The latest art exhibition at the Clackamas Community College Wilsonville campus is a riot of color worthy of the recent burst of spring weather that has brought early flowers into bloom.

Pastel Pleasures opened March 17 in the open-air lobby at the Wilsonville campus, featuring landscape paintings by Wendy Ware of Corvallis and Irene Van Dusen of Albany. Part of the college’s ongoing promotion of public art, Pastel Pleasures will be on display through May 17 during regular business hours, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Wilsonville campus, 29353 SW Town Center Loop East.

Van Dusen is a native Oregonian who uses a sanded ground that enables pastel colors to cling to the paper. Her subjects range from the known, such as Crown Point in the Columbia River Gorge, to the unknown details of flowers and other beauty requiring a closer look.

“I appreciate that pastels are forgiving and layers can be brushed away and repainted when mistakes are made,” Van Dusen said. “This quality has led some to believe that pastel paintings are fragile.”

But that’s hardly the case, she said. The work holds up both physically and aesthetically over time. And despite a relatively late start as an artist, Van Dusen has had her work in juried shows around the state and sold to buyers across the country.

Ware, meanwhile, is a landscape artist and figure painter who grew up in the Midwest in an artistic family.

“There was never a time I didn’t know I would pursue art,” she said.

As an adult, she and her husband moved their family to Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming, where she taught plein air classes each summer to guests at Jackson Lake Lodge. As an Oregonian, she now works with artists in Vistas and Vineyards, a plein air artist group from Corvallis. Her work is in private collections across the country.

“I find pastels to be the medium I feel most comfortable working with,” Ware said. “They require no tubes, mixing or paintbrushes. Each pure color is added directly to the paper with another color next to it, so that the eye will blend them from a distance.

The exhibition is free to the public, so come on out and see for yourself.
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