

# The Daily Courier

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## Familiar faces grow from colorful art

By Bruce Colbert

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They smile, they laugh, they're serious and they are unique. However, the 35 portraits hanging on the walls of the Prescott Coffee Roasters have one thing in common - they are wildly colorful.

"This is beautiful stuff," artist Chaz Scardino said Friday morning. "It reminds me of work from the 1960s."

Since this past November, artist Rachel Houseman has been painting portraits of fellow artists, friends, musicians, poets, writers and business people. Houseman owns the Eye on the Mountain Art Gallery in the McCormick art district in Prescott, and she is known for her dazzling acrylic landscapes.

"When I started, I thought of the landscapes," Houseman said from her studio. "They're like Zen paintings - it's all about the brush strokes."

Houseman wanted to do the portrait series as a way to preserve a sense of the Prescott community that many of her subjects are a big part of. Her subjects sat for free, and they could buy the paintings or not.

"While I was doing the portraits, I learned all these things about the people," she said. "It was really cool. It was like a validation of their lives."

Back in November, Houseman's boyfriend, Ivan Domeratzky, asked her to paint his portrait. The series evolved from that simple request.

"I really like her landscapes and the colors, and I thought she'd be good at a portrait," Domeratzky said. "It was really cool to sit for her, and it was a lot of fun."

Houseman painted Domeratzky's portrait in one day, which meant Domeratzky spent hours sitting on a stool in her studio. After she decided to do the portrait series, she changed tactics for her subjects - she sketched them during the sitting, and painted later.



Bruce Colbert/The Daily Courier  
Eddie O'Brien studies some of Rachel Houseman's 35 portraits that are currently exhibited at Prescott Coffee Roasters. Houseman painted local artists that many visitors to the coffee shop recognize.



**Rachel Houseman**

"I worked very fast and deliberately," she explained. "I would make a mental picture of them that I used when I was painting."

Marie Railey, Coffee Roasters barista, was familiar with Houseman's landscape work and readily agreed to the exhibition. Railey said that she does not actively search for artists to exhibit at the coffee shop.

"People come to us," she said.

"My goal was to hang it in the Roasters, because a lot of the people in the paintings hang out there and know each other," Houseman said.

"I'm familiar with about half the people up there," Roasters regular Eddie O'Brien said. "It's comfortable to be surrounded by friends. It brings thoughts of conversations I've had with them."

Whether the faces in the paintings are familiar to someone or not, the beauty of the work makes it worth a visit.

"They're very colorful and cheerful. It's nice," said Richard Landis while sipping an espresso.

"I wanted to highlight a person's strengths. And I wanted the portraits to be sublime," Houseman said. When she is not managing her gallery, she is an art therapist at West Yavapai Guidance Clinic.

"They are all local people, and I like that about it," said Kathryn Lanzerotte, a yoga instructor.

Although Houseman's show ends June 30, she continues to have people sit for her and is currently working on another portrait.

"It's kind of an infinite portrait series," she said.

The Prescott Coffee Roasters is located at 318 W. Gurley St., in Prescott. Houseman's Eye on the Mountain Art Gallery is located around the corner at 117 N. McCormick St.

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