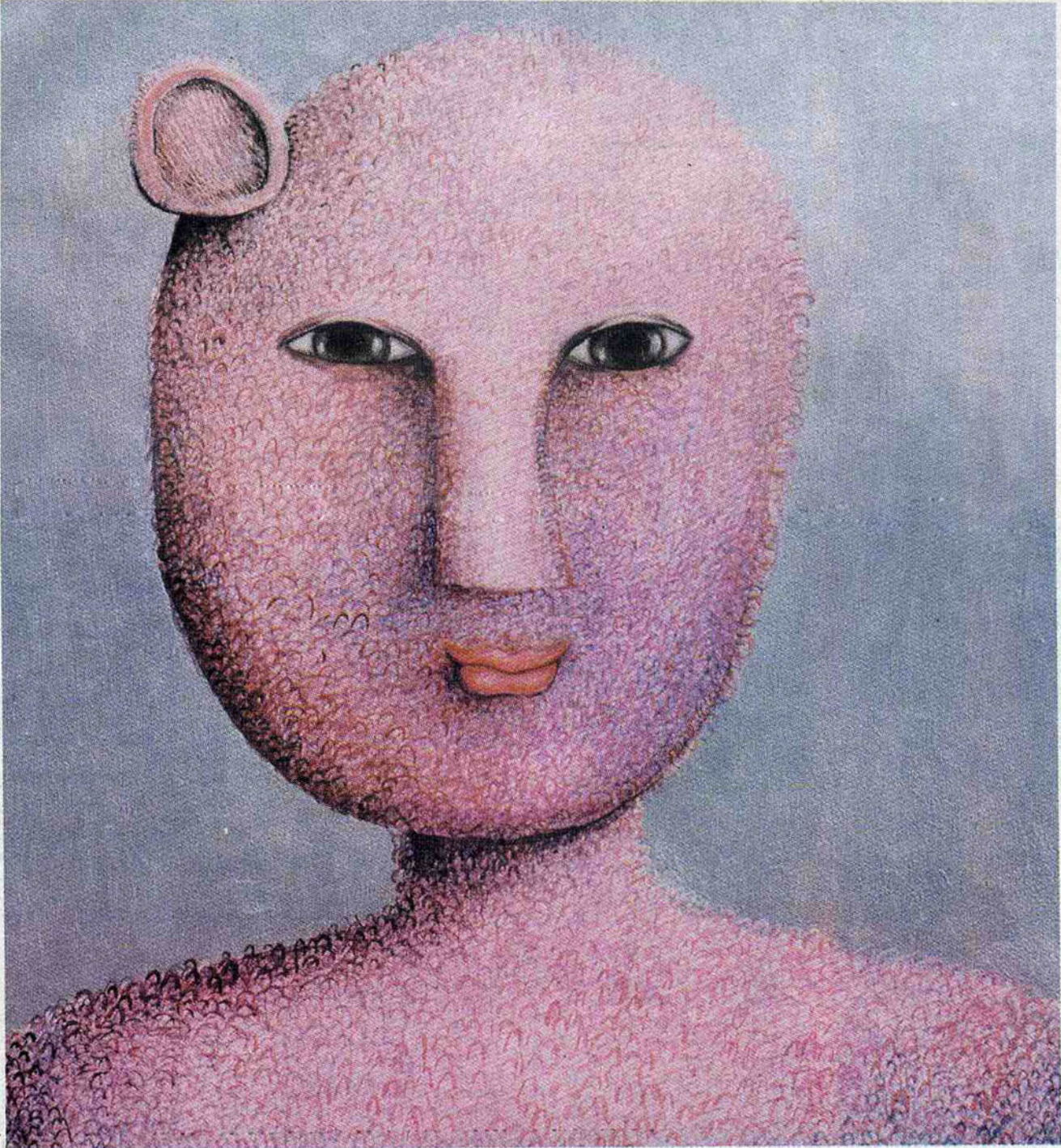


APRIL 2002

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SHORT NORTH GAZETTE

News of the Short North, the Arena District, Victorian and Italian Villages, and the Columbus Art Community



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Pink Monsters

California artist Craig Carlisle, a graduate of the Columbus College of Art and Design, lived and worked as an artist in Columbus for 22 years before moving to NYC. Carlisle currently resides in San Francisco where he brings us this latest essay on his new series of paintings, "Pink Monsters."

By Craig Carlisle

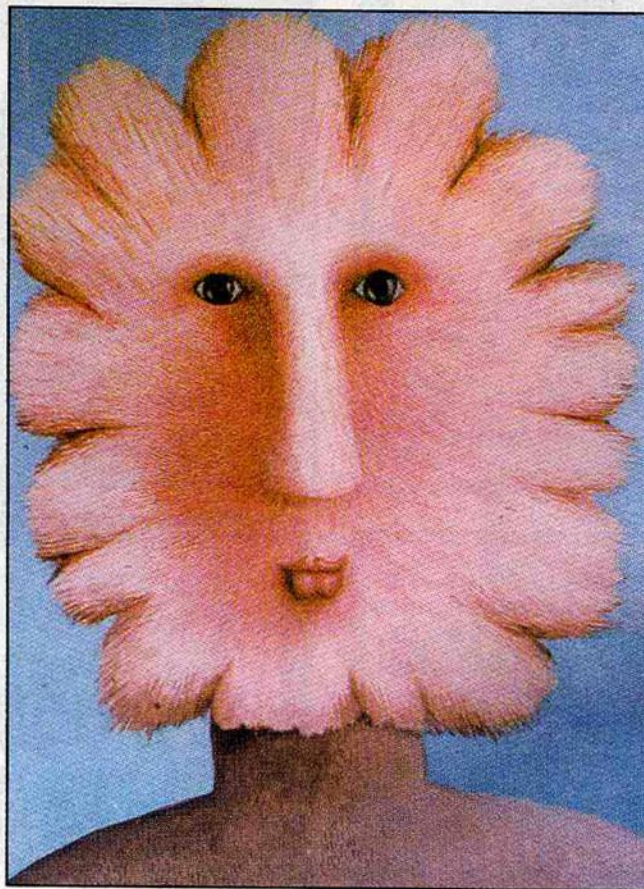
On one warm late summer day, the skies were clear from air traffic. The sun took full advantage and fed the earth with light. The birds flew through the sky freely for what remained of that day. Their wings dominated the air once again as nature had intended. Each bird carried a pink seed in its beak and dropped it to the earth at random. A gentle breeze helped spread the seeds.

On that warm late summer day, a tragedy had occurred on earth and humans gathered together collectively shedding tears which fed the pink seeds. By mid-afternoon the pink seeds sprouted and rose from the earth. The stems became furry arms and legs in no time at all. Furry heads appeared next and then the bodies broke free from the ground. The Pink Monsters were born, emerging as carriers of love. ♥

Their soft fur is the color of passion, one that pulls at my heart's desire. They have lips that command attention and seductive eyes that pull me toward them like a soul mate upon first glance. Some Pink Monsters have human-like eyes while others are dark and beady. My normal reaction to a monster is to exhibit fear or turn and run. These furry creatures adorned in pink do not bite and they do not hate. I have found no reason to recoil or hide from these soft bundles of love.

Pink Monsters come in all shapes and sizes and carry a unique expression that I believe communicates independently to every human. They mirror my expressions, forcing me to look inward to my soul. Choosing to interact with a Pink Monster has allowed my voyage into my emotional depth to blossom. Pink Monsters are here to be visual healers and to help open the human heart. They have arrived and their message of love is meant to guide us through troubled times. I dream that the radiant love from their eyes will heal the wounds in our collective hearts.

Pink Monsters have helped with my personal pain. They have not directly



Craig Carlisle's *Pink Macho Monster*

removed the pain, but they have stood beside me as guardian monsters and provided support. It is my choice to trust in the Pink Monsters and know that they will always be there for me each day. I witness through its eyes my own need for love. As I walk through life, I am faced with my own inner monsters, some are old beliefs learned as a child and others are creations I have manifested in my daily life.

When I see the color of passion, it warms my blood. The color pink can symbolize love or it can create lust that makes my heart pound. The Pink Monsters help communicate this emotional juxtaposition. Simply put, Pink Monsters are all about love, passion, and empathy; they re-frame an old belief that all monsters are scary. In the eyes of a Pink Monster, a reflection of my soul is brought forth.

In the world today, the tragedy and suffering I see fuels my need to create art that is inspiring and healing. I have always

felt the responsibility as a creative soul to produce art that will help or touch others. I believe there is a gentle flow of energy radiating throughout the world and it is created in the shape of love. I see it when a rainbow forms, or when someone offers their seat to a stranger on a train. The shape of love is a child pulling a crayon across the paper and onto the table. I witnessed the shape of love in my studio once when a friend stood in front of my painting and began to cry. As an artist, I create love, whether it be in brilliant colors or flat gray tones. Generating passion in my heart and translating it to a visual image is a subjective part of my creative process. There are no mistakes ever made in the creation of my art. Art is a healer.

As a child I would make humorous drawings like a human head with an animal body. I would hide them from my friends for fear they might punish my imagination. Just out of art school I created a series of work entitled "Big Heads" which were oil paintings of larger-than-life heads. The Big Heads were bizarre looking, they had no hair nor did they have ears. In my own studio, I felt intimidated by what I had created. I kept them hidden from the public eye for over a year. That changed one day when a friend walked into my studio and raved about them.

It took love from another human to push this artist to create and show hundreds more over the subsequent years. Today, I share the same love with others. Critiquing others' work should be done with love behind it whether one likes the work or not. It just takes one small blow at a candle to darken a room. Creating art is my passion and a way to connect with people through its presentation. As an artist, I have license to present to the public my fears, desires and passion. Everything I create is a self-portrait.

In the late summer of year 2001, I started the Pink Monster series after seeing a wall hanging of a huge pink rug. Just as some see faces in the clouds, I saw a large Pink Monster reaching out to hug someone. I took that embrace home and turned it into a new series of paintings. In these paintings I have felt the need to utilize the color of passion to help connect with the human heart. ♥

Craig Carlisle will be in attendance at his public opening reception at Antiques and Art on Poplar the evening of Friday, April 5. He will be unveiling his new series of paintings "Pink Monsters." Carlisle is represented by George Billis Gallery in New York City.