

disaster Relief paintings

From his home in San Francisco, artist Craig Carlisle worked out his individual response to the September 11 World Trade Center attack on canvas. In days, he became the catalyst for a more organized display of emotion and support, inspiring a group of Columbus artists to donate works for the benefit of New York City firefighters. A former local resident, Carlisle maintains a presence on the Columbus art scene through Sharon Weiss, proprietor of Antiques and Art on Poplar in the Short North, who hangs his work regularly alongside a dozen other artists. After the tragedy in New York City (where the artist briefly made his home), Carlisle checked in with close friends there. One has been trying to boost morale by covering Manhattan parking meters with uplifting images, and suggested that Carlisle find a similarly positive outlet.

The American Hero came as a result, a figurative work in Carlisle's familiar style that puts a head with steady, comforting eyes and a Mona Lisa smile under a fireman's helmet, standing before a murky background. Light shines from above onto the figure's flushed cheeks and its heavy, gray and yellow overcoat. "Creating a painting helped pull me out of myself," Carlisle explained via e-mail. "Channeling the energy into this painting allowed the pain to stop momentarily."

"I asked Sharon if she would offer this painting as a donation to help the fireman's fund," he continued. "Less than 24 hours later she created a wonderful event." Weiss used Carlisle's piece as a springboard, contacting each of her regular artists about a donation to a silent auction. Each—including Eric Lubkeman, Rick Akers, Eric Barth, Dan Ferlan, Hani Hara and Rick Borg—agreed, and some plan to create works specifically for the event. All proceeds will go directly to the New York Firefighters 9-11 Disaster Relief Fund. The silent auction begins at noon on Thursday, September 27, ending on Sunday, October 7, at 3 p.m. A reception will be held that day to honor the victims of the September 11 tragedy, their families and the artists' contributions. Dial 291-5683 for gallery hours and additional info.

—Melissa Starker

