

Jackson Hole & the Teton Lifestyle

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The *Art*
of Jackson Hole



It's an Art

WORDS LIZ COYLE | IMAGE COURTESY TRAILSIDE GALLERIES

"I've always had a passion for being around art and collecting it and just enjoying it."

— Maryvonne Leshe

For 50 years, Trailside Galleries has provided Jackson with the most excellent of art—from acrylic landscape paintings to bronze sculptures of wildlife. "There are not a lot of galleries that can say that," Maryvonne Leshe, the gallery's current managing partner, said. "A gallery can't stay in business for 50 years without being able to provide its clients with top quality art and excellent customer service." The gallery represents nearly 80 full-time artists, including favorite painters Tucker Smith, Bill Anton, Z.S. Liang and Mian Situ.

Leshe has been a partner at the Jackson gallery as well as its sister storefront in Scottsdale, Arizona, since 1994. She began her career as a salesperson at the Scottsdale space in 1976. "When the gallery started 50 years ago, there was not much of a tourist trade in Jackson," she explained. "The gallery really needed to have more of a year-round season. Arizona in the wintertime is marvelous. We're a destination gallery. We're busy in the winter months in Arizona and the summer months in Jackson."

As a child in Paris, Leshe's interest in art first developed as she spent time with her grandfather, who was a professional artist. "That was for me what really shaped my future," she said. "I'd spend a great deal of time in his studio. I soaked it in."

She studied art in college but didn't have the desire to create it herself, according to Leshe. "I've always had a passion for being around art and collecting it and just enjoying it," she explained.

Instead, she found her niche being around art in the gallery and discovered she really enjoyed the business end of it. "It's a pleasure meeting the clientele that we have," Leshe said. "It's enjoyable finding just the right painting for what they're looking for. One of the focuses I have is constantly finding new, talented artists and introducing them to my clients."

Leshe and her partner, Roxanne Hofmann, were instrumental in starting the Jackson Hole Art Auction in 2007. The auction, which takes place each September during the Fall Arts Festival at the Center for the Arts, is nationally recognized. "It certainly has brought something new and exciting to Jackson," she said. "I work all year long to find exceptional, quality art to put into the auction."

As part of a vetting committee for the Jackson Hole Art Auction, Leshe has curated million dollar paintings by Fredric Remington, Maynard Dixon and others. As a result of Leshe and Hofmann's efforts, the auction has now developed a niche for wildlife art, including work by important deceased artists such as Carl Rungius and Bob Kuhn as well as living artists, including Tucker Smith, Ken Carlson and Carl Brenders. Many art collectors, old and new, flock to the valley each fall for this event.

And, of course, visitors and locals alike can get a good art fix at Trailside Galleries at 130 East Broadway. "We have a lot of experience and a great reputation," Leshe said. "We provide great service and a lot of knowledge to our clients." ■



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