

Adventures await at art exhibition

By Angela Wibking

Scale forbidding rock promontories, explore mysterious burial mounds and walk among the skeletal figures of twisted oak trees scraping their bare branches at a leaden winter sky—all without ever leaving downtown Nashville.

The outdoor adventures described above are but a few afforded viewers of *Landscape Vision*, a fascinating retrospective exhibition of works by Nashville-area artist Charles Brindley, now at the Tennessee State Museum.

Though still in his early 40's, Brindley has been working professionally as a fine and graphic artist since college and in those two decades has created an astonishingly rich and varied body of paintings and drawings. Through those years one thing has remained constant with the artist and that is his love affair with the land and his almost spiritual connection with its forms. For Brindley does not so much as accurately depict interesting trees and curious rock forms as he does portray them as living links with our past, especially as seen in the cycle of the seasons that has numbered man's days since the beginning of time.

In his gnarled tree branches and cold skies we see both the dying time of winter and the promise of spring's rebirth that lies beneath the bare land. In his studies of garden stakes in winter, fall and spring or views of freshly-plowed fields flanked by ancient rock outcroppings we also feel the eternal seasonal cycle.

But beyond how each individual viewer



Field with Oak and Cedar Tress by Charles Brindley

may interpret Brindley's paintings on an emotional level, the works can be appreciated and enjoyed on a purely visual level: The artist's draftsmanship is precise and exquisite and his color choices and luminous use of light haunting.

There are 58 paintings and 67 graphite drawings or pastels on paper in the exhibition, from all stages of the artist's career. Each viewer is bound to have his preferences, whether for Brindley's monumental oil on canvas studies of rock monoliths, the Monet-like pastel depictions of Harpeth burial mounds during different seasons, the dozens of detailed graphite drawings of bare twisted trees,

or the shimmering oil on linen paintings of ruined brick walls overtaken by trees and vines.

Taking time from a busy work day to walk through Brindley's *Landscape Vision* is nearly as refreshing as a solitary ramble at sunset through a Tennessee field. You have until March, when the show closes, to make the trip—and, unlike the real Tennessee landscape this time of year, the museum is heated.

Hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday and 1-5 p.m., Sunday. Admission is free. For information, call 741-2692.