

Wanderlust, love of environment lead to Home & Planet exhibit

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By MYRA YELLIN OUTWATER
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The fact that Bill Hudders' new show, "Still Lives and Landscapes," is opening this week at Home & Planet

Gallery in Bethlehem should be no surprise. The new gallery/store on the South Side is dedicated to exhibiting artists with an environmental bent, and Hudders' work celebrates the environment.

Hudders' exhibition is part of

Bethlehem's monthly First Friday celebration.

"I think that the reason that John Clarke [Home & Planet owner] chose my work is that I paint from life," says the 34-year-old former Emmaus resident. "I paint what I see. I have been exhibiting my works in the area for the past few years, and John has always admired them, but what he likes best is my view of nature."

Hudders does not just report what he sees, but he imbues his views with a stylistic clarity. Whether it is the thick, luxuriant trees in his parents' Emmaus back yard, or the color of a Moroccan street, the dappled light and shadows of a densely forested Vermont hillside, the angularity of the trees in the Tuscan hills outside Florence or the sparseness of a deserted



'White Lilies' by William Hudders reflects the artist's warm, hyper-real style. It is on exhibit at Bethlehem gallery.



Hudders

director of the Baum School of Art and chairman of the art department at Moravian College. Hudders is an adjunct professor of art at Moravian.

But it has been his intellectual wanderlust that has fueled Hudders' artistic vision. Since graduating from Rhode Island School of Design, he has pursued a graduate degree at the University of Pennsylvania, taught in Florence, Italy, and visited Morocco and New Mexico. Also, he was chosen as artist in residence by Yaddo, the prestigious artists colony in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

"It took me four tries to be admitted to Yaddo," says Hudders. "I would like to think I was admitted because of the quality of my work, but on the other hand, maybe it was just my persistence."

It was his persistence that also gained him access to one of his literary idols, the 1950s avant-garde writer, Paul Bowles, who is best known

for his novel, "The Sheltering Sky." It was also his persistence the next year that got him a job as painting assistant to New York installation artist Jeff Koons.

At Yaddo, Hudders met a friend of Bowles, Buffle Johnson, who encouraged him to travel to Tangiers, where Bowles lives. Hudders got the opportunity when he received a teaching fellowship in Florence this past summer. While there he took a trip to Tangiers and knocked on Bowles' door.

"When he opened the door, I told him that I would only stay for five minutes. I stayed for three hours. We just talked and talked. I have admired his style for years and I couldn't believe that I was talking to him."

Many of Hudders' Tangiers sketches are in the show, including a watercolor of the Rembrandt Hotel, a favorite haunt of Tennessee Williams

and William Burroughs. It was while he was in Tangiers that Burroughs stayed there and wrote "The Naked Lunch."

The show also contains views of Vermont, Florence, New York City and Taos, N.M.

"I am not an activist artist," says Hudders, who thinks that too many artists today think the way to succeed is to provoke, startle or annoy their viewers, advancing their work by becoming media personalities. "I like to think I paint good, quality landscapes and that is enough to get me noticed."

"Bill Hudders: Still Lives and Landscapes," continues 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Saturday (until 7 p.m. Thursday and Friday), through Oct. 30, Home & Planet, 26 E. Third St., Bethlehem. Free. Information: 610-866-7370.

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mesa outside Taos, N.M., he abstracts its natural essence.

"I am a painter who works in a classically realistic style," says Hudders. "Although some of my works may appear photo-realistic, that is not my intent. What I am trying to create are paintings that reflect a deep contemplation and the sensation of the visual world. They are not intended to be mere recordings of visual information."

Since leaving the Lehigh Valley, Hudders, who maintains an apartment in New York's East Village and a studio in Brooklyn, still retains strong family and professional ties to the area. His parents are Sylvia and Jack Hudders, and his first art mentor was Rudy Ackerman, executive