

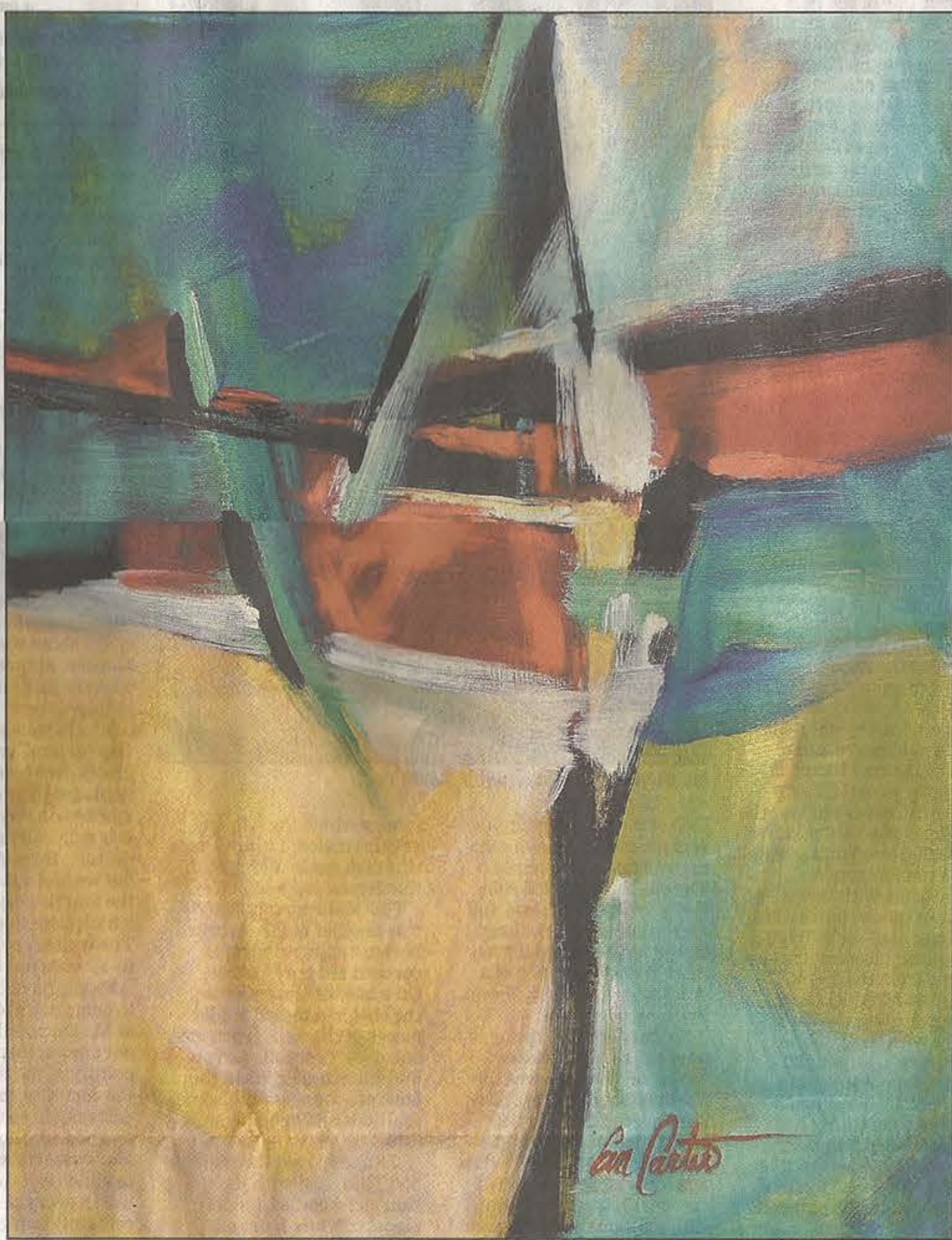


"Taos" is an oil on canvas by Eva Carter.



"Connection" is an oil on canvas by Eva Carter.

EVA CARTER'S NEW PAINTINGS INAUGURATE NEW PIPPIN GALLERY



COURTESY OF PIPPIN CONTEMPORARY

INTERNAL JOURNEY

If you go

WHAT: "Time-Lapse," one-woman show of new paintings by Eva Carter

WHEN: Today through July 16; reception 5-7 p.m. today

Artist's presentation, 2-3 p.m. Saturday

WHERE: Pippin Contemporary, 200 Canyon Road

CONTACT: (505) 795-7476

By KATE MCGRAW
For the Journal

The South has been Eva Carter's actual and material home all her life, but her artistic and spiritual journey began in New Mexico 55 years ago.

She is returning to that internal abode with her show of new paintings opening today at Pippin Contemporary's newest home, the gallery right at the entrance to Canyon Road off the Paseo.

"I am very, very blessed in my location," Carter said in a telephone interview from her studio on Wadmalaw Island, off the Charleston, S.C., coast. "I've toyed over the years with moving to northern New Mexico, because I love it so much, but I decided I love the Low Country even more ... so I'll visit New Mexico!"

Visiting New Mexico is how it all started for her. Carter grew up in rural Tennessee, in a family that was mostly bewildered by her constant art as she drew and painted the world around her. They neither encouraged nor discouraged her, she said. It never dawned on them — or her — that this avocation was actually a vocation. The epiphany came in 1958, when she was 17, and visited an uncle, Walter Wilson, a scientist at Los Alamos National Lab.

"I have been highly influenced by northern New Mexico over the years. My uncle, he was very encouraging. I looked at him as my mentor," Carter said. "He knew several artists. It made a lasting impression."

The only art class in her high school was taught

See ARTIST'S on PAGE S4 "Intuition 1" is an oil on canvas by Eva Carter.

Artist's work explores her life journey

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by the algebra teacher, which was, she has said, "about as bad as it could get."

Still, she blossomed under the benign neglect of parents and other family members. "They just left me alone, which was absolutely wonderful," she said. "I was pretty much left to my imagination and my creativity without any interference, and that worked for me."

She studied art at East Tennessee State University and resisted the lure of abstract expressionism, focusing instead on realism in her early career. Carter would travel to New Mexico most summers. She forged strong friendships with many artists in the region. Finally, at age 45, she decided to "jump off the cliff without a parachute" and switch to the genre she loved most.

Twenty-seven years later, a very successful abstract expressionist, she still marvels at her gumption. "I was making a living on my realistic work," she said. "You're a risk-taker any time you choose this avenue, though."

Carter owned and ran the only abstract art gallery in Charleston for a number of years, but lately she has pulled back to her island studio, which looks out over the inter-coastal waters.

"I do miss the gallery. I think I miss the camaraderie more, but it's really freed me up to be able to paint more," she said.

She mostly follows the philosophy of action painting, as she works her way across large canvases. "The initial strokes on the canvas are the beginning of a journey," she said in an artist's statement. "It's about the challenge of putting a big blank thing up there and jumping off the cliff. It's 'Can I survive this? Am I going to be able to do this?'"

On good days, that initial nervousness dissipates and the paint tells the artist what to do, she said. "Then, you finish, and you're looking at something no other human being in this

world has ever seen before," she said.

"Normally, I let the palette choose me," Carter added on the telephone. "I usually put out the full palette when I start. Along the way, I create this dialogue with the work. It tends to lead me through it. Often it surprises me. I think I'm going to paint something dark, say, and what comes out is light and full of color."

She paints in oils. "Oil gives me speed and action and trails. It leaves a trail through the paint. Acrylic flattens; to me, it loses its brushstrokes, that energy I want left in the paint," she said.

Her large abstract oil works have been described as paintings drenched in color and brimming with movement and emotion. She believes a spiritual connection can be drawn between her paintings and the ambiance of the natural environment. Although she doesn't paint the literal landscape, her inspiration is charged by the idyllic setting of her studio where she watches the ebb and flow of inter-coastal tides or a fading light on the watery horizon.

There is a balance of energy and grace in Eva Carter's paintings that she compares to the balance of fresh and sea water around the island. It is that distinctive perspective that has won her national acclaim: her work hangs in many private and museum collections.

Carter said she has found that as she paints, she subconsciously tells little pieces of her life story, from her journeys through the Southwest to her meditations on the shifting tides outside her window. That's why she calls the show "Time-Lapse": because it is a chronicle of her internal journey.

"As I look at this body of work, I realize that it was done over a number of years," she said. "It is a reflection of the passing of time in my life, and how that has affected the creative process."