

talent in

REVUE

Pronounced: Soak-Up

By Jan McNutt

At first glance, Jill Soukup's studio seems to have quite a lot of horse paintings, but after flipping through dried canvases, cityscapes, dogs, people, lonesome tables and chairs, beach scenes, street scenes, and scenes of Paris all come to the forefront. In other words, Jill Soukup is very diverse.

Currently, her galleries in Martha's Vineyard and Block Island sell all the equine portraits she can produce, but fortunately for Denverites, people out West are demanding her paintings of just about everything. So, she sends her horses off to the East Coast and sighs, "I'm afraid one of these days I'm going to get tired of the endless horses and say, 'no more.'"

Soukup ditched her computer design career very recently only to comment, "I wish I had done it earlier." Yet, her growth as an artist was definitely enhanced by the skills and talent she developed as a designer. For instance, she explains the sketches and studies for paintings tacked to the walls of her studio, "If I am referencing a photo, I print it out in black and white, then work out the study in a sketch. Often times I cut them up for the composition, balance and design I want. That's where my design background comes in handy. It allows me to play with the composition."

Whether she sticks with horses or allows them to ride off in the sunset, Soukup's forté is capturing the essence of Denver and the people who live here. This emerging artist is among the many being

touted as up-and-coming and is often grouped with Kevin Weckbach, Nancy Switzer, Ron Hicks, Deborah Bays, and Tiffany Williams—an ensemble who sprung from the artistic wells of Denver's Art Student League by studying under Quang Ho and Mark Daily.

Individually, they are a vitally fresh talented group who are not only the talk of the town, but browse any major art magazine and you'll also find any one of them as the 'artist to watch.'

While Soukup easily fits in to this category, she definitely branches out from the group as her architectural and cityscapes define the artist within. Her dramatic, colorful, edgy, tonal works are a cross between Edward Hopper and Van Gogh, yet they are modern and documentary. Scenes looking down 13th Avenue, the new construction in the downtown area, outside the Denver Library, and old established neighborhoods are all executed with masterful strokes of design and an eye for color.

She calls her work contemporary realism, but when all is said and done, her category may be defined as urban impressionism. Jill Soukup has created the palette of Colorado by combining the colors of humanism with urbanism. For collectors and art lovers, Jill Soukup is one to watch. •



Jill Soukup, "Fairgrounds Bronco", 21" x 29"