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Glass, Ceramics & Wood*



DYANA HESSON

Garden varieties

During a weeklong visit amid the red rocks of Sedona, Arizona, Dyana Hesson and her friends uncovered a small cactus with five white buds, a discovery that would serve as the inspiration for one of the artist's newest works, *Sakes Alive, There's Five*.

Hesson, a botanical artist known for her intricate, incandescent paintings of Arizona blooms, explains further, "This had been the spring that javelina had destroyed every cactus bloom in my own neighborhood, so I was excited at the prospect of five blooms intact.

"We were not disappointed," she continues. "There they were wide open in a perfect circle, no stinky javelina in sight."

It is these unexpected moments that inspire Hesson, whose evolution of work is celebrated in a retrospective, *Return to the Desert, Celebrating 25 Years of Paintings*, at the Desert Botanical Garden's Ottosen Gallery in Phoenix through May 22.

Among the pieces in the show is *An Arizona Wink*, which highlights the pale yellow variety of *opuntia*, or prickly pear cactus, that Hesson describes as "demure on the outside, flamboyant on the inside."



For Hesson, who frequents the Desert Botanical Garden to find inspiration for her work, springtime warrants multiple visits to the 140-acre grounds to uncover the varieties of blooming cactus.

In *Beauty and the Beast*, an agave is engulfed in pink evening primrose, which bloomed near the entrance to the garden's

wildflower trail. Hesson writes of the piece, "They appeared to be fighting for attention but truly, side by side, they were breathtakingly beautiful. There in the cool shadows, beautiful saturated colors seemed to dance."

Commenting on her recent body of work, Hesson acknowledges that it



Scan for VIDEO

- 1 Artist Dyana Hesson.
- 2 *Sakes Alive, There's Five*, oil on canvas, 30 x 60"
- 3 *Beauty and the Beast*, oil on canvas, 30 x 40"
- 4 *An Arizona Wink*, oil on canvas, 18 x 24"
- 5 *Veronika's Garden*, oil on canvas, 40 x 30"



3



4



5

forced her to slow down to focus on technical excellence and convey her vision of beauty clearly. “I thought at this point in my career I would be painting faster,” she admits. “In reality it is taking me longer to complete each canvas.”

In conjunction with the exhibit, Hesson will release her first art book, *Radiance: the*

Paintings of Dyana Hesson, which features more than 170 of the artist’s radiant botanical and landscape paintings.

While several of Hesson’s latest works appear at the retrospective, the rest of her new collection can be found at Scottsdale, Arizona-based Bonner David Galleries. A public reception at the garden takes place

from 6 to 9 p.m. on March 18. Hesson hopes collectors take the time to view both exhibits to see the full story.

“Creation never disappoints. It is always dramatic and always inspiring,” comments Hesson on her goals for the shows. “I hope that their eyes can rest a while in the beauty that they see.” ●