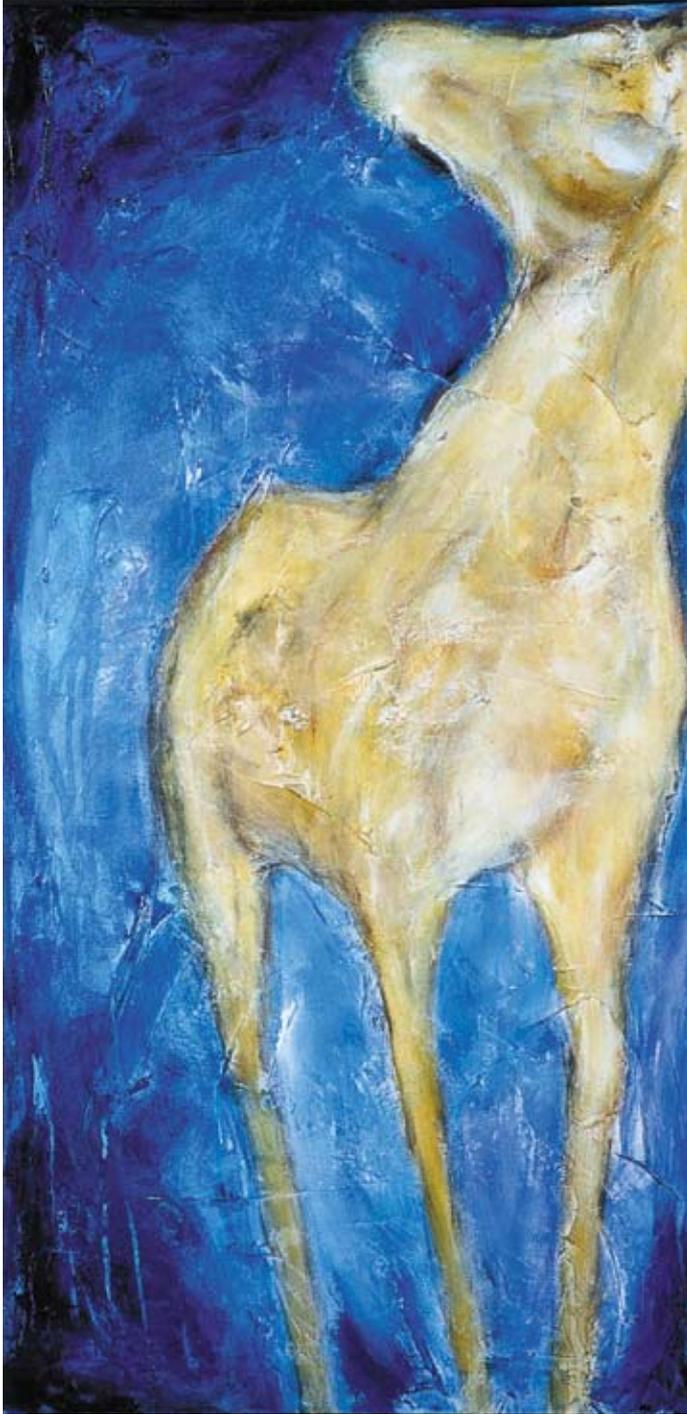


A Force of Horse

Carol Spielman's spirited paintings elicit simple memories



BODY LANGUAGE
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS
60" x 24"

CAROL SPIELMAN IS SPIRITED in her approach to art and living. She speaks in cantering sentences emphasizing verbs and adjectives while her gestures rein in the nouns. Her passionate ideas prance and burst forth. In Spielman's horse paintings, she continues to express her ardent spirit by allowing her paint and brush to roam free.

"The way of the world by horseback is a wonderful experience," Spielman writes in the first sentence of her artist's statement. Growing up on Orcas Island off the coast of Washington, she spent her girlhood riding horses. Her love affair with these animals began with a bareback ride on the beach.

As she tells of wading into the protected waters of Crescent Beach on a horse, she cups her hands into the shape of a "U", demonstrating the horseshoe shape of the island she grew up on. She draws her arms back and curls them forward when talking of the waves. Her voice becomes ethereal as she relates the moment when the horse floated free and began swimming. She throws her head back, tensing her neck as she speaks of the movement of the horse's muscles, of her becoming "one" with the animal.

The sensation of synchronization she experienced greatly influences the representation of horses in her work today. She depicts the horses in her paintings with very little detail. "I try to get an angle that picks up a gesture ... how their heads or bodies are turned. The color brings in the drama." The images are simplified, "pretty reduced down," Spielman explains. The bodies of the horses are outlined, but their legs are thin and long. With a gleam in her blue eyes, Spielman points out that on occasion she does not paint a tail on her horses, something often missed by viewers.

Her bold background colors showcase the mystical figures. She paints mostly in red. "There was something in me one day that just wanted to use red. It had to be intense red." These days she is branching into blue and green, and on occasion, she utilizes white. Spielman explains that she wants to be receptive to any color. She seeks contrast, pairing her green



EARLY MORNING REVELRY
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS
24" x 32"

backgrounds with dark brown, and red with white. "You always see black in my work, at least some black.

"You know, Matisse said that if you can't figure out what color to use, you can just use black," Spielman says with a chuckle. Impressionists Henri Matisse and Vincent Van Gogh have influenced Spielman's art. "I like Vincent's color but really how Matisse used it." Italian artist Marino Marini affected Spielman's simplistic representation of horses.

Spielman credits Neil Jussila, faculty member in the Montana State University Department of Art in Billings, for building her foundation. She learned about technical color theory from him, while personally, she was inspired by his ability to finish a painting almost daily. Jussila feels "it is important to develop basic skills" but he observes that

Spielman is, "adventurous, willing to try new things and challenging herself."

Spielman's Billings' home is an art gallery featuring many of her own works. Large windows front the entrance of her house, streaming in natural light. Entering through the French doors, one spies a fiberglass colt she has painted. Aptly named Vincent, this three-dimensional figure tinted in the colors of spring at the head and flowing to solid red towards its rear, appears to have slipped out of one of her paintings.

Clean lines and space abound in Spielman's house, decorated and arranged by Carol's husband, Jim. A custom stainless steel and cable banister enhances the entrance stairways. The ceilings are high, and wood flooring stretches



COLD FRONT
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS
32" x 32"

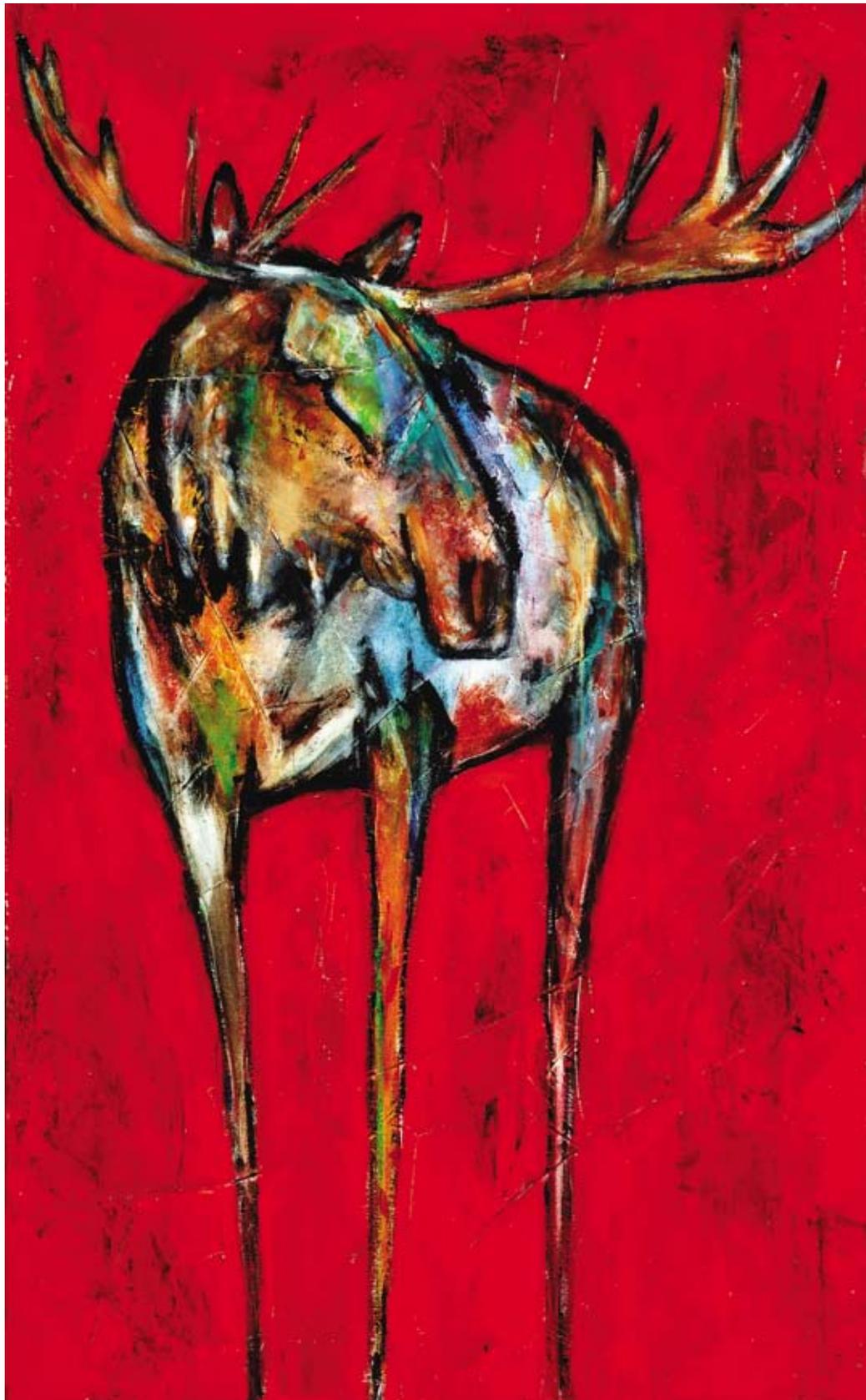
wall-to-wall. Spielman's paintings adorn walls above the entryway, in the living room, and over the dining room table. A life-size mobile, made from broken green wine and spirit bottles depicting a horse, highlights the sitting area. On the tables, Spielman displays her other creations with glass—small piles of flat sheets of clear glass amalgamated together, spilling from brushed, round metal spheres or laying on found pieces of rusted metal.

Above the entry to Spielman's workspace is a small metal sculpture of a horse, head down, walking precariously on a long arched strip. Through glass doors is a room that Spielman uses as her studio, evidenced by the splotches of

paint on the gray carpet and brushes in a corner. But obviously, with exercise equipment pushed to one side, this space serves other purposes.

Spielman does not use an easel to paint. She works with her canvas flat on the floor; her petite 5-feet, 3-inch frame crouched over pieces that often dwarf her. To achieve dimension and texture, she layers on acrylic paint and then scratches and scrapes through the thickness, creating depth. By tipping the canvases up, paint cascades down her work.

"I love the process of painting," Spielman says enthusiastically. When asked if she has a plan when embarking on her work, she responds, "I have no preconceived idea of what will



RED BULL
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS
58" x 36"

Intentionally creating cascade drips down her works, she tips the canvases up.



NEXT GENERATION
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS
11" X 14"

happen. I might go in there for half an hour and stay for three hours or for 15 minutes. That is why I have paint all over my clothes. I may be there with my pajamas. I don't have a set time. It is really a part of my life now. I think I will always, always paint."

Spielman has started to paint moose. After viewing moose bedding down in front of her mountain home, she has painted "Red Bull" which she exhibited at the C.M. Russell Auction of Western Art in Great Falls this spring. Spielman also expresses a desire to pursue more sculptural projects.

When Carol Spielman graduated cum laude from Montana State University in Billings in 2005, she was awarded the Edith Maxwell Freeman Award. This honor is presented to a graduating senior who is an exceptional artist and visionary, an individual who provokes thought and dialogue, and a person who desires to make the world a better place. Spielman has, and continues to do so.

Spielman is the mother of two teenage daughters, Sarah and Meghan, fulfilling the demanding duties associated with nurturing children at this stage in their lives. Aside from show-

ing at the Dana Gallery in Missoula, The Painted Pony in Big Sky, and Visions West Gallery in Livingston, Spielman contributes paintings and time for many fund-raisers. Her works have been accepted in the Billings' Yellowstone Art Museum Auction. In Bozeman, she will teach a workshop benefiting the Cancer Family Network of Montana.

Billings' Norma Buchanan has decorated her husband's business, Buchanan Capital, with several of Spielman's works. She discovered Spielman's creations at an auction for the Carbon County Arts Guild in Red Lodge. Spielman's painted chair entitled, "Saddle Up" is described by Buchanan as "Not only is it colorful and beautiful, it makes the room it sits in feel good!" About "At the Gate," a painting of a pair of horses, Buchanan says Spielman's color and boldness "reflect her boundless energy



and enthusiastic thinking."

Allison O'Donnell, owner of the Toucan Gallery in Billings where Spielman displays her art, believes the attraction of Spielman's painting "is its straightforward nature. The colors are energetic and appealing. People can enjoy her work without feeling like they don't understand it."

With color and texture, Spielman conveys spirit and energy in her paintings. The force and freedom of her horses "elicits a simple memory or emotion personal" to all those who view them.

*Born and raised in California, Stella Fong has lived in Montana since 1999. She divides her time between Billings and Big Sky, where she writes, cooks and teaches. She contributes regularly to Magic City Experience and has written for The Washington Post, Fine Cooking and Cooking Light. **BSJ***

The Historic Bell Ranch

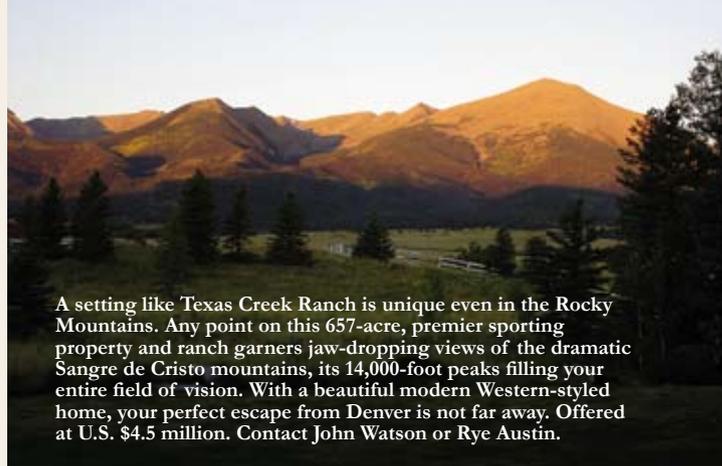
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