



## a brush with nature

BY LYN ASSELTA

What do Microsoft founder Steve Jobs, Olympic gymnast Shannon Miller and Impressionist painter Claude Monet all have in common? No idea? The Jacksonville Arboretum & Gardens, of course! All right, it may be a stretch, but if you visit this unique Jacksonville treasure during the last three days of March, you'll find a bit of each of these personalities, along with 36 of Florida's finest plein air painters plying their craft.

As the painters set up their easels at *A Brush with Nature*, the Arboretum's second plein air painting invitational on March 29-31, visitors will get a first-hand look at the legacy of Claude Monet and others like him. Back in his day, Monet and his fellow Impressionists were pioneers of the plein air movement, capturing fleeting moments of light and shadow while painting swiftly outdoors in all sorts of weather. The participating artists at *A Brush with Nature* will be carrying on this legacy, conjuring up the magic of the Arboretum with paint and pastel. Stop by the wet tent to see paintings as they are finished, framed and put up for sale, fresh off the easel. Sit and listen to live music, stop for a bite to eat and enjoy walking the trails while watching and talking with the artists. And please bring the kids! On Saturday, there will be a children's tent where kids can experience plein air painting for themselves.

The Arboretum trails will be open to the public during this event, as they are every day from 8 am to 5 pm (7 pm during DST). Take a guided nature walk and learn about the 13 different ecosystems and the flora and fauna of the 120-acre site by downloading the Arboretum's new phone app to your smartphone (thank you, Steve Jobs), then scanning the QR point of interest codes that appear on 21 posts along the trails. For those of you who are really



ambitious, you can scan cyber yoga positions demonstrated by Olympic gold medalist Shannon Miller along the Lake Loop Trail and practice your poses.

*A Brush with Nature* gives you an opportunity to meet and watch some of the area's finest artists at work in a beautiful wooded setting that will make you forget that you're in the city. The event is free, so come for the day or come back again over the course of the weekend, but definitely don't miss this perfect pairing of art and nature at the Arboretum. Come, and you will also see how Steve, Shannon and Claude have added to the magic and wonder of this special place.

For more information on this event, to become a Patron, or to purchase tickets to the Gala, please go to: [www.abrushwithnature.org](http://www.abrushwithnature.org).