

# Local Artist's Work Reflects Spiritual Rebirth

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intensity of her style.

"When I paint, I'll end up putting my hand in the paint and then putting my hand on the canvas," said Parkum, laughing. "It's like finger painting for adults."

During Parkum's childhood in suburban Philadelphia, her mother drove two hours from their home every Saturday so she could study at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

One of her earliest works of art, an abstract sculpture of a mother holding her child, made when Parkum was nine or ten, still decorates her mother's living room.

Her life experiences still fuel her creative fires. For instance, her father's job in the record business inspired her paintings of jazz musicians, some of which are hanging in Olmsted.

Since her parents endured the Depression, her pictures of food reflect her appreciation for Pennsylvania's productive farms.

Horses, however, are one of Parkum's favorite images. Of the

paintings displayed here, her favorite shows a horse running against a green background. Parkum said that represents the possibilities life holds for everyone.

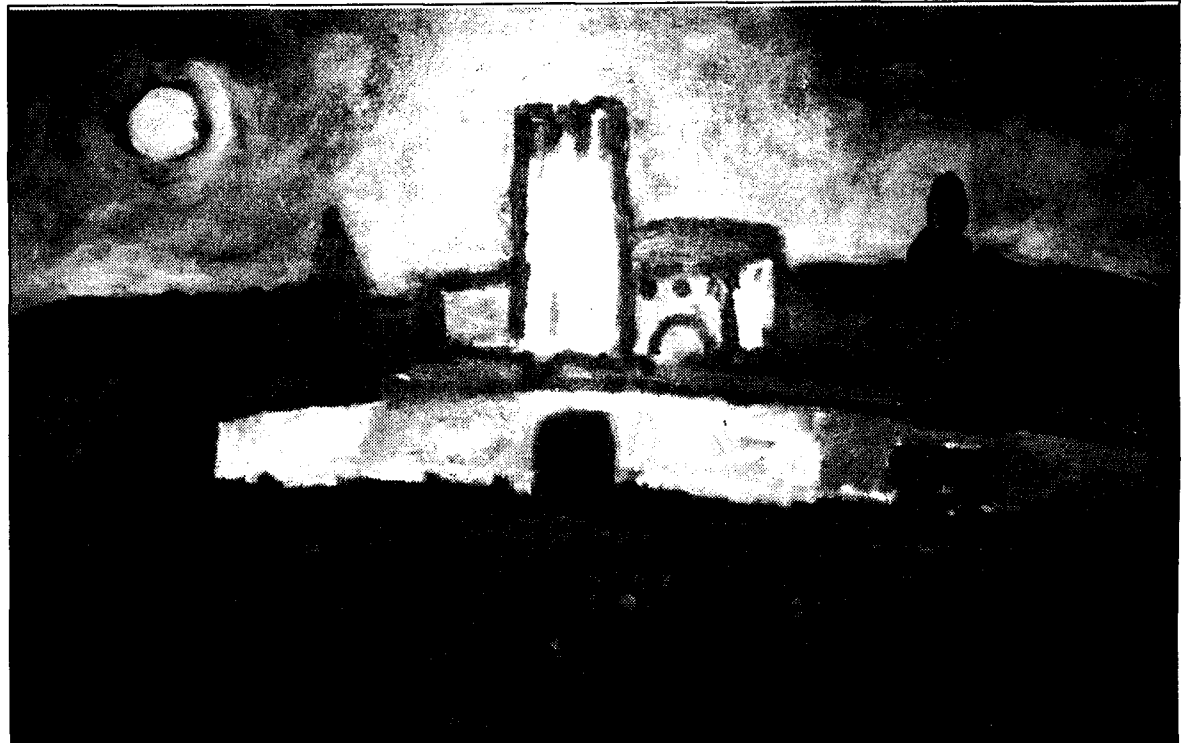
As she talked about her creative process, Parkum's eyes closed, almost as if she were meditating. She said it may take several hours to a few days to complete a canvas.

The concept evolves as she paints, often resulting in a completely different color scheme or set of figures than she thought might emerge.

"The paintings in the hallway flow from being open to what's there, and what comes, and not filtering things out because a flower has to look exactly like a flower," said Parkum.

Her work does not attempt to convey a specific message. Parkum simply hopes audiences will learn to see the world through their eyes instead of using the media as a lens through which to view and react to our culture.

"I think the mind, when it's



**Coming and Going**

saturated with direct photographic images...the mind automatically builds up a defense. It doesn't see them, or your heart doesn't feel them in a way that it probably wants to but can't," she said.

"Maybe the effect of expressionist painting is to bring you back to that moment. Just enjoy the beauty and the images and the color that's around you. Don't think of it in a pre-formed way."

Though Parkum has painted seriously for the last decade, she believes it is only one of the things she was meant to do.

The Penn State alumna, who graduated from University Park "when they begged you to come to the games to fill up the stadium," took some courses in design and drawing; since the cost of supplies prevented her from majoring in art, she earned a political science degree.

She has since received her PhD in that field, and is now pursuing a master's degree in library science from Clarion University.

She has also co-authored a chapter for a book, due out next month, that examines Buddhist activities in America's criminal justice system.

Additionally, Parkum has drawn the illustrations and written the accompanying poems for a book entitled "The Zen Path: Ten Steps Along the Way."

This book is a modern interpretation of the ten paintings traditionally used to explain Zen

Buddhist teachings. She is writing the artist's commentary for the book, which should be available next year.

Parkum is also considering becoming ordained in one of the branches of Buddhism, or working in a religious studies center or research library. She said that desire came from a job she had last year assisting in Heindel Library, where she worked for about a year.

Whatever path her life takes, Parkum knows art will remain a key part of it. Her work has earned many accolades and continues to be shown in many local galleries including the Doshi Gallery at Strawberry Square and the gallery at Harrisburg's Open

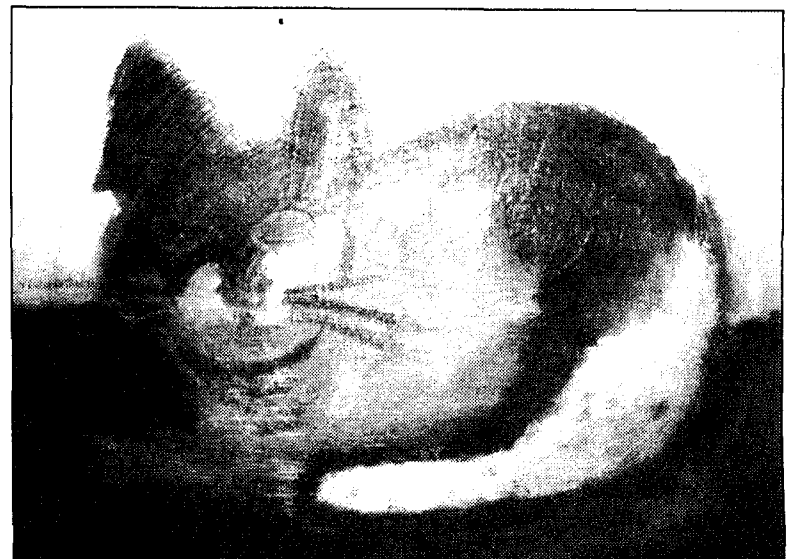
Stage.

However, money and recognition are not her greatest rewards. "Artwork is a blessing to give to others. It's a way of being able to express something within myself that's there."

Said Parkum with a peaceful smile, "I can't sing worth a darn and acting would terrify me, and sometimes just living is pretty scary. But in the painting, it just seems like a way of expressing that's there, and then if people see the paintings and get something from them that brings anything to their lives, that's wonderful."



**Game Breaker**



**Watch Cat**