

**Bayside Historical Society Juried Art Exhibition**  
**Criteria for Judging Art Exhibitions**  
**Neill Slaughter**  
**2026**

Having been invited as a juror to this annual exhibit for longer than a decade now, I am grateful to have been invited back this year. My co-juror, award-winning artist Susan D'Alessio, and I carefully reviewed all the artwork submitted to the **Bayside Historical Society** exhibit this year. Once again, we want to compliment everyone's efforts, from the artists to Laura James and the BHS Executive Director Brita Kube, as well as Christina Gerbino, BHS Webmaster, for making this exhibit easier to judge online, especially during the recent snowstorms.

Please allow me to explain how we judge the exhibit. There are certain judging criteria, which I would like to share with those artists who are participating in this particular exhibit, especially those who have not participated in this exhibit before. As a practicing artist and Professor Emeritus I feel strongly that creating art is intrinsically linked to interpretation. All visual artists become inspired by something, which is generally motivated by visual stimuli, and then interpreted as well as communicated visually. Regardless of the medium or whether the art is abstract or representational realist in its approach, my colleague and I try to be as objective as possible while judging an exhibition. Certainly, we value skill and technique, however, ultimately, we look for an honesty and truth in the artwork. During a careful analysis, in the best art there is a transcendence, whereby the viewer is emotionally moved or taken to another place by the artist's interpretation. We think it is important that the artist's intention is communicated as well. If we as viewers sense or recognize an inconsistency in intent or approach then the work suffers. Sometimes the artist's idea is better than the execution because of lack of skill or technique. Other times the skill is visually apparent, but there is no transcendence beyond merely copying a photograph or even photographing something that doesn't transcend the obvious, while still other times the end result is cliché or mimics other artists and there is nothing original in the interpretation. Recognizing that in this particular exhibition there are artists with more years of practice and or education than others, nevertheless certain artworks stand out over others and therefore are singled out, worthy of recognition in a variety of categories ranging from drawing, oil and acrylic painting, watercolor, mixed media, printmaking, 3-D, and photography. In each category one artist has been judged the BEST of category and if warranted, other artists received HONORABLE MENTION. Additionally, this year artwork from high school students was submitted online, therefore that artwork will be reviewed and commentary will be submitted separately.

## **PAINTING in both OIL and ACRYLIC**

### **Stacy Carner, “North Fork Bluffs”, Best Award in the Painting category**

This dynamic poured acrylic painting has an energetic life force culminating in the swirling multi textured surface with dramatic color resembling the turbulence of the sea. However, it's apparent that the artist, who appears inspired by the sea, is thinking first and foremost about abstraction while creating this captivating art through controlled pours and splatters that transcends a traditional seascape painting.

### **Ian Zdatny, “Beach at Greenport”, Honorable Mention in the Painting category**

A competently painted beach scene with well rendered rocks, beach, clouds and a calm sea in a somewhat limited palette. Clearly the artist is disciplined and paying attention to detail, although the painting is so calm both in terms of how the sea is rendered as well as the application of the paint, that it seems to lack a life force, perhaps because it was probably based on a photograph and the limitations therein. A suggestion; pay less attention to copying picky detailed information in the photographic source and instead loosen up, injecting more passion into the brushwork that both describes the objects being rendered, but also enlivens the canvas. It is after all a painting, not a photograph. A good artist like a good writer, knows how to selectively edit, deciding what is important and what can be eliminated to create the most dynamic painting possible. For example, look at William Trost Richards closely and even though his seascape paintings are very believable, there is a life force to the brushwork indicating a bold confidence in addition to accurate observation.

### **Mimi Kagel, “Circling”, Honorable Mention**

The brightly colored concentric circular forms, overlapping one another, create a sense of movement, while also appearing convincingly as sculptural discs, because the blue banded outside edges look shiny and reflective. Additionally, there is a sense of depth created through the overlap and change in value from brighter red to darker red when the disc is in shadow. The artist's intent is to create a confluence of abstract circular shapes, selectively cropped, suggesting movement while also indicating being inspired by Pop Art and Op-Art of the mid-twentieth century.

### **Mahlani Melendez, “ Colorful Symphony Still-Life”, Honorable Mention**

At 40 inches wide, this is an ambitious size for this FIT art student, however there is overall a well-balanced configuration within this still-life. The artist is fairly successful at unifying all these disparate objects through color harmony, by introducing a greenish tone in the foreground related to the background negative space and the apple in the center of the horizontal composition. Contrasting the greens are various reds and blues circulating through reflection and refraction, within the metallic shaker and glass vase along with the bottles.

## Painting Continued

### **Na Ji, "Harmony", Honorable Mention**

Apparently inspired by traditional Asian screens, this painting appears to be a contemporary reiteration of that genre. Instead of gold leaf or enamel, often employed in Asian screens, bright yellow is substituted as the background color upon which a variety of different twisted pink and red flowering branches with a bright blue colorful bird alighting on one branch, create a visual pathway for the eye to dance across to the green bamboo on the bottom right half of the square screen broken up into three vertical rectangles. To counterbalance the lower half there is a bright red sun through which a swan or crane or heron is flying past. The manner in which the neck of the bird intersects the red circle creates an unusual abstract shape that is somewhat different than the traditional Asian screen painting, which is rather refreshing.

## WATERCOLOR

### **Inna Kupchenko, "Peaceful Morning" Best in Watercolor category**

As the title implies there is an overall feeling of peacefulness present in this painterly watercolor of boats docked at a marina. While it captures the essence of cool calm water lit by warm morning light reflecting off the languid surface, the artist's intent seems to be less about depicting picky detail and more about creating a mood that is more ethereal than factual. The background boats and marina building appear hazy in order that the viewer's eye focuses on the two boats in the foreground gently bobbing about the placid water. The poetic interplay between water and reflection appears first and foremost this paintings raison d'être.

### **Denis Ponsot, "Golden Carousel, London", Honorable Mention**

One is struck immediately by the artist's attention to detail and the seemingly obsessive accurate rendering of the complicated brightly colored carousel patterns found within this watercolor. And while that aspect grabs the viewer's attention, unfortunately, the artist does not obsess enough over the elements outside the carousel, which by comparison appear much less interesting and somewhat distracting. When working from a photograph of such a scene, one needs to carefully assess what is of paramount concern in all that information, especially if one is challenged by and enamored by photographic realism. Clearly the complicated patterns found within the colorful carousel are the center of focus, therefore, if the photo had been cropped closer to a square format to emphasize the carousel, without the background organic foliage and hanging baskets, all the attention could have been focused on the colorful complicated configuration of carousel elements and that would be a more interesting composition and one could possibly discover more abstract elements within all those patterns.

### **Laura Heim, "Sunrise Through the Clouds", Honorable Mention**

This artist appears to handle the watercolor in a rather stylized simplified manner, with the emphasis on the great expansiveness of the sky and all those organic patterns, while playing down the water in the foreground and the flanking foliage on either side. It's simple yet effective.

## **DRAWING**

### **Sharon Whinston, “Adirondacks Summer” Best Award for Drawing**

There is an intense scrutiny in how the artist treated the rendering of this portrait (perhaps a self-portrait) using a variety of colored pencils creating subtle shifts in value and color within the light and shadows, ranging from warm to cool in the face, glasses, hair and hands cradling the frog. A narrative is suggested, with an admiration of the frog by the figure that also sustains the viewer’s interest beyond the technical finesse of the artist’s manipulation of the medium.

### **Karen Kolada Assel, “Blooming Lilies” Honorable Mention, Drawing category**

A square format coupled with a dark background seems to work well to help contain the floral arrangement of the lilies in this competent colored pencil rendering. Even though the dark background helps set up a dynamic between flowers and negative space, and the artist faithfully captures the color and shape of the flowers, the drawing does not seem to move beyond the rendering to suggest something greater than what is portrayed.

## **PRINTMAKING**

### **Rosalie Hatch, “Thoughts as Birds”, Best Award for Printmaking**

A very effective linoleum-print on rice paper, comprised of a configuration of various dark bird silhouettes perched on jagged branches, forming a heart shape design. The intimacy of the 4"x6" image printed on the delicate rice paper draws the viewer into this piece and how apropos to exhibit it during Valentine’s month.

### **Elijah Brahmi, “Tribute to the East Village”, Honorable Mention**

There is a unified consistency in the handling of all aspects of this colorful cartoon, digitally printed. Within the 20-inch square composition, the goofy stylized characters congregate and carry on with one another surrounded by various rectilinear shaped banners and or furniture countertops and or machines and pavement. Everything appears off kilter, leaning one way or another on a diagonal, creating a sense of flowing energy, symbolized by the jazz sax player with the wavy freeform flow of musical notes moving out of his horn. It’s wacky, festive fun!

## **MIXED MEDIA**

### **Christina Vandian, “ammil series 1”, Best Award in Mixed Media category**

Initially appearing to be a stylized floral configuration resembling a branch of orchids, when seen from afar, however, upon closer inspection the viewer can fully appreciate the subtle nuance of the unique textural patterns, appearing sort of like a bas-relief of tiny bumps of sand or jewels. One wonders if the floral overlay is simply an excuse to indulge the artist’s imagination to create these swirling bead-like patterns in a limited palette, which also resemble something organic viewed under a microscope. One can appreciate this on multiple levels.

## **Mixed Media continued**

### **Wing Kong, “Fragile – Piping Plover with Chicks”, Honorable Mention**

This delicate and intimate combination of paper, watercolor, acrylic and eggshells creates a scene of a piping plover sheltering her vulnerable chicks. It is a clever configuration looking like a mosaic and utilizing actual eggshells, ironically reminiscent of the plover’s eggshells.

### **Giovanni Gelardi, “The Dictator”, Honorable Mention**

This mixed media assemblage once again creates a politically charged social commentary that is visually satirical and compelling to inspect all the items loaded with symbolism while poking fun at the politician as king, caught with his pants down in the right panel. On the left panel there is a circus clown at the head of the bandwagon on a shelf below which is a small statue of liberty flanked by voided documents and another wagon train with rats running amuck. The middle panel has a crucifix statue hanging above an American flag and a photo of what appears to be President Bush?... surrounded by pictures of soldiers and protestors below which is a second shelf with symbolic skeletons lying as if in their coffins with Nazi swastikas present.

## **3-D/ SCULPTURE**

### **Maya Cirillo, “My Bed in My Dreams,” Best Award in the 3-D Category**

This little wonderful wire bed sculpture is quite whimsical and visually endearing in how she creates the delicate, fanciful headboard, footboard and the linear box springs. One wonders whether the artist is familiar with the great sculptor Alexander Calder, because this certainly is created in the playful Calder spirit when he was creating his wire circus characters between 1926-1931.

### **Joseph Marziliano, “Invisible Man”, Honorable Mention in the 3-D category**

Inspired by the 1933 Invisible Man film starring Claude Rains, this clay sculpture is very clever in how he has the overcoat open revealing the “nothingness” because his body is invisible. There is a good sense of movement in the overcoat blowing open and also an eye for detail in the wrapped head and hand holding the knife.

### **Kevin Goetzger, “Take Me to Your Leader – 1”, Honorable Mention**

This is a whimsical figure resembling the ET film alien, although this little sculpture also resembles ancient Pre-Columbian or even African Primitive figurines. Therefore, this little sculpture, which was humorously conceived also pays homage to ancient history.

## **COLLAGE**

### **Trish Wirtenson, “Number 1”, Best Award for Collage category**

This symmetrical composition is comprised of a sophisticated layering of disparate images perhaps symbolizing personal meaning for the artist. Utilizing a personal palette of somber colors, the central floral motif, surrounded by various images, poses questions more so than revealing answers. It's this kind of mystery that makes this collage so compelling.

### **Francie Scanlon, “Leap of Faith”, Honorable Mention in Collage category**

In this collage the artist seems to be making a personal statement of a religious nature, in which the composition is structured in such a manner that a crucifix image is surrounded by words, primarily pertaining to Christ with the words “Leap of Faith” being centrally located just below the crucifix. Essentially one takes a leap of faith whenever one interacts with humanity and religion.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

### **Emerson Chen, “Autumn Impression, New Hampshire” Best Award in Photography category**

Conceptually, this photograph transitions from pure photographic scenery into something more abstract and consequently more extraordinary, in which the photograph becomes an impressionist painterly abstraction of varying shapes and autumn color.

### **Rebekah Hanousek-Monge, “Washington Square” Honorable Mention in the Photography category**

A dynamic night time cityscape seen from above emphasizing the architectonic structure showing the circular park in the lower third of the composition, juxtaposed by the brightly lit Washington Square monument and flanked on either side by the graphic impact of little white rectangular lights in silhouetted blacked buildings split by a band of street lights leading north towards the iconic Empire State building in the distance.

### **\*EL, “Literally Me”, Honorable Mention in the Photography category**

A compelling digital manipulation of color and light creates a mysterious portrait narrative emphasizing a wounded individual, both physically and probably mentally.

### **Jon Gallo, “Loving Couple Comfortably Sleeping on the LIRR” Honorable Mention in the Photography category**

Very aptly titled, this photo says it all...an exhausted couple riding the LIRR late at night, probably following a very long day at work in the city. Quite a nice configuration of heads.

## **Photography continued**

### **Joanne Raskin, “Imagination”, Honorable Mention in the Photography category**

The stark cropping of night time building windows creates an abstract pattern found in reality. It’s an excellent example of “less is more”.

### **Juliana Morales, “Where the Light Lives”, Honorable Mention in the Photography category**

This is simply a beautifully balanced photograph in which the artist captures a sublime nature scene at an optimal point in time, thereby preserving a serenity in which to relax and escape from these unsettling times.

## **GRAPHIC DESIGN**

### **Jamie Zaragoza, “The Sound of Thunder” Book Jacket**

This large-scale book jacket design is unique and as it does not fit into the other categories; it stands alone in its own category. The artist’s statement accurately describes why this graphic design works so well: “This book jacket redesign for Ray Bradbury’s *The Sound of Thunder* uses visual symbolism and mood to convey its central themes. The butterfly motif highlights the butterfly effect, showing how small actions can trigger significant, irreversible consequences. A muted color palette with splattered textures suggests violence, chaos, and temporal disruption, reinforcing the story’s tension. Together, these elements emphasize the conflict between human control and unpredictable outcomes. The overall design invites the viewer to consider the far-reaching impact of seemingly simple decisions. Subtle visual details encourage closer inspection, mirroring the story’s focus on unintended consequences.”

**PS...continue to scroll down to a separate page to read my commentary of Bayside High School students’ artwork.**

**WINTER ART SHOW 2026**  
***"Dreams and Destinations"***

***A collection of work by Bayside High School's art students, 2025-2026***

**BAYSIDE HIGH SCHOOL** students have again submitted artwork that will not be judged as the Bayside Historical Society exhibit has with awards, although some of the quality of the artwork submitted is worthy of commentary.

**Aether, "Blessed Be the Hands"**

This illustration's well-balanced composition shows a couple of figures who appear to be friends freefalling through space with a commentary based on Leonardo Da Vinci. The illustration of the figures indicates an active imagination with the spirit of curiosity, something Leonardo was never lacking.

**Amanda, "Ignorance or Bliss"**

In this painting the artist appears not to necessarily be taking sides or favoring one over another, although the serene looking bearded figure on the left with eyes that appear to be closed, looks quite content as opposed to the figure on the right very intently reading what appears to be a newspaper with a large headline "BOMBS". In these unsettling times of war and terrorism constantly in the news, perhaps the student is suggesting that maybe "Ignorance can be bliss"... a way to mentally escape these troubling times.

**Amanda, "Isolation"**

This is a most imaginative drawing in which the negative space configuration of hatched lines creates a rhythmic pattern full of graphic impact, juxtaposing a different linear handling of a variety of hanging cages with doors open, indicating they are empty, except the one in the foreground that appears to have a stylization of something hanging out of that particular cage, resembling hair perhaps? In any case it causes the viewer to wonder about this "isolation".

**Carine, "Wheel of Fortune"**

A witty title for this computerized illustration of a female figure in a timeless long purple dress complimented by long flowing locks in front of a ship's wheel, entwined by a vine whose leaves appear to be like Irish clover, symbolic of good luck. However, the figure has her eyes covered and cannot see what will occur in the future. She is not steering the ship, but perhaps trusting in Fate to lead her to what exactly we do not know. There seems to be symbolism in the uncertainty portrayed, suggesting what many high school graduates feel as they embark on the next chapter in their lives.

**Christine, "Spiral"**

Aptly titled, a figure has been greatly abstracted through computer manipulation, creating a whirlwind hurricane spiral and at the eye of the energetic looking spiral is a male figure...is it the same as the greatly abstracted one whipped about into the spiral? One can read US ARMY in the spiral configuration and wonders whether this is what may be the future of this particular high school student, about to graduate?

**Dale, "Revelation"**

There is a subtle color shift from warm to cool and from dark to light in this portrait that was manipulated in the computer, or perhaps a printmaking process to alter a photo of this face. The subtle handling of the figure, which appears a bit fuzzy like in a drawing, symbolically seems to suggest an emerging out of the darkness, revealing oneself.

**Maddison, "Frisbee Cookie"**

This is a delightful whimsical illustration of two figures appearing as if in a fantasy circus surrounded by lollypops while flinging frisbee cookies back and forth, with a mut in between hoping to catch a bite!

**Kimora, "Music"**

As a musical scale with notes appears to recede it appears to begin to revive and take up a fallen angel, whose arm is raised, linking it to the music. Music can move all of us in these unsettling times to become better angels.

**Si Yin, "Choices"**

All of us want make choices about so many different aspects of LIFE, and sometimes it's simply about what to wear on any given day, to make the right impression. With the female figure's head being cropped, the emphasis is on whether it'll be the fancy formal blouse or the simple informal tee-shirt.

**Rayana, "Altered Portrait"**

What may be a self-portrait has indeed been altered with varying striped layers somewhat camouflaging and abstracting the figure...thus making the portrait of what lies underneath more complicated...as all human beings are in reality.

Commentary by Professor Emeritus Neill Slaughter