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Death Valley National

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## **Death Valley National Park**

**News Release** 

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## **Death Valley National Park Hosts Visiting Artists**

In April 2005 Death Valley National Park was host to an artist couple, Janet Morgan and Gregory Frux as part of the park's Artist-In-Residence program. Both have participated in Artist-In-Residence programs at other national parks. While at Death Valley the duo worked at diverse locations in the park from the salt flats below sea level at Badwater to mile high vistas in the Panamint and Black Mountains. Working at numerous roadside locations, the artists were a visible presence in the park, interacting with both visitors and park staff. "We saw our presence as an invitation to see landscape more deeply", says Frux. Morgan reported being "exhilarated and inspired by the great expanses and gestures of the landscape." Both were excited to contribute to the education mission of the park. "Art can teach us to see in new ways," extolled Morgan. Sharing the vision of the beauty and fragility of the Death Valley landscape can help raise awareness of the preciousness of this area. In keeping with their belief in the power of art to raise environmental awareness the artists have agreed to donate several paintings to the park. "National Parks have inspired artists for over 100 years. Their works have since stirred generations of citizens to preserve and enjoy these national treasures. Janet and Gregory's paintings will be proudly displayed in the Furnace Creek Visitor Center for everyone to enjoy," stated Death Valley Superintendent JT Reynolds.

Frux created fourteen oil paintings of the vast landforms. Morgan, working in watercolors, portrayed the grand gestures of the geology in over thirty works. Of particular note are two five foot by five foot panoramic paintings created when working on the valley floor. The artists captured the beauty of several remote locations including Saline Hot Springs and Surprise Canyon. For three days the artists paid special attention to Surprise Canyon. It is the site of debate between wilderness preservation and OHV use. The argument is over whether or not to allow vehicles to drive this rare canyon in Death Valley that has year round running water. Surprise Canyon is under temporary vehicle closure and the artists depicted the return of native vegetation in this atypical scene.

The National Park Service sponsors the Artist-In-Residence Program in collaboration with the non-profit organization PASTA or Park Stewardship Through The Arts. PASTA has cooperative agreements with several national parks, Bureau of Land Management, California Desert Lands, and the Riverside Art Museum. PASTA's mission is to find high caliber artists who, in the words of director Tim Terrell, "can communicate to the public the essential values of the park, its beauty, uniqueness, fragility and priceless value..." For more information about Death Valley National Park's Artist-In-Residence program visit the PASTA web site at <a href="https://www.artmojave.org">www.artmojave.org</a>.



1. Artist Greg Frux capturing the essence of Death Valley National Park's famous Badwater Basin at 280' below sea level.