

View artwork on the wild side

*Chandler exhibition feature
whimsical depiction of nature*

Geri Koeppel
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A bear sitting cross-legged on a white-linen-topped table gobbling a bowl of spaghetti might seem silly on first glance, but it says a lot if you take the beast as a metaphor for the animal lurking inside us.

"We're always balancing the wild human side and the rational human side," artist Anne Coe said, "the old brain and the new brain. We're always trying to find this place where we can function in society and be true to ourselves."

Coe's new show, "Domestic Bliss: The Artworks of Anne Coe," opens 7 to 9 p.m. Friday at the Chandler Center for the Arts, 250 N. Arizona Ave. She will also tour the gallery and discuss the paintings from 7 to 8 p.m. Sept. 16.

The title "Domestic Bliss" reflects the artist's emotional and spiritual journey since losing her husband to leukemia four years ago. She said she moved from the domestic situation of marriage through crisis and grief, back to a point where she feels alive - back again in domestic bliss.

"I really think the joy is much more profound than I ever had it before," she said, "and that, I guess, is the gift of the people who go. You realize what a gift life is."

The show will be up through Oct. 16, but the gallery is closed Saturday because of the holiday weekend. Regular hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays and noon to 5 p.m. Saturdays. Admission is free for both events and the ongoing exhibit.

Fans of the Apache Junction artist will find the paintings also continue to represent her connection with animals and nature. Art featuring animals tends to have a wide appeal, said Polly Larsen of Larsen Gallery in Scottsdale, which represents the artist's work.

But Coe's paintings aren't just cute. Her works "have a lot of whimsy, but when you begin to dissect the image, it has a lot of irony and satire," Larsen said.

Part of this is because of Coe's conservationist efforts that extend beyond the canvas. She has worked on successful efforts to reintroduce the Mexican gray wolf, to ban leg-hold traps on public lands, and, with the Wilderness Coalition, to get certain lands classified as wilderness. She also volunteers with Liberty Wildlife in Scottsdale, which rehabilitates native wildlife.

Another reason is the metaphorical aspect. The bear, for instance, is a recurring image in Coe's works, and one that she finds aptly conveys human characteristics.

"Bears are these big, furry mammals that are big and cuddly and at once terribly frightening," she said. "Humans have that capacity to be nurturing and loving and (yet) totally destroy the world."



Mark Henle/The Arizona Republic

Apache Junction artist Anne Coe's new show, "Domestic Bliss: The Artworks of Anne Coe," opens Friday at the Chandler Center for the Arts. The show will be up through Oct. 16.

FYI

Anne Coe

HOME: Apache Junction.

EDUCATION: Master's degree in fine arts from Arizona State University, 1980.

INFORMATION: Visit www.annecoe.com or call the Larsen Gallery at (480) 941-0900.

Domestic Bliss: The Artworks of Anne Coe

WHERE: Chandler Center for the Arts, 250 N. Arizona Ave.

WHEN: Opening reception 7-9 p.m. Friday; artist's forum and discussion 7-8 p.m. Sept. 16; exhibit up through Oct. 16. Gallery hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays and noon-5 p.m. Saturdays (closed Saturday for Labor Day weekend).

COST: Free.

INFORMATION: (480) 917-6859.
