

Easter celebrations

Congregations all over the metropolitan area are planning events to celebrate the holiday this weekend. **Page 3E**



TAKING A DEEPER LOOK

at the paintings of Dale Nichols



Dale Nichols broke the boundaries of regionalist painting with stylized works such as this one, "Road to Adventure," an oil on canvas that is part of the Joslyn Art Museum's modern & contemporary collection. Top: Nichols is best known for his barn paintings depicting rural life.

A new exhibit goes beyond the familiar regionalist style of the famed Nebraska artist

By STEVE JORDON
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

The works of Dale Nichols are more than red barns. The Nebraska-born artist, who died in 1995, deserves recognition both as a major U.S. regionalist, along the lines of Grant Wood and Thomas Hart Benton, and as a painter who stretched the boundaries of his artwork, according to a newly minted expert on Nichols.

That expert, Amanda Mobley Guenther, said only a small share of Nichols' canvases portray the idealized farm scenes that started his career in the 1930s.

For decades afterward, he moved on to paintings that turned realism into a sort of stylized surrealism, with distinctive, crisp lines and what some people call a mystic quality beyond their subject matter.

That's why Guenther attached "Transcending Regionalism" to the title of a new national exhibit of Nichols' work, which opens May 20 in his hometown of David City, Neb., and to the

200-page book she wrote about him and his art.

"I think most people who are familiar with Nichols are familiar with the red barn scenes," said Guenther, associate curator of the Bone Creek Museum of Agrarian Art in David City. "But if you were to take a panorama of his whole body of work, just a portion of it would be that subject. He painted a lot of other things."

Like "Green Flame," a portrait of his grandfather, William Pollman, who encouraged his artwork and helped support Nichols' studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Chicago.

"On the surface, it's a very regionalist painting in the sense that he's painting a farmer in overalls," Guenther said. "But he always went far off in painting his subject. He explored and went beyond regionalism in the way he painted it."

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"DALE NICHOLS: TRANSCENDING REGIONALISM"

Where: Bone Creek Museum of Agrarian Art, 575 E St., David City, Neb.

When: May 20-Nov. 18. Opening reception, 1-4 p.m. May 28

Other stops for the exhibit: Georgia Art Museum, Athens, Ga., Dec. 27-Feb. 27, 2012; Montgomery (Ala.) Museum of Fine Arts, March 17-June 17, 2012

Exhibit book: "Dale Nichols: Transcending Regionalism," by Amanda Mobley Guenther (200 pages, \$34.99), will be for sale at the museum during the exhibit's run.



Guenther

Missing painting not forgotten

By STEVE JORDON
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Dale Nichols' "The Sanley Farm" painting apparently was last seen publicly at a 1938 exhibition at the Macbeth Gallery on East 57th Street in New York City.

Relatives have been trying to locate the missing masterpiece for years and have only one image to go by: A black-and-white copy of the front page of The World-Herald's 1940 farm report.

The painting features a characteristic of Nichols' early work from the 1930s and '40s: a red barn.

Dan Sanley of San Diego, a former Nebraskan and nephew of the artist's sister, Lilas Nichols-Sanley, said she recalled that Nichols went out on a bitterly cold day in 1933 and set up his easel in a cornfield to create his first oil painting.

Amanda Mobley Guenther, assistant curator of the Bone Creek Museum of Agrarian Art in Nichols' hometown of David City, Neb., said the painting likely is the first "red barn" work by Nichols and the only known one that he painted directly from life.

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EVER WONDER WHY EASTER FALLS ON A DIFFERENT DATE EACH YEAR?

BLAME THE MOON

BY THERESA FARRAGE
WORLD-HERALD CORRESPONDENT

Have you ever wondered why Easter hops around so much on the calendar? The jumping has nothing to do with the Easter Bunny and everything to do with the moon. A full moon, to be exact.

According to the Rev. David Fleming, pastor at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Council Bluffs, Easter is determined by a formula that was set in A.D. 325 by the Council of Nicaea. Easter is on the Sunday after the paschal full moon — the first full moon on or after the vernal

(spring) equinox in the Northern Hemisphere. This year, that formula put Easter on April 24.

Fleming said Easter can be as early as March 22 or as late as April 25. Easter is determined by the paschal full moon because that is the date of Passover in the Jewish calendar, and the Last Supper (Holy Thursday) occurred on Passover.

Fleming said the church doesn't use the exact date of the paschal full moon, but rather an approximation since the paschal full moon can fall on different days in different time zones. According to Fleming, the full moon is always set at the 14th day of the lunar month (a lunar month begins with the new moon) for calculation purposes.

The church sets the date of the vernal equinox at March 21, even though it can occur March 20, so the church can set a universal date for Easter.

"Still, Easter isn't celebrated universally on that date," Fleming said. "While Western Christians use the Gregorian calendar to calculate the date of Easter, the Eastern Orthodox Church continues to use the older, astronomically inaccurate Julian calendar. Currently, March 21 on the Julian calendar falls on April 3 in the Gregorian calendar."

The Rev. Peter J. Pappas of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in Omaha said the Orthodox Church traditionally refers to the Passion and Resurrection of Christ as Pascha, which is the Greek word for Passover. Early in the

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35 DAYS OF EASTER

The date of Easter can range from March 22 to April 25. This year's date of April 24 is almost as late as it can be.

MARCH 22

Easter last fell on the earliest possible day in 1818.

Next occurrence: 2285.

APRIL 25

Easter last fell on the latest possible date in 1943.

Next occurrence: 2038.

Source: www.assa.org.au/edm.html#list20