

*Cheri Christensen*



*Theo* - 8 x 10, oil

The impressionistic brush strokes of Cheri Christensen's paintings reveal the subtle depth of light and shadow, while the colors of the figures and landscapes show a warmth and vibrancy. Inspired by the simplicity and interaction of animal and nature, the artist attempts to capture this on canvas. Mainly focusing on the familiar tenets of a farm, such as grazing cows or inquisitive sheep, she portrays her passion for harmony.

Cheri Christensen was born in Enumclaw, Washington, in 1961. Her childhood home was a natural place for her to become acquainted with animals and develop an appreciation of their environment. Majoring in costume and fashion design at the University of Washington, thoughts of becoming a painter had not seriously entered her head. Christensen worked as a retail-clothing buyer until the desire for art seized her soul. Finding her cousin was learning to paint, she too wanted to be introduced to the art. She exclaims, "I loved the smell and feel of oil paints. Almost immediately a voice inside of me said, 'I want to do this forever.' It was the first thing I had ever felt passionate about. I realized then that I had no choice in the matter- I had to paint."

It became clear that if she wanted to pursue the art seriously then she would need an instructor. During one of the art shows she had begun to visit she found a painting that excited her. In talking to the artist she was referred to a teacher, Ron Lukas. Ron Lukas had been taught by the Russian impressionist Sergei Bongart and passed on many of the lessons he had learned to Cheri. Although Cheri did not have a formal background in drawing and art, this did not hamper her dedication to learn. After about three years of instruction from Lukas, his usual critiques changed to praise. At that point she knew her efforts had been rewarded.

Her constant practice has brought out a looseness and simplicity in her paintings. Beginning by finding the perfect light of early-morning or late afternoon she then opposes it to a deep color. Starting with the outlining shapes from a shadow, she soon works toward the object of the shadow. This routine of keeping with the spontaneity of her subjects has brought her national recognition in galleries around the country. Currently living on a small farm she shares with her husband and a variety of animals, she hopes to continue to paint the beautiful and tranquil mood of her surroundings.



*Orpheus Watches Over Henry - 24 x 36, oil*



*Me And My Shadow - 18 x 24, oil*