

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2003

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## portfolio

C.J. Hurley's gesso panels are the stuff of legends. Knights of the Round Table and mysterious enchantresses grace these near-life-sized pieces, bringing a little Camelot magic to the homes they decorate. The 35-year-old Portland artist has always been fascinated by Arthurian legend for its symbolism, history and decorative aspect (Arthur's Court is common subject matter for the Art Nouveau and Arts and Crafts movements). "I'm carrying on that tradition of using Arthurian legend as a model for ideals and what society can be," says Hurley.

The Green Knight (right) is half of a two-panel set that was inspired by the 14th century epic poem, "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," a tale of battle, magic and deceit. "I love going over and over the details of the story," says Hurley. "But the most fun was taking all of the disparate elements—the copper, glass, gesso, twines, ceramic—and coming up with a solid composition."

Measuring 25½ by 55 inches (including its copper-and-pewter frame), the panel was designed to be installed into Hurley's hallway, integrated into his home's interior. "These gesso panels can stand on their own as an individual piece of art," he says, "but the interior work is all part of it. I'm seeking that total environment."

Hurley, who received his fine arts degree from Guilford College in North Carolina, started crafting the site-specific panels in 2002 while restoring the 1913 Arts and Crafts home he shares with his wife and five pets. Besides the gesso pieces, which take months of exhaustive work to fashion, Hurley also creates abstract paintings and hand-painted friezes on homeowners' walls. His custom panels cost \$3,000 to \$7,000.

Contact C.J. Hurley at 503-234-4167, via e-mail at [cjhurleycenturyarts@Comcast.net](mailto:cjhurleycenturyarts@Comcast.net) or visit his website at [www.cjhurley.com](http://www.cjhurley.com). His abstract paintings are on display at Fifth Element (503-279-9042) in Portland.

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