

# Lifelong search takes Fayette County artist across nation

By REBECCA CANTLEY  
REGISTER-HERALD REPORTER

When he was 8 years old, David Weaver's grandmother gave him a set of oil paints — a gift that directed his life pursuits.

Weaver and his wife Chereese own the Midland Trail Art Gallery in Lookout, Fayette County.

Weaver's paintings and Chereese's avant garde pottery are available for sale in the gallery. The painter's works include landscapes, floral, still life and wildlife scenes and portraits.

The couple's love of art began early.

"My first memories are of drawing, and the painting just came naturally after that," Weaver said.

David and Chereese have been together since they were both 16, growing up in Ohio. They would skip classes in high school to go to the Toledo Museum of Art. Weaver's high school art teacher Robert Smith inspired the young artist.

"He set me on a path of searching," Weaver said. "The hunt was on after my experience. It was a pursuit of knowledge."

Weaver developed a love for Old Master realism. The painter strives to capture the realistic qualities of the subjects he paints. Old Master works have beauty that can "transport you to another place and time," Weaver said.

The life-like quality of Weaver's paintings is created by intense study, he said. Chereese often finds him painting in the forest or fields.

"I take photos during the warm months so I can paint in the winter," Weaver said.

Weaver does not have a favorite subject; it is the creation process that entrances him.

"The process takes me away," he said. "It's such a satisfying experience that I become spoiled by it."

"The process is in the mental. It's a creative place, where more people should be. We all have it."

Weaver joined the air force after high school. He studied art at the University of Texas-Austin and was an apprentice to German master Dalhart Windburg. Weaver's art took a new direction to forensic art in 1980.

"That consisted of going to



Chris Hancock/The Register-Herald

**VISION:** David Weaver paints a rose in the Midland Trail Art Gallery in Lookout, Fayette County. The artist creates Old Master paintings, works that can "transport you to another place and time," he said.

crime scenes and searching for physical evidence...I was using my artistic talents to draw faces of bad guys from victims' descriptions."

Weaver was recruited to Alaska to study three-dimensional skull sculptures at the FBI training academy. The technique involved recreating faces on skulls to help officials identify them.

Weaver apprenticed with Russian Master Iouri Sidorenko before he moved his family to West Virginia in 1993. The Weavers had never visited the state.

"We feel more at home here than we would in Ohio," he said. "The people here are down to earth. They have the values that we were seeking for our children."

The gallery's location works well, Chereese said.

"Life is easier," she said. "We don't have the stresses, and we can focus on the things we want to do."

The scenery in rural Fayette County, gives Weaver inspiration for his work.

"The beauty, the land's strength, the color. I find inspiration, because I'm surrounded by it," the painter said.

The move to Lookout was "a leap of faith," the Weavers said; a move that is beginning to pay off. Recently Weaver traveled to California to the Simic Art Gallery in Carmel.

"They say they can sell everything I do," Weaver said.

The painter also has a contract with the Bradford Exchange to paint works for their limited edition plates. One of

Weaver's works is currently being test-marketed.

"If it does well, then it will be marketed internationally," he said.

Weaver's contract is a four-year agreement. If the test piece does well, he will paint three series of works. Scenes will include florals, birds, and an English garden, he said.

Weaver will continue his associations with the Simic Art Gallery and the Bradford Exchange. Chereese intends to show her pottery pieces in Manhattan.