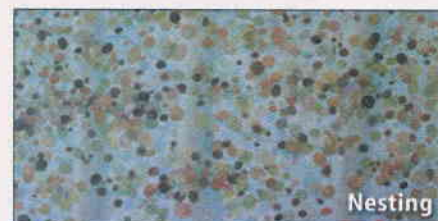


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## CELEBRATING ART

Local artist April Willy reflects on the Carmel International Arts Festival

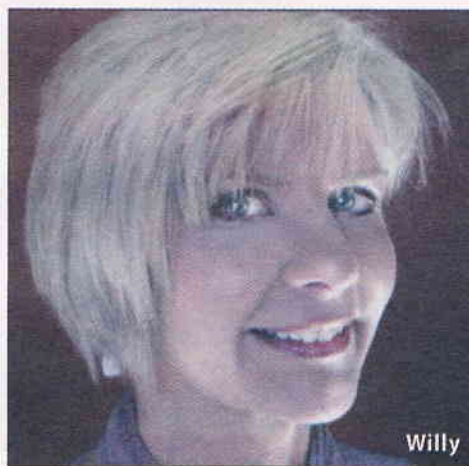
By Christian Sorrell • [christian@youarecurrent.com](mailto:christian@youarecurrent.com)

For the last 15 years, the focal point of the Carmel International Arts Festival has been placed undeniably on the art and, beyond that, the art competition. Last year's Best in Show winner April Willy, a painter and Carmel native, has been a long time participant in the festival.

"(Winning Best in Show) was a great honor and achievement, especially considering the level of talent on display," said Willy. "I never expect to win, but it is the icing on the cake after already getting such great exposure and good sales at the festival."

The judge of this year's art competition will be Evan Lurie, gallery directory of Carmel's Lurie Gallery. Having lived in New York and traveled extensively across Europe, Lurie has developed a wide network of artists from around the world while establishing one of Carmel's most highly respected art galleries.

Like most of the artists participating in the festival, Willy is truly a professional artist with her own full-time gallery in the Indiana Design Center.



Willy

"I have been painting professionally since attending art school in the '80s, but made my living mostly through commercial illustration. I made the transition to working as a fine art painter around 10 years ago. I work full time doing commissions, showing in galleries and participating in regional shows," said Willy.

After years of attending all of the notable art festivals in the region, Willy decided to participate exclusively in the Carmel International Arts Festival.

"I am genuinely loyal to Carmel, not just because it is my home town, but because of the overall quality of the event's organization, pro-

motion, volunteers and talent," said Willy.

With the festival set in the center of the Carmel Art & Design district, an area filled with art galleries and designed for foot traffic, it is not surprising that the festival has gotten progressively larger as the years have gone on.

"The festival truly gets better every year, which is a direct result of the great promotion the city of Carmel has given to the Arts & Design District," said Willy. "(The festival organizers) realized, a few years ago, the need to restrain the amount of artists they were jurying in the competition in order to keep the quality of art at a peak level," said Willy.

A number of Willy's favorite artists such as Beth Forst, Randall Harden, Julie Houck, Carol Bell, Lee Ellis and Chang Kwa Brown will also be participating in this year's competition.

For more information regarding Willy and her art gallery, visit her Web site at [aprilwilly.com](http://aprilwilly.com).

The Carmel International Arts Festival will be held at Main Street and Range Line Road in the heart of Carmel's Arts & Design District this Saturday (10 a.m. to 6 p.m.) and Sunday (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.). Admission is free. For more information, visit [carmelartsfestival.org](http://carmelartsfestival.org).

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