Retired educator enjoys second career as artist

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Louis Mason, MSE '66, spent 36 years in the classroom as a business teacher.

But he has always been an artist.

In his retirement, Mason has rediscovered his love for art – and found others love it, too. In fact, he has sold more than 400 pieces on four continents.

The former Oshkosh West business teacher and business/marketing education department chair moved to Glendale, Arizona about 10 years ago. He needed something to do, so he painted 30 canvases.

At his first show in Scottsdale, nearly all of them sold. "That was enough to motivate me to pursue this a bit further," he said.

When he paints, Mason tries to capture the typically uninhibited, colorful drawings done by a third- or fourth-grader. The only difference is a dose of adult intellect. "So here I am in my golden years trying to create paintings that are similar to those that a seven- or eight-year-old might do."

Because he is self-taught, he feels less inhibited, both technically and emotionally.

"I have the freedom to make mistakes," he said. "I am sure some art professors that look at my work would suggest I take some classes, but I enjoy the discovery method. I did while I was teaching, and I do now as an artist."

Critics have given Mason the thumbs-up. One said his art tests the boundaries of perception, and that the exaggeration of scale suggests primitivism often associated with narrative folk art. Another called his works "gutsy, whimsical and compositionally interesting."

Pleasing critics is rewarding. But making everyday people smile is really what is important. "I hope my art will engender a grin or two for the observer," he said.

Besides smiles, Mason said the few extra bucks are nice, too.

"It also keeps the right side of my brain nice and active. And the reminder that I have sold more than 400 paintings to folks on four different continents is also a bit of rush," he said.

While at Oshkosh West, Mason was named Teacher of the Year in 1995. He also authored 24 books and workbooks in business, economic and legal education.

Mason's art is available for purchase exclusively through galleries. For more information, visit

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http://homepage.mac.com/louismason1/Personal7.html and http://www.highcountryart.com.