



Photography by Rachel Montejo.

RESIDENTS OF MOUNT PLEASANT may have recently noticed something other than the typical seagull or pelican camping out on the bridge that overlooks Shem Creek. For six weeks, Irish artist Kevin McNamara has created his very own studio space on the platform, making sure to catch and capture many a sunset. Armed with brushes,

BY KALENE MCCORT

paint, weather appropriate attire and plenty of water, he holds post at the same time each evening. McNamara, who scouts the world for those outdoor spaces worthy of painting, was immediately drawn to Shem Creek. With its gleaming waters and cotton-candy swirls of sky, we can't say that we blame him.

"He spends valuable time exploring and scouting the local areas," said Kevin's wife, Rachael Montejo, a photographer who has been documenting his artistic journey. "By doing this, he finds places that have a special visual interest to him in terms of composition, perspective, color and light."

McNamara's presence has evoked a high level of interest from locals. Joggers, dog walkers, paddle boarders and diners at the eateries that line Shem Creek all come in for a closer look at this artist at work. After all, it's not every day you can witness an impressionist painter in that moment of self-expression.

"Several people offered to purchase the piece while it was ongoing," said Montejo. "He was photographed

countless times, and even people on the boats would make an effort to come up and meet him and view his work."

McNamara was drawn to the overall feel of Shem Creek. The boats, shrimp trawlers, outdoor restaurants buzzing with friends sharing cocktails and memories all inspired him to set up shop on the bridge overlooking our notable waterway. As this project reaches completion, folks can find McNamara's Shem Creek series downtown in Hagan Fine Art, along with his other work depicting

snow-coated cabins and European city streets.

McNamara's first job opportunity in the United States was one of the magical variety. Prior to painting Shem Creek, McNamara worked for Walt Disney Films in the Animation Department, offering creative input and crafting scenes that would light up the silver screen. His work can be seen in '90s animated classics such as "Tarzan," "Mulan,"

"Thumbelina" and "All Dogs Go To Heaven 2."

"The technique used to keep consistency of color for the backgrounds in each movie meant that before I even painted, I had to pre-mix in jars a large quantity of the colors that were used in the background," said McNamara. "Color continuity had to be extremely accurate to prevent what they called popping on the big film screen. This, along with stylistic considerations in painting, meant that I developed a lot of facility in the use of color."

He's painted from the cliffs of Dublin and the banks of Florida's Wekiva River and finds it best to be outside, taking in nature's surroundings when attempting to

