

Douglas Aagard

Manitou Galleries, November 5-27



The Year's Last Harvest, oil, 30 x 36.



Edge of Winter, oil, 36 x 60.

ASPENS IN FALL, farmland in dappled light, open pastures with animals grazing, mountain pines, canyon maples, cottonwoods—these are a few of the delightful subjects one can find on the canvases of Douglas Aagard, a Utah-based artist who has been painting his observations of the western landscapes he loves for more than 20 years. An exhibition of 13 new paintings by Aagard opens on Friday, November 5, at Manitou Galleries' West Palace Avenue location in downtown Santa Fe. The show, titled *Chasing Light*, kicks off with a reception from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Although Aagard's subject matter might be expected, given the natural beauty surrounding his rural western home, the way in which he paints it is not. Working from both observation and imagination, the artist uses a palette knife to sculpt layers of rich color and texture onto the canvas. It's quite a departure for someone who started out painting in watercolor. "When I first began painting, I thought that watercolor was all I was ever going to do," he says. "Then I visited a Gary Ernest Smith show and saw what was possible with oil. A couple of paintings in, I picked up a palette knife, and I haven't gone back to watercolor since."

That was more than two decades ago, and today the impasto effects Aagard creates are what both he and his collectors love best about his paintings. "To this day I can't achieve with a brush the depth of field I can with a palette knife," he says, adding that "sometimes the texture is more fun than the composition." Manitou Galleries' associate director Cyndi Hall concurs. "Douglas's ability to create tone and texture with a palette knife has caused him to remain a favorite among collectors," Hall says.

The paintings included in *Chasing Light* range from 9 by 12 inches up to 6 by 4 feet, giving collectors plenty of options to choose from. The artist admits,



Across the Canyon,
oil, 12 x 24.



▲ **Bear Ridge,** oil, 24 x 36.

◀ **Sunlight Across the Water,** oil, 6 x 4 feet.

however, that he's most in his comfort zone when creating large-scale works, which he says have to be seen in person to fully experience their impact. "There

are so many elements and layers that, when you stand in front of them, they just draw you in," he says of the towering paintings.

A painting or two in the show turn the spotlight squarely on one of Aagard's favorite subjects: "I just love the canyon maple," he says. "They're not that big, but they're

this amazing shade of red. When you

come across one of these bright, colorful trees in the middle of the forest, it's like someone flipped the light on in front of you." —Allison Malafronte

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