



ay

ALL ABOUT YOU

Number 3 | \$3.50 value

Volume XX

aymag.com

July 2008

AY

Architecturally Inspired

THE HEBER SPRINGS
LAKESIDE DREAM HOME OF
PAT AND NITA MAGRUDER

Murder Mystery

THE CONCLUSION OF THE OKLAHOMA GIRL SCOUT MURDERS

Special Insert: Guide to Good Health

KEY INFORMATION TO HELP YOU STAY HEALTHY

A Branson Excursion

is pretty much what you get.

Color as Character

"It's funny ... what drives things," said Carlisle, who once painted several largely orange and red pieces "because I just happened to see this girl in a sweater and a red T-shirt."

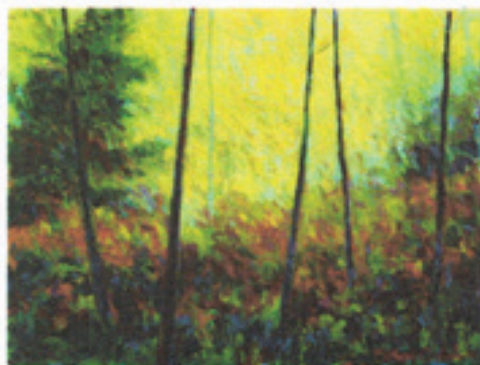
In his artist's statement, Carlisle wrote: "nothing adds more power to works of art than color." More than any other element, color motivates and characterizes Carlisle's work because of its inherent variety, from "colorful in a comic kind of sense" to "dark and moody" and so much in between. Often a color relationship in one piece will inspire another. In fact, color is almost always the starting point for Carlisle. He begins most of his paintings by introducing color onto the canvas, dealing later with the structure — angles, edges, shapes, etc. Carlisle compares this process to his high school experience with set design and a theatrical mantra he picked up along the way. "They used to say, 'Make them laugh, make them cry,



but never confuse them, and also introduce all the characters in the act early on," he said. "I try and get all the color characters on the surface, so I'm thinking about them and seeing their interaction as I'm going through the process."

And how does he know when the process is finished? "When my wife comes in and says, 'Ooh, I really like that.'" Laughing, he added, "Sometimes I decide, too." Uncharacteristically, the typically stoic Carlisle sounded a bit nostalgic as he spoke briefly of his wife Patricia, whom he met and dated in high school and married in 1970. "She was this very stunning little blonde person," he said. "She still is, by the way."

(Clockwise from top left) *Trees in Orange Light*, 60x72, oil, 2003; *Small Trees in Evening Glow*, 48x60, oil, 2005; *Small Trees*, 60x96, oil, 2006; Carlisle in his studio in Jonesboro, Arkansas.



Carlisle said he usually feels he's finished not only when a piece "speaks" to him, but when he's "corrected all the stupid things" he's done. In fact, he destroys about 25 to 30 percent of his work. "I'm forever tearing up drawings and starting over," he said. Though he has little separation anxiety from this discarded work, he does feel a certain sense of frustration that ironically turns out to be among his primary motivations for making art.

"It's solving the problem differently each time," he said. "If it were too easy, I wouldn't do it."

A New Approach

To keep things interesting, Carlisle said he is "not very shy" about trying new tech-

niques, both with color and with his style of painting.

"I've kind of been down lots of different roads," he said. "I'm constantly thinking

top 10 arts and entertainment

1 "FAMOUS LAST WORDS": through July 12. Little Rock. See this intriguing exhibit featuring the latest works of Brad Cushman and Katherine Strause at Gallery 26. Cushman lists his inspirations as UFO tattoos, professional wrestling and 1970s television shows. Strause's paintings are based on discarded photographs found at an estate sale. (501) 654-8996 or gallery26.com.

2 OPERA IN THE OZARKS: through July 18. Eureka Springs. Don't miss these fantastic performances at Inspiration Point including "La Boheme" by Giacomo Puccini, "Così fan tutte" by Mozart and "The Mikado" by Gilbert and Sullivan. Performers undergo four weeks of rehearsal and present four weeks of operatic productions for this annual event. (479) 253-8595 or opera.org.

nic rock lovers will appreciate this collection at the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art of 40 of the most famous posters from one of the most influential times in rock music including posters for artists such as Jimi Hendrix, Big Brother and the Holding Co., Grateful Dead, and Otis Redding. (901) 544-8200 or brooksmuseum.org.

4 STEINUNN THORARINSDOTTIR: HORIZONS: through Aug. 31. Memphis. Catch internationally-acclaimed Icelandic artist Steinunn Thorarinsdottir's installation of 12 life-sized cast iron figures situated amidst the magnificent grounds of the Dixon Gallery and Gardens. (901) 761-5250 or dixon.org.

5 "GIRLS ONLY": July 4. Hot Springs. This first Friday art walk exhibit at the Art Church Studio

Terri Menefee, Lana Tallaferrro and Rachel Schwartz. (501) 282-8343 or artchurch.org.

6 2008 SAAC ANNUAL JURIED ART SHOW: July 7 through 25. El Dorado. See some of the best two- and three-dimensional work from regional artists at the South Arkansas Arts Center Annual Juried Art Show in the Merkle and Price Galleries. Admission is free. (870) 862-5474 or saac-arts.org.

7 "GUYS AND DOLLS": July 15 through Aug. 24. Little Rock. This high-energy musical comedy involving love and high stakes is sure to be a good time at Murry's Dinner Playhouse. (501) 562-3131 or murrysdinnerplayhouse.com.

8 "1964 ... THE TRIBUTE": July 18. Little Rock.

issue that has always been present is that I'm very fond of the illusion of space on a flat piece of paper or canvas. I've always been fond of the landscape."

Though a large portion of his work reflects this fondness, Carlisle often strays from the true-to-life representational work usually associated with the subject. "There



(Clockwise from top left) Red Underbrush and Green Glow, 21x28, pastel, 2006; Autumn Trees, 60x72, oil, 2006; Through Woods in Early Spring: Small Trees in Blue and Yellow; Woods in evening light, acrylic, 30x40, 2005; Blue Shadows, oil, 4x5, 2005.

are a number of my landscapes that people think of as representational, but their colors are exaggerated to the point that I think of them as being abstract," he said. "The landscape for me is an opportunity to use those kinds of forms in a new sense or a new approach to a traditional kind of subject matter."

Recently, though, Carlisle has spent more time with non-objective art, which "has no real subject matter other than itself." He typically works on several pieces at once and said in the last year and a half or so, he found himself "a little bit tired" of doing even the non-traditional landscapes.

of all ages. Admission is \$27 to \$42. (501) 244-8800 or celebrityattractions.com.

J "JUMP", July 19 through 20, Little Rock. Honor one of Arkansas' most famous jazz musicians at the Louis Jordan tribute in the picturesque Wildwood Park. On this 100th anniversary of Jordan's birth, Wildwood Park, the Louis Jordan Tribute Band and the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies are collaborating to produce this high-energy musical performance. Tickets are \$50. (501) 821-7275 or wildwoodpark.org.

M "MY FAIR LADY", July 25 through Aug. 10, Rogers. Don't miss this production, at the Rogers Little Theater, of the classic tale of crass lawyer Eliza Doolittle who bewitches the wealthy Henry Higgins as he conducts an experiment on her to change her into a well-mannered socialite. Admission is \$42 for dinner and show, \$17 for balcony seating. (479) 631-8988 or rogerslittletheater.org.

From Student to Teacher

"When I was a little kid, my grandmother used to remark that my hands looked like an artist's hands," Carlisle said. "Maybe that had a little bit of subconscious influence on me."

Carlisle was also influenced quite consciously by the time he spent on his grandparents' farm, where he "enjoyed being out in that kind of vast space. I was probably drawn to the landscape originally by those feelings," he said.

Carlisle's earliest experiences with art came when he started drawing the elements of his childhood surroundings, such as toy guns, baseball bats, an average boy's playthings. It was in this youthful period that he "really started looking at things and being able to record what they look like" ... an ability that is far from average. Seeing this, his parents put him in private art classes, which eventually led Carlisle to the University of Nebraska, where he did his undergraduate work and received a master's degree in fine arts in 1973. There, his experience as a teaching assistant served as a springboard for a career in education, which began in 1974 at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro. Carlisle continues to teach drawing and painting there; teaching provides a steady income and lots of "personal creative time." But the real draw for Carlisle is the students.

He said, "The students are great. I'm really fond of our students and what they are able to do. It's also having a number of really fine colleagues and other professional artists who ... I have made friends with over the years."

One of those artists is Sara Howell, a former student of Carlisle's who has featured his work in her downtown Jonesboro gallery since it opened in 1995. "His teaching career is equal measure to his art career," she said. "It's across the board phenomenal."

Whether in the classroom or the studio, Carlisle's objective remains the same. "I don't really have any kind of hidden message or philosophy in my work. I'm not trying to convince people of anything. I'm just plain old interested in showing them something they might like to look at."

Carlisle's work is also featured at Greg Thompson Fine Art in Little Rock and Rémy Fine Art in Fort Smith. For more information on Carlisle and his art, visit rogercarlisle.com. **AY**