

# Painting Colorado

Eight contemporary artists discuss the inspiration they draw  
from Colorado's urban and rural scenery | By Rose Glaser

It's not that **Jill Soukup** doesn't think places like national parks and forests are beautiful, it's just that she prefers painting the city with all its angular, hard edges and mechanical objects. "Sunlit buildings, factories, cars, and bikes all catch my eye. The light in this part of the country is more dramatic since we don't have the haze to influence the color and soften the angles. There is just something about architecture that inspires me," she says.

Soukup started painting in the city when she joined a group of artists that met to paint *en plein air*. The group always seemed to pick some old house or interesting building to paint. She had just graduated from Colorado State University in Fort Collins and was continuing her education at the Art Students League of Denver.

Though she still does some painting on location, these days she tends to spend most of her time in the studio. She takes a digital camera with her wherever she goes to capture scenes like the row of lampposts along 17th Street in downtown at dusk that caught her eye as she raced off to a gallery opening. Then, back in her studio, Soukup makes black-and-white print-outs of those digital images. From the prints she redesigns the composition by drawing small sketches before she tackles the subject on canvas. Painting like this, she says she can be more expressive. "When I paint on location I



JILL SOUKUP, 17TH STREET LAMPOST, OIL, 24 x 15.

tend to be more literal, but when I work from my black-and-white photos I get more creative with color and design because I can filter out the nitty-

gritty details," she says. Soukup is represented by Abend Gallery, Denver, CO; Eisenhauer Gallery, Martha's Vineyard, MA; and Stewart Gallery, Boise, ID.