

The beauty of rural California



Photos by Sarah Reingewirtz Staff Photographer

Scott W. Prior displays his painting, "Reflections of Big Papa," at American Legacy Fine Arts in Pasadena.

Artist Scott W. Prior honors farm and ranch



By Michelle J. Mills Staff Writer

Sunlight streaming into a tattered shack. Rows of grapevines barren from harvest. These scenes are disappearing, but you can see them in the exhibit, "Scott W. Prior: Recollections of Rural California," opening Saturday at American Legacy Fine Arts in Pasadena.

Prior is very passionate about "Recollections of Rural California."

"The show is about respecting what's left of rural California," Prior said.

"This show is about paying homage to the small family farms and ranches that still exist today in California, and also a way of reliving my youth because I watched Irvine become Irvine, growing up in Orange County," Prior said. "There were farms, strawberry fields and bean fields and corn and orange groves. I

SCOTT W. PRIOR: RECOLLECTIONS OF RURAL CALIFORNIA

Opens today. By appointment 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday-Friday and 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, Saturday through Dec. 10

American Legacy Fine Arts, Pasadena
Free

626-577-7733

www.americanlegacyfinearts.com,
www.scottprior.com

Opening reception 5-7 p.m. today. Free.
Call the gallery for reservations and directions.

watched it all go away when they became strip malls and highways and freeways."

The Oceanside artist who once rode his

bicycle through orange groves as a child is now best known for his urban landscapes, although he has been actively painting landscapes and still lifes capturing the vanishing rural scenes for just as long.

For his landscapes, Prior likes places that have a story, such as the historical San Diego County cattle ranch in his painting, "Rancho de Guajome," or a large oak tree in Tejon Ranch that has survived from the days when people like Kit Carson rode past it on horseback as they explored the west.

"If there's a little history behind it and a story that goes along with it, it really gives me a little inspiration," Prior said.

Prior's still lifes feature objects he has found on his trips to ranches, including travels with his grandfather to places that no longer exist.

Prior begins his work by sketching the

scene on his canvas with paint and then building upon the lines.

"I see it in my head what I think, but sometimes the painting changes because the light changes a little bit or something else," he said. "For the most part, the painting is traditional painting techniques — dark to light, thin to thick," Prior said.

Prior already has begun working on two more projects. One is landscapes along Highway 101 from the Mexican border to San Onofre and the other is portraits of his friends, heroes and mentors, ranging from winemakers and chefs to skateboarders and punk rockers, along with an interview with each subject. Both series are slated for books and Prior hopes that the 101 project will eventually become a traveling museum show.

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Scott W. Prior's "Tejon Oak."