

Diane White

Spiritual connections

SEVERAL YEARS ago, when the objects in Diane White's traditional still lifes began telling stories, so to speak, the artist listened. "I started adding mystical elements to my paintings to represent what each object means to me," she says. "I'm letting it tell me what it needs to tell me."

In a style she describes as magical realism, White frequently portrays fanciful scenarios alongside realistic depictions of Asian ceramic vessels and other pottery. In one painting, for example, a teapot becomes a clipper ship on the South China Sea. In another, a white rose floats above a russet vase and a neighboring army of vigilant knights on horseback. The artist has also portrayed stones, feathers, sticks, and birds' nests found near her homes in Vermont and South Carolina. "I think all objects are spiritual," she says. "I have one Chinese vase from 400 B.C. with these characters carved into the rim—made-up animals like jumping bulls with unicorn-like horns. I depicted all the characters flying off the rim into a night sky to become part of the constellation."

In a recent series of oils she fondly calls her Ghost Horse paintings, White stepped away from inanimate subjects to portray her beloved horse Crowheart. In these loosely painted, otherworldly portraits, the artist endeavored to convey his spiritual essence. Each work is mounted in a white gold-leaf frame created by her husband, Steve Harrington. "My husband makes all my frames," she says. "We talk about my paintings together and design the framing for each one." —Kim Agricola

Find White's work at Matthews Gallery, Santa Fe, NM.

ROW 1: **Magical Lichen**, oil, 21 x 23. ROW 2: **Order of the Peony (detail)**, oil, 38 x 26. **Ghost Horse II**, oil, 36 x 18.

