

Artist Monique Cagle Finds Inspiration “Everywhere”

“I really owe my talents to my mom,” says Monique Cagle, a native Brown County artist who primarily creates semi-impressionistic paintings in acrylics. “She encouraged her four children to be creative, to learn and explore.”

Ms. Cagle has always been an artist, perhaps partly due to growing up in a household without TV, a household filled with books, music, animals and love. She remembers her mother reading to her every night, and being impressed by great children’s book illustrators such as Beatrix Potter.

“This led me to do my own pictures,” she says, “which in turn gave me a strong background in drawing.”

Ms. Cagle didn’t turn to painting until her mother died.

“She had wanted me to pursue a career in the arts,” she remembers, “and painting is great therapy.”

She painted a few pictures for family and friends and, with their encouragement, entered the T.C. Steele Outdoor Art Contest. She won first prize in the acrylics category, the first of three times she’s earned that honor.

“It gave my confidence a huge boost,” she says.

Though she studied fine art at Indiana University, Ms. Cagle considers herself self-taught.

“I really taught myself how to paint,” she says. “I tried oils in college and didn’t like them.”

She once worked as a decorative painter, and that was where she discovered acrylics.

“I love them because they dry quickly, are easy to work with and relatively nontoxic.”

Ms. Cagle grew up in Brown County, and it’s where she really feels at home. Where does she find inspiration?

“Everywhere,” she says. “For paintings all I have to do is go outside. I like



to go to Yellowwood Lake, to the state park and also just down the back roads.”

Combined with art gallery visits, art magazines, and the numerous photos she and her husband take, she can always find new ideas.

“My favorite subjects include scenes around my home and my animals, particularly my cats,” she says.

Right now, she’s working on a series of Brown County landscapes for a show that will exhibit this summer in New Harmony, Indiana. She’s also doing a series of small paintings, more whimsical in style, of cats and foxes and

cozy scenes.

But Ms. Cagle doesn’t limit herself to painting. She makes original jewelry, crocheted items, mosaics and drawings. Next, she’d like to work in pastels.

“I love the effects that can be achieved with them,” she says.

She’s really doing what she loves, and spends hour upon hour in the studio each day.

“I’m so driven to create it’s hard to find a stopping point,” she admits. “Sometimes I forget little things, like lunch, because I’m too busy to stop.”

Ms. Cagle’s dedication to her art explains how she consistently produces large quantities of artwork. Her work can be found all over the county, including the Brown County Art Gallery, the Ferrer Gallery and Gallery by the Green, all in Nashville.

She’s won many awards, including a First Time Exhibitor’s Award at the Hoosier Salon Annual Exhibit and the Outstanding Professional Artist Award twice at the Fall Foliage Festival Art Show in Martinsville. Her studio is one of those included in the Brown County Studio and Garden Tour held the last weekend of June each year.

More information about Monique Cagle and her work can be found at her website, www.sleepycatstudio.com, or at www.BrownCountyStudioTour.com.

by Michele Heather Pollock

