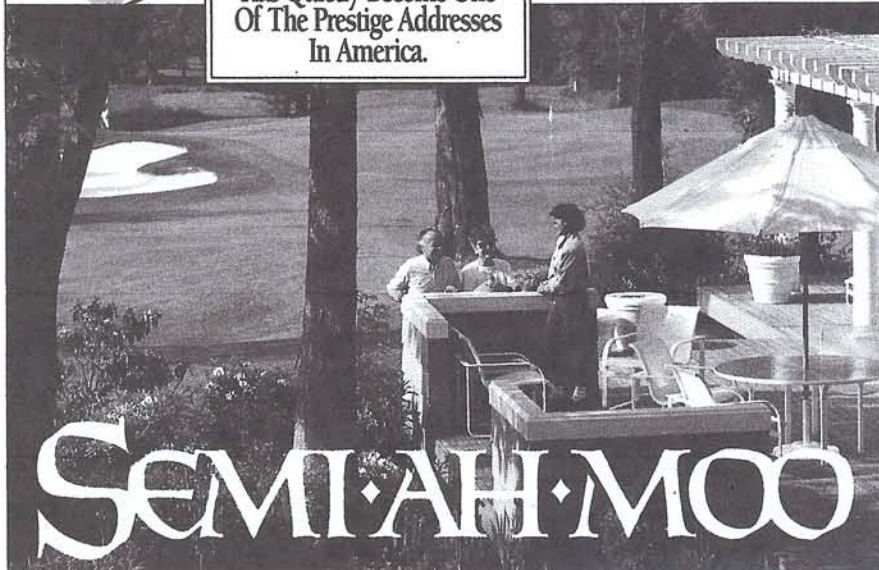
Photo: Catch the Wind Kites.



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nities; to get one in advance, call the Corvallis Convention and Visitors Bureau at (800) 334-8118 or, in Corvallis, (503) 757-1544.

#### FIVE ART SHOWS

To see some of the best on-location and studio work, plan to browse at one or more of these major shows.

**Wallama Kopa Wecoma**, September 15 through October 29, Oregon State University Memorial Union Concourse Gallery; open 7:30 A.M. to 11 P.M. daily. Four-woman show of paintings produced on location along Columbia River tributaries.

**Vineyards & Vistas Mentors Exhibit**, September 21 through December 18, Oregon State University Center for the Humanities (811 S.W. Jefferson Avenue); open 8 to 5 weekdays and during Artwalk. Works by Michael Gibbons, Nancy Olson, Marilee Rayle, Nelson Sandgren, Carol Selberg, William Shumway, Scobel Wiggins, Carol Yates, and others who were mentors during the outdoor sessions.

**Vineyards & Vistas Invitational Exhibit**, October 2 through November 14, Benton County Museum (on U.S. 20 in Philomath); open 10 to 4:30 Tuesdays through Saturdays. Oregon vineyard landscapes by Gibbons and watercolorist Richard Robertson.

**Willamette Valley Juried Exhibit**, October 7 through November 12, Corvallis Arts Center (700 S.W. Madison Avenue); open noon to 5 Tuesdays through Sundays (open at 10 Artwalk weekend). The arts center's 22nd annual showcase.

**Vineyards & Vistas Juried Exhibit**, October 16 through November 12, Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis (2945 N.W. Circle Boulevard); open 9 to noon Sundays through Fridays and during Artwalk. A juried show of works produced on location. ■

By Bonnie Henderson