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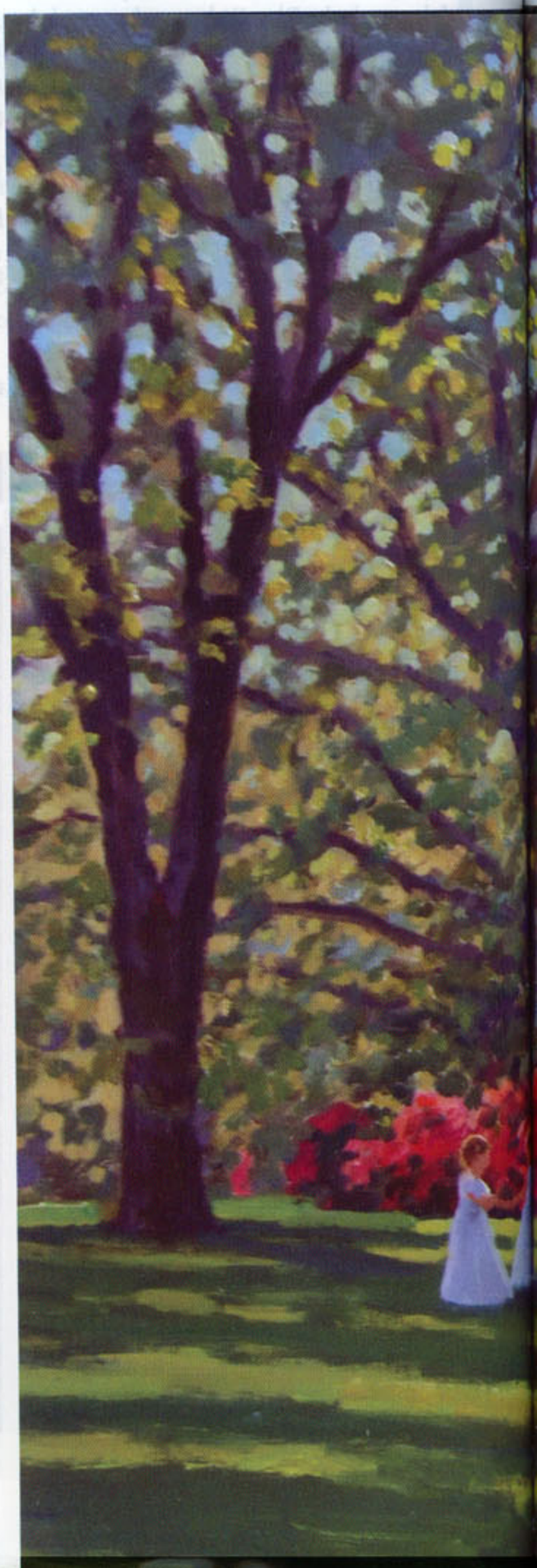
The Piedmont in Flowers

By Mary Winston Nicklin, Curator

Nothing is quite so welcome as the first flowers of spring. After the dark months of winter, the frozen landscape suddenly breaks into Technicolor, and all's right with the world again. The blooming Virginia Piedmont is ripe for the picking for local artists, who find inspiration in the region's paysage and beautiful gardens. In fact, the French impressionist Claude Monet himself was so captivated by flowers that he cultivated his garden at Giverny -- to brim with interesting perspectives and colors to translate onto canvases. The accomplished artists featured on these pages find similar inspiration in flowers -- and so create works of art that are translations of nature.



Come spring,
the Virginia Piedmont
has the flowers
--and the artists.

"I perhaps owe having become
a painter to flowers
-Claude Monet famously said.

"Spring Field, North Garden," oil, 12" x 16"

Malcolm Hughes

"Spring is an invigorating and renewing time to get outdoors and paint, after what seems like a long winter of indoor work," says Malcolm about springtime painting. "In the city of Charlottesville especially the cherry and pear blossoms that seem to explode suddenly, as heralds of springtime, invariably have me pulling the car over for an attempt to capture some brilliant light effect with paint and brush. Then there are the dogwood, azaleas, and forsythia in days that follow, all set against the partially wooded cityscape."

Malcolm paints the mountains and valleys of his North Garden rural neighborhood in Central Virginia, the nearby University of Virginia lawn, and many other places in the region. Working in a way similar to the American and French Impressionists, from whence he drew much inspiration in early years, his painting subjects are developed from outdoor painting. Studies are often brought to completion later in the studio, or there converted into larger canvases. All his current work is done in the oil medium.

Malcolm Hughes paintings have been collected throughout the United States and Japan for over 30 years, and his memberships have included the American Artists' Professional League and the Oil Painters of America. His work can be seen at his studio by appointment and at L'etoile Restaurant on Main Street in Charlottesville. View his work on the web at www.mhughesart.com

Previous page:
"Spring Picnic on Park Street," oil, 12" x 16"