

Kenny McKenna

Legacy Gallery, July 1-15

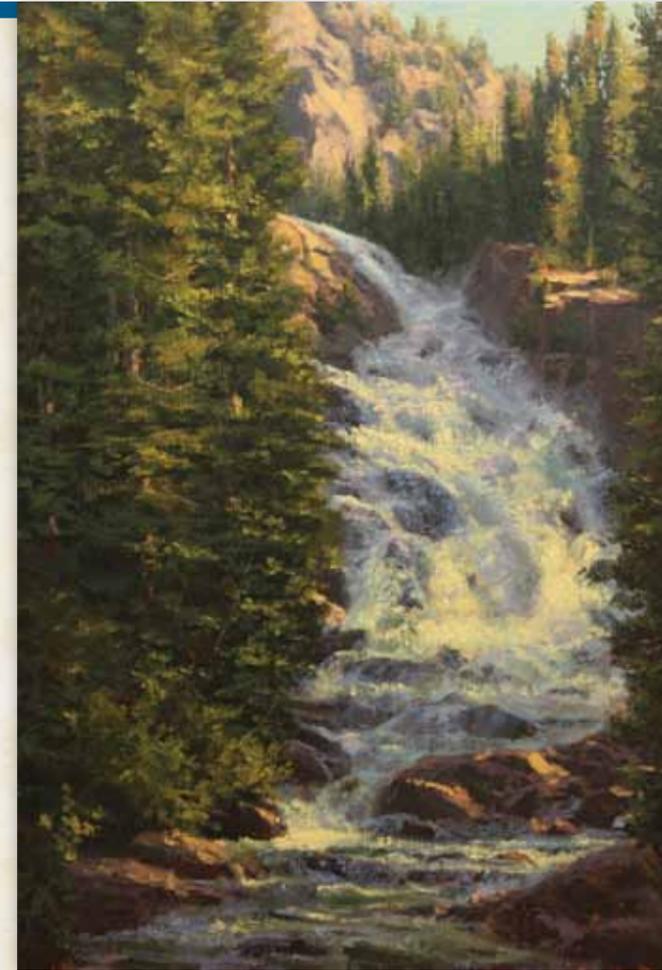
LEGACY GALLERY mounts a collection of new paintings by Kenny McKenna this month in its Jackson, WY, location, bringing to life the pure beauty and majesty of the surrounding landscape within the gallery walls. Consisting exclusively of local scenery, McKenna's latest body of work material-

ized during one of his many trips to the area. "Kenny came to Jackson last fall to photograph and prepare for this show," explains Janell Grady, marketing manager at the gallery. "All the pieces in the show are Wyoming landscapes, highlighting iconic subjects like the Tetons, Sleeping Indian, and the Snake River."

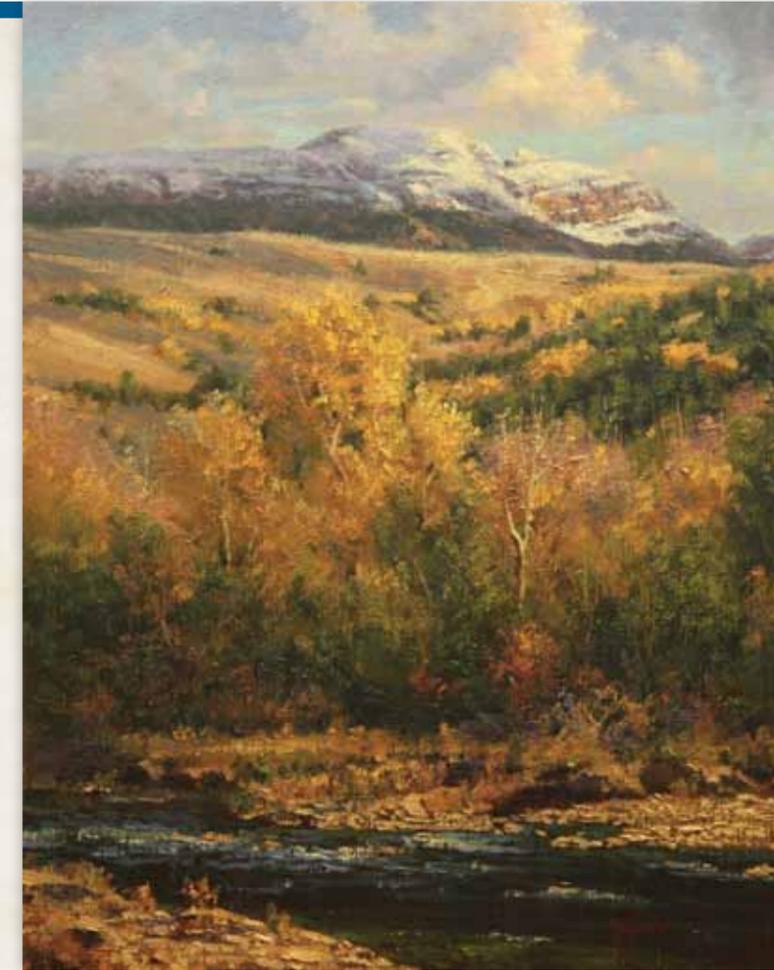
The solo show opens on Wednesday, July 1, and continues through July 15. It includes 15 new canvases, ranging in size from 12 by 16 inches to 36 by 44 inches. Scenes include panoramic vistas that embody Wyoming's largely untainted landscapes as seasons change. McKenna refers to the October excursion that



Shades of Autumn, oil, 16 x 20.



Hidden Falls, oil, 26 x 18.



Autumn on the Gros Ventre, oil, 20 x 16.

inspired these works as "charmed"—rife with the dramatic weather events, vivid sunrises, and vibrant natural color he likes to employ in his compositions.

"I have always painted landscapes because it just feels right," says the artist. Based in Oklahoma, he enjoys traveling in search of new subject matter and, in fact, has a long history of being on the road. His family traveled frequently during his childhood, and as an adult, the former musician spent years touring the country with various bands. From those experiences, the artist developed a deep appreciation for nature and a "passion for the landscape"—one that continues to grow and inform his work.

Though he creates the occasional plein-air field sketch, McKenna prefers to paint in his studio, working largely from photographs taken during his travels. A dedicated oil painter, he utilizes

these rich pigments to express the lustre of the scenarios that engage him visually. "I love oil," he says. "I like the smell, the feel ... everything about it."

Many of McKenna's idyllic environments appear untouched by humans, as if the artist is giving his audience a first glimpse at the pristine, living land. Further, his soft, painterly scenes invite reflection as they take viewers on a visual journey throughout each composition. SHADES OF AUTUMN captures the autumnal light in bright yellows and burnt oranges that emerge from the surrounding evergreens. HIDDEN FALLS displays nature's power, creating a sense of drama as the water quickly cascades downward. One of only a few of the artist's paintings to give evidence of human life, VALLEY BARN depicts an idyllic tableau. Interestingly, however, the man-made constructions remain dwarfed by the

surrounding mountains and trees, existing in, not on, the land.

"Kenny has made many trips to Jackson over the years to capture the Tetons during different seasons and different times of the day," remarks Grady. "We feel that through these efforts he has become one of the top artists to currently paint these landscapes. His sense of lighting and depth capture the very essence of the Tetons."

—Elizabeth L. Delaney

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www.legacygallery.com

See more work at www.southwestart.com/events/legacy-jul2015.