

# Skies' the limit

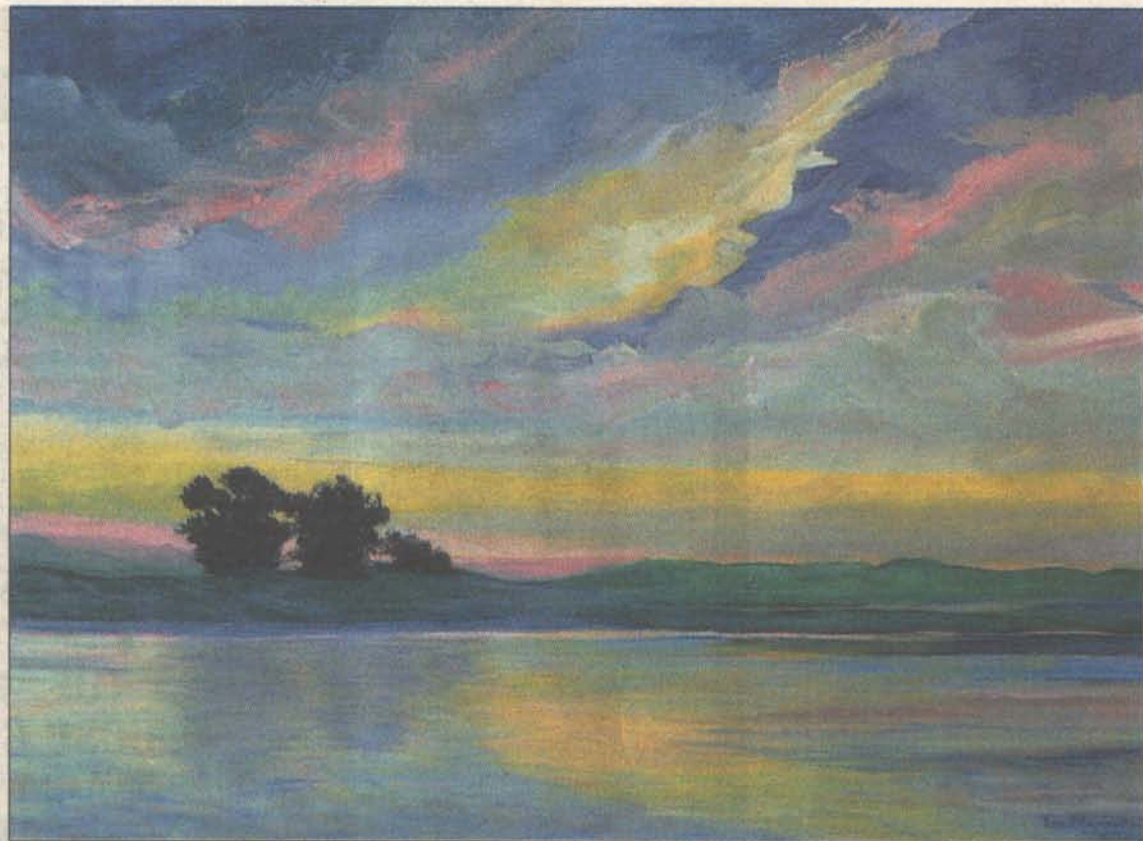
For Liz Maruska, beauty is in the world above, around her

By Josef Woodard

NEWS-PRESS CORRESPONDENT

For its first exhibition of the new year, the Karpeles Manuscript Museum — host to a few art exhibitions each calendar year — surrenders its wall space to Los Osos-based painter Liz Maruska. Her best work falls under the combined category of landscape and skyscape, with a decided bias towards the latter.

Skies leave their imprint on her paintings, especially as filtered through the colorful distortions of sunsets and the mirror imagery of skies in bodies of still water, as seen in paintings such as "Glorious Skies — Winter" and "Evening Light." In these paintings, the squat



COURTESY PHOTO

**Above is** Liz Maruska's "Evening Light." The artist draws on natural forces and visual phenomena in her land- and skiescapes.

traditionalism of her horizontal compositions is offset by the iridescence of the sunset skies, suggesting soft echoes of J.W. Turner and Monet.

Maruska calls her show "Waylaid

by Beauty," a suitable mantra-like description of the particular rapturous relationship many nature-based artists connect with their subject.

As for the painting giving the

show its title, it best typifies the artist's push toward abstraction, without ever leaving the comforts and rulebook of representational plein air painting. Dramatic swaths of reds and blues swipe across the

## ART REVIEW

**LIZ MARUSKA, 'WAYLAID BY BEAUTY,' and art by LISA WAKEFIELD, PERDITA and KIVA**

**When:** through March 31

**Where:** Karpeles Manuscript Museum  
21 West Anapamu St.

**Hours:** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily

**Information:** 962-5322

canvas and the sky, while cloud formations are given an almost sculptural form by the fading sunlight.

In another room in the Museum, Maruska shows a painting of sailboats which seems entirely out of place and character from the more poetic lyricism of her better work in the show.

But her close-up, wet-and-wild paintings of waves, freed from the anchoring presence of horizon lines or coastlines, falls right back in line with the sensibility of an artist exploring and exploiting the abstract potential of natural forces and phenomena.

Upstairs at the Karpeles, through very different local artists converge for a casual, potluck-y get-together of a show. Lori Wakefield's loud-colored and whimsically comic-Cubist paintings are friendly grotesque. Hers is the more gregarious artist's persona, compared to the vapor shape-shifting in the mixed media by Perdita and the intricate stained-glasswork of Kiva. ■