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## Dueling easels: Father, daughter relish chance to paint together

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Cheyenne Hawkins, now 28, grew up playing, painting and helping her father in his art studio.

These days Hawkins, who started painting seriously a couple years ago, rarely gets the chance to paint with her dad, Rocky Hawkins. She lives in New York and he lives in Montana.

But on Friday, father and daughter had their easels set up side by side as they each created paintings for Art in Action, part of the C.M. Russell Museum's benefit sale.

"Whenever we get a chance, we paint together," Rocky Hawkins said.

Art in Action was a more relaxed event than most quick draws that start with a shotgun firing and end exactly an hour later, said C.M. Russell Museum Director Darrell Beauchamp. At Friday's event, artists had more than three hours to complete their artwork, and many started their pieces before the event.

"This situation is a little more laid back," Beauchamp said.

The artwork was auctioned off after the artists finished their pieces. Beauchamp said 100 percent of the proceeds went to the C.M. Russell Museum. The art sold for a combined total of \$121,605, and the event sold all of its 600 tickets.

"We had to turn people away," Beauchamp said.

Rocky Hawkins was proud to see his daughter taking part in The Russell: The Sale to Benefit the C.M. Russell Museum event. Cheyenne Hawkins had a painting in the museum's fixed-price sale on Thursday, and Rocky Hawkins had paintings in both the Thursday sale and in Saturday's live auction.

He knew that his daughter had talent at a young age.

"She had that creative imagination that I always knew was there," Rocky Hawkins said. "She would come up with these great pieces that I would literally be jealous of."

Both father and daughter paint in an abstract style, using vivid colors and textures, but Cheyenne Hawkins said she never felt any pressure from her father to follow in his stylistic footprints.

"I just basically do what I feel," she said. "He's always let me express myself."

While Friday's event offered more of a relaxed atmosphere than an hour-long quick draw, the artists weren't completely without stress.

"The pressure is still on," said painter Carol Hagan of Billings.

Hagan, who has a piece in the museum's live auction on Saturday, is known for her brightly-colored paintings of animals. Her works usually take a week or two to finish, because she uses many layers of paint to create her unique style, she said.

Still, she had time to mingle with the crowd while painting a bear Friday.

"It is such a luxury," she said.

Cascade artist Tom Gilleon, known for his paintings of tepees, created a unique piece during Art in Action — a nude mermaid, with lettering reading "Sipus et Dipus," across the top.

Sometime ago, Sip N Dip owner Sandra Thares asked Gilleon to do a mermaid painting on black velvet to commemorate her bar.

"I said no because I was really fond of my career and I didn't want it to end right away," Gilleon said.

But he thought he could get away with the painting in an event such as Art in Action.

"I thought it'd be a good way to kill two birds with one stone ... or kill two birds with one mermaid," he said.

Thares purchased the painting for \$4,500 during the auction.

The auction's top seller was a painting by Missouri artist Andy Thomas that sold for \$15,000.

Thomas has a painting in Saturday's auction that is predicted to sell for between \$52,000 and \$58,000.

Greg Kelsey's sculpture of a cowboy on a bucking horse was also a hot seller Friday. Two casts of the sculpture sold to two separate buyers for \$10,000 each.