



Photographer Stephen Carl of Xenia poses with some of his 43 prints on display at Carriage Hill MetroPark. From left, 'Dance of Night,' 'Pitcher This' and 'Lone Tree.' He's holding 'Shaded Walk.'

PHOTOGRAPHER'S ART IS VISUAL MEDITATION

By Pamela Dillon
Contributing Writer

From the viewpoint of a practiced photographer's eye, eroded rock becomes an owl's face, twisted pieces of cane perform a lyrical ballet, and a wet rock morphs into a large turtle. Stephen Carl of Xenia is a photographer with 50 years of practice, and it shows in the 43 black-and-white images he's presenting at Carriage Hill MetroPark.

"My dad gave me his old 35-mm Rangefinder on my 12th birthday, and I've been at it ever since," said Carl, who develops his prints at a Center-ville studio. "It's a form of self-expression. My work evolves from what I call the spiritual geometry of space, a sort of photographic feng shui or visual meditation."

Many of his silver gelatin prints were taken at Carriage Hill: *Wrinkled Row* shows a line of weathered cypress trees; *Morning Break* shows an exhausted worker resting on the front porch of a blacksmith's shop; *Shaded Walk* follows the curving path of maples along a fence.

"I entered *Shaded Walk* in a juried show at the Springfield Art Museum, and it took first place," said Carl. "It was a perfect warm fall day last year, and the play of light and shadow caught my eye."

Downtown Dayton at night is another favorite place to capture the nuances of light and shadow. *Dance of Night* was taken along RiverScape around 10 p.m., where geometric forms draw the eye to important elements: tree-branch shadows on a circled walk, the simple curves of a park-

bench, and gradually disappearing street lamps.

Other prints of interest:

► *Resting Spears* shows an old picket fence in the Smokey Mountains. "I often use repetition as a way to convey an idea. The repeating fence slats with their pointed tops made me think of resting spears. It was as if a group of primitive people had been out spear hunting, and decided to take a break."

► *Get a Grip* is the close-up of a vise at Carriage Hill MetroPark. "In our modern hurried life, we often feel overwhelmed by stress and frustration. This photo was taken as a reminder to slow down and enjoy life."

► *Essence* shows the close-up of a dogwood branch at Cox Arboretum. He used a development technique to expose the grain patterns. "It represents the concept that each and every object is special and unique when viewed in the proper perspective."

Carl has a bachelor of arts in photography from Union College, and also trained at the Dayton Art Institute and Winona

School of Photography in Chicago. He's a long-time instructor at the Kettering Adult School, and teaches photography at the Springfield Art Museum School. He's had numerous solo and group exhibitions.

"I work in black and white, which is both literal and symbolic. I work to create a doorway, an opening if you will, to the many layers of individual awareness," he said.

Contact arts writer Pamela Dillon at pamdillon@woh.rr.com.

How to Go

What: Black-and-white photography by Stephen Carl.

Where: Carriage Hill MetroPark, 8090 Shull Road, Huber Heights.

When: Through Dec. 31.

Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday.

For more info: (937) 879-0461 or (937) 372-8718.