Paintings and poems describe image of place at Art Museum

BROOKINGS, S.D. — Former South Dakota State University faculty colleagues and friends began an artistic collaboration after teaching a workshop called “Celebrating Rural Life through Painting and Writing.” Plein air painter Gary Steinley and South Dakota Poet Laureate David Evans spent a week encouraging participants to view the world around them through words and painted images.

Their workshop planted the idea to create pairings of South Dakota images. Both artists say they value direct involvement with a local, physical world as a source for artistic expression.

So the instructors put their teaching in practice by completing a collection of 21 pairings over a two-year period matching one of Steinley’s paintings with a poem written by Evans.

Most times Evans’ poems were formed in response to an experience of his that Steinley’s painting evoked. In some instances, though, the words caused Steinley to return to the setting for his painting to enhance the image kindled by the poem.

The South Dakota Art Museum has “Images of Place,” an exhibition of Steinley-Evans pairings — paintings and poems —until April 3. It’s the final exhibition of a show that has exhibited in seven South Dakota and northwest Iowa communities since April 2008 inspiring people along the way to familiarize themselves with what’s around them.

“I’ve appreciated watching Gary’s work as an artist develop,” said John Rychtarik, museum curator. “He goes anywhere and everywhere to capture a scene. The poetry of David Evans adds another wonderful dimension to the exhibition. It is very interesting to see how a subject is interpreted through the brush of a visual artist or the pen of a poet.”

According to Rychtarik, “Images of Place” fits the museum’s South Dakota Artists Series of exhibitions to recognize the outstanding artistry and craftsmanship of South Dakota artists.

A reception for Steinley and Evans is scheduled for March 25 at the museum.

The South Dakota Art Museum is located on the campus of South Dakota State University on Medary Avenue at Harvey Dunn Street. Hours the museum is open for visitors are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays.

The Museum is closed on Sundays January through March. The Museum also observes state holidays.
The Museum or Museum Store can be reached by calling 605-688-5423 or, toll free, 866-805-7590.

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Photo: Plein air artist Gary Steinley’s “Oakwood Farm” is one of his paintings that inspired “A Winter Journey,” a poem by Dave Evans, for a 21-piece pairing exhibition, “Images of Place,” currently on display at the South Dakota Art Museum.