***Plein Air Adventure* – Mike McSorley 2016-2018.**

This piece is a collection of plein air paintings I have created over the last two years, since my move from Pittsburgh to DC. It includes 50 paintings; mainly from scenes in DC and the surrounding areas, and a few from other cities and locations. Most paintings are from plein air events which I have had the opportunity to join. Some are on my own, painting around DC and the local area. This is my story of my adventure and the creation of this piece along the way.

I had always painted from life and en plein air. A college instructor had our class go outside as often as possible. I latched onto the Monet quote: *“Top of Form*

*Try to forget what objects you have before you - a tree, a house, a field, or whatever. Merely think, 'Here is a little square of blue, here an oblong of pink, here a streak of yellow,' and paint it just as it looks to you, the exact color and shape, until it gives you your own impression of the scene before you”.* I painted many times in the many neighborhoods of Pittsburgh. In 2014, frustrated with fighting the changing light of outdoor painting, I focused on still lifes, returning to plein air when I moved to DC

In DC, my first plein air painting was after the January 2016 snowstorm. This was of the unique houses of the Eckington neighborhood on North Capitol Street. This piece is not included in this collection because it was acquired for the Washingtonia Collection. This inspired me to take some workshops to be better prepared for the plein air events.

Seeing my work at the Ellicott City event in 2016, a gallery owner liked my paintings and I delivered 5 pieces in late July. The flood was 2 days after and all my work was lost. Incredibly, a college student found one painting on the side of the Patapsco River and returned it to me. It sustained moderate damage and the frame was gone. I donated it to the relief effort and ended up getting a claim from the same fund I donated the painting to.

I painted in Tarpon Springs in Florida. My sister lives in St. Petersburg and I thought it would be nice to establish a connection there. Staying at an Airbnb, the owner hosted a house concert for the folk group *The Currys*.

Amid all the plein air events I was going out and painting on the streets of DC. One day I was approached by a woman who commissioned me to paint a view of her house.

I was exposed to many wonderful locations. Cumberland, Annapolis, Chestertown, Havre de Grace, Snow Hill and Ellicott City all in Maryland. Painted at the Wyeth Studio, Brandywine Museum and Chadds Ford in Pennsylvania, Great Falls, Falls Church and Alexandria in Virginia. Tarpon Springs in Florida.

I hope you enjoy this collection, and my plein air adventure. It has been a wonderful journey, allowing me to see many places I wouldn’t normally have been able to see, and I have enjoyed creating each piece and putting it all together into this unique collection of 50 paintings. I sold a few pieces and won a few prizes. I met and even reconnected with many artists and art lovers which was one of the benefits. A special thank you to all who have supported the arts by their involvement, with the shows and hosting events and even families who have allowed me and other artists stay in their homes.

In-between all of this I was painting still lifes and portraits for this show.