



This painting by Jeffrey L. Neumann, of New York, is titled "Dog House" and is on display at The Bing Arts Center in Springfield through Dec. 18.

Staff photo by DAVID MOLNAR

Artist's canvas capture landmarks

By CORI URBAN

The Bing Theater at 716 Summer Avenue in Springfield is part of painter and art educator Jeffrey L. Neumann's memories of growing up. Some of his first dates were at The Bing.

Now he's got another date there: His art exhibit that runs through Dec. 18 at what is now the renovated Bing Arts Center.

The show, "Road Trip," features 15 pieces; some are oil, some watercolor and some pigment print. They were painted between 1984 and 2010.

"A lot of what I paint is rapidly disappearing Americana," Neumann said of his work that preserves 20th century urban landmarks that are being demolished or changed.

Among his work at The Bing is an oil painting of the Café at City Hotel in Westfield, a pigment print of the former Tic Toc Lounge in Springfield and a pigment print of the Royal Café in the Aldenville section of Chicopee.

Other landmarks featured are near his home in Copake, N.Y., and in the southwest where he lived as a child.

"I grew up in the back seat of the station wagon," he said, explaining that his family moved frequently. "I was profoundly influenced by the landscape I saw out the window."

Neumann received a bachelor's degree in art and urban life and a master's in visual arts education from Springfield College. He worked as a radio disc jockey, a graphic designer and an art director before beginning a 20-year career in the fine paper industry;



Staff photo by DAVID MOLNAR

Artist Jeffrey L. Neumann with one of his paintings, "The West," at The Bing Arts Center in Springfield.

he is a recognized industry expert on fine art papers.

For more than 30 years he has been painting seriously.

He has had five solo exhibitions: Great South Bay Gallery in Hudson, N.Y., in 2006; Art Exchange Gallery in Santa Fe, N.M., in 2005; Earthfoods Restaurant in Hudson, N.Y., in 2004; Becket Arts Center in Becket in 1997; and Cafe Manhattan in Springfield in 1992.

He has exhibited at Gallery 137 in the Indian Orchard section of Springfield, The Paradise City Arts Festival in Northampton, The Pen & Brush Gallery in New York City and Oxygen Gallery in St. Paul, Minn., and in other regional group shows.

"All great art is personal," he said. "It comes from our experience."

All of the images he paints resonate with him in some way, and there is a story behind his works. "But the cool thing about art is everybody brings their own frame of reference to it. You'll respond to it how you do because of your experience."

There's a realism to his work, exuberance yet melancholy. Much of what he paints is the architecture of the 1940-1965 period with neon signs and space-age motifs.

His aim is to create deeply personal work that speaks about the soul of America.

"Throughout my life I have spent a great deal of time on

the road. My art is a distillation of that experience through the filter of my memory, my imagination and my hand," he said.

The gallery at the Bing is open Fridays and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

All of Neumann's work in the show is for sale, and 30 percent of sales will be donated to the arts center.

"What they are doing at the Bing is really important work," Neumann said. "They're bringing the community together and giving (people) exposure to the arts and a place to grow and learn. They're bringing culture to the area."

For more information, visit www.bingartscenter.org