



THE CULTURAL TIMES

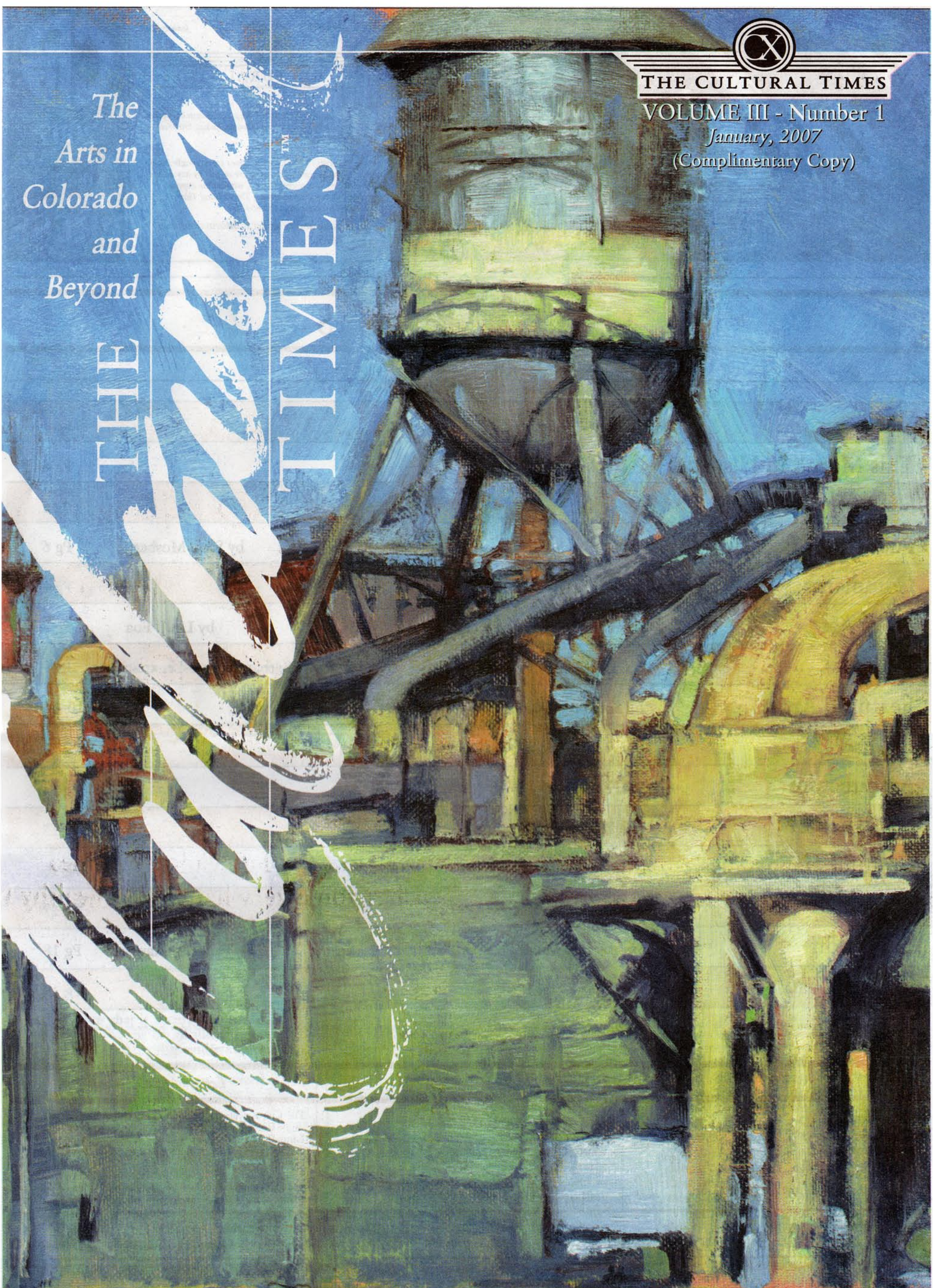
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(Complimentary Copy)

The Arts in Colorado and Beyond

THE CULTURAL TIMES™



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# Jill Soukup—



"Counter Canter," oil on canvas, 9" x 12" © Jill Soukup

**F**rom the dishes in my sink to a bustling city scene, I find inspiration everywhere; in the interplay of shapes, values, edges, textures, and colors. Intuition and a sense of composition bring these elements together. Thematically, I find myself returning again and again to the juxtaposition between rigid, mechanical, man-made objects and the fluid, organic aspects of nature—discovering that despite their contrasts, they share and exchange the same tendencies.”

— Jill Soukup

The above statement, by painter Jill Soukup, exudes a confidence and understanding well beyond her years. Still in her thirties, she continues to grow as an artist, continually exploring and experimenting, capturing scenes with her free brushstroke style that might include a horse at rest or full gallop, a street scene with mundane water towers, or a stoop at daybreak, or a woman in contemplation.

Her subject matter might at first appear to possess a simple charm, but the paintings themselves incorporate a high degree of sophistication in composition, color, and execution. Such noteworthy talent suggested further investigation. CX asked Soukup to talk about her work:

CX: Are you originally from Colorado?

JS: “Actually, I was born in Buffalo, New York; but six months later my family moved to Colorado. I grew up in Park Hill and Aurora.”

CX: You graduated from Colorado State University with a Bachelor of Fine Art degree. Was that your field of study?

JS: “My field of study was fine art with a concentration in Graphic Design.”

CX: You started your career in graphic design, doing what and with whom?

JS: “I started my design career with a corporate identity firm named Glenn Monigle & Associates. They designed logos and implementation systems (of the logo & associated design elements). I was there for about two years when I was offered a job at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science in the Exhibits department. There, I designed printed materials such as brochures, posters, books, etc. to support the Museum’s programs and exhibitions. I also was the primary in house web designer.”

CX: What made you switch to fine arts as a career? JS: “I’d always know my strengths and passions were better suited for fine art, but I initially wanted to take a conservative approach to doing art, thus I chose design (and a steady paycheck). At age thirty, however, I knew it was now (then?) or never, to start working towards full-time painting. I’m not

sure why, exactly, age thirty was the magic number—perhaps the realization that time was passing and faster. Perhaps because I was more grounded with other aspects of my life.

CX: Seven galleries, in as many states, represent you, how easy was it for you to garner that kind of representation?

JS: “I’ve been very fortunate with my gallery representation in that they’d all contacted me, with the exception of Abend. Abend had a group show for a class I was in. I’d sold three of the four paintings I exhibited and thus was the beginning of my relationship with them (about ten years ago).”

CX: Your style and subject matter vary considerably, from figurative to cityscape, you even venture into non-representational art. Do you work on more than one painting on at a time?

JS: “Yes. I like to have about ten works going on at one time at different stages. I’ve found that all the paintings going on at once help me to solve problems more efficiently. One painting’s aspects often resolve another painting’s trouble spots. Or one painting’s inspiration often flows into the other paintings.”

CX: Do you work from sketches, photographs, and/or au plein air?

JS: “Yes, all three.”

CX: Most of your work is diminutive in size, what is the largest canvas you have worked on?



# Sharing Her Vision



"Malta" oil on canvas, 21" x 38" © Jill Soukup

**JS:** "I just completed a 72 x 48 inch painting of a horse—almost life size. I plan on more—it was very exciting!"

**CX:** How would you describe your evolution as an artist? What changes have you consciously made?

**JS:** My evolution as an artist the past three or four years has mostly consisted of really understanding the mechanics of a painting (or any work of art) and why something works or doesn't work. I'm moving towards paying more attention to expression—being more aware of it and being open to it where it may lead me."

**CX:** You seem to vary your subject matter. What intrigues you about what you select?

**JS:** "With all my paintings, my choice to paint any given subject is ...at it's core, about shape and composition—how do the components (shapes, values, edges, textures, and colors) of the painting work together."

**CX:** You sometimes take a more abstract approach to your work. What motivates you to go one-way or the other?

**JS:** "I paint all my works in the thinking mode of abstraction in that I see the horse & rider painting the same as I do the abstract, city scene, or any other subject matter. Horses, cityscapes and winter trees are my favorite subjects. The horses,

because from a very young age, I've been drawn to them—to me they are aesthetic perfection. The city and winter tree scenes, because of the intricate breakdown they naturally create—cities with all the windows, streetlights, fire escapes, etc. and the way winter tree limbs divide their surroundings. I don't approach a pure abstract work all that often. Sometimes I will abstract a painting that failed as a representational work. Sometimes I will paint abstractly as an exercise in pushing any given subject and technical approach."

**CX:** Do you ever try different techniques for the same subject?

**JS:** "Yes, I'm currently painting the same subject in different manners . . ."

**CX:** Where do you see your art heading in the next few years?

**JS:** "I'm wanting to explore more intimately some of my favorite subjects: horses and city scenes (two separate ideas) of which I want to produce several series. I plan on exploring several approaches as to how I execute these paintings. I've also been playing with figurative sculpture (with water based clay) and have fallen in love with it—definitely more of that! I also look forward to doing some etching and intaglio prints."

**CX:** You have received many awards, and a fare amount of media coverage, as well as exhibition representation. Does any one of them stand out as being your most prized?

**JS:** "All of the different venues of exposure have been great in their own ways. Although, Abend Gallery has helped to launch my career more so than any other single entity or event."

**CX:** What artists, past and present have inspired you the most?

**JS:** Ahh, so many artists! Locally, there is such great talent that continue to awe me: Lu Cong, Quang Ho, Daniel Sprick, Nancy Switzer (CX 12/06), Kevin Wechbach, ...just to name a few. Other present artists are Francis Livingston and Vachagan Narazyan. Some past artists . . . I frequently return to are Richard Diebenkorn, DeKooning, Giacometti, Arthur Melville, Edgar Payne, John Singer Sargent..." — CX

Ed. Note: A detail from Jill's painting, "Gates," 16" x 20", oil, © Jill Soukup, is on the cover of this edition of The Cultural Times. Jill Soukup is represented in Colorado by Abend Gallery in Denver. Her work is also shown at Eisenhauer Gallery in Martha's Vineyard, and Block Island, Howard Mandville in Kirkland, WA, J. Whitney Gallery in Southington, CT, Phoenix Gallery in Park City, UT, and Timmons Galleries in Solana Beach, CA.