

Criteria for Judging Art Exhibits
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As we are still coping with variants of Covid, now in its third year, with artists spending more time isolated in their homes/studios and perhaps only sporadically exhibiting and attending events such as art receptions, the process of judging this year's **Bayside Historical Society** art submissions was conducted online. Having reviewed all the artwork with my colleague and co-juror Robert Mehling, we are cognizant of what is entailed in the creative endeavors we saw presented in this year's online exhibition submissions and want to compliment everyone's efforts from the artists to Laura James and her competent staff who rose to the challenge admirably, helping continue this annual exhibition.

There are certain judging criteria, which I would like to share with those artists who are participating in this particular exhibit. As a practicing artist and professor for a full four decades, 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 Robert Mehling 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 painting as well as acrylic painting, watercolor, mixed media, photography including digital. This year to expand the field of honorees, we have decided to add two new categories, Quilts and Folk Art, sometimes referred to as Outsider Art because it is primarily self-taught, without academic training. In each category one artist has been judged the BEST of category and if warranted other artists received HONORABLE MENTION.

DRAWING

Henry McQuillan, "Cage the Elephant" Best Drawing Award

This unique drawing is most imaginative and appears to transcend the very competent illustration in ballpoint pen, a media which in and of itself is not forgiving, if mistakes are made. There is a surreal quality of having an elephant shrunken down and trapped in what appears to be a bird cage, surrounded with arms and hands, some of which are holding cameras photographing this endangered species, which adds a certain social commentary to this provocative drawing.

Sarah Case, "Chiaroscuro" Honorable Mention, Drawing category

This charcoal drawing has a very well-conceived composition in which all the objects are not only well rendered, in terms of correct proportion and perspective, coupled with a full value range creating a sense of convincing volume, but it appears to be the artist's intent to have the rope help the viewers' eye wander throughout the various objects in this calculated composition.

Paula Flanzraich, "Untitled 2" Honorable Mention, Drawing category

In this abstract drawing there exists a free form, stream of consciousness quality, indicating a creative act unfolding before us as the artist maneuvers her colored markers throughout the page

Betsy Lazarus, "Map0123" Honorable Mention, Drawing category

There is something rather whimsical in how the artist uses ink, pastel and charcoal to create an abstract configuration that one recognizes instantly as a map, even before one reads the title. The artist seems to delight in the limitations imposed on this drawing in which less can be more?

Chin-Ping Tsen, "New Generation" Honorable Mention, Drawing category

There is an endearing quality with the children appearing somewhat physically awkward and gangly that transcends an awkwardness in the handling of proportion and perspective within the arm and stance of at least one of the children as well as the amorphous picture or doorway in the background. Nevertheless, the intermixing of various colors found within parts of the children's hair and body suggest an awareness of how to create atmosphere through combinations of color.

Kerri McKay, "Rex's House" Honorable Mention, Drawing category

A domestic interior is enlivened by a sophisticated use of warm and cool color, particularly within the couch and its cast shadow upon the floor, although it also exists to a lesser degree throughout the composition creating a color harmony between interior objects and those found out of doors. The addition of the poodle on the couch, whom we assume is named Rex adds a certain levity.

SCULPTURE/3-D

Giovanni Gelardi, "One Thousand Wishes" Best Sculpture/3-D Award

As in years past this socially conscious artist has presented another relevant piece of art loaded with social commentary. This particular 3-D piece packs a wallop with a multitude of skeletons spilling out of a box, underneath bombers hanging (flying) overhead, with a crucifix of Jesus in front of an atomic explosion image. In front of the skeletons are hundreds (perhaps 1000) pastel

colored Japanese origami paper swans contrasting the skeletons with little signs reading Nagasaki and Hiroshima signifying the nuclear holocaust of Japan during WWII...which could occur again.

Yael Maayan, “Guardian Angel” Honorable Mention in 3-D category

While not as conceptually powerful or as complicated as the “One Thousand Wishes” 3-D piece there is a handling of wire, paper and glue creating an effective patina to this piece, transcending the materials used in its creation. A seemingly simple stylized angel hovering in front of a ladder...what does that symbolize...a sort of ladder or stairway to Heaven perhaps?

MIXED MEDIA

Geraldine Izzi, “Processing Grief” Best Mixed Media Award

This mixed media collage is a heartfelt testament to a deep friendship with someone who unfortunately did not survive cancer. The various elements including repetitive photos and other personal images surrounded by dark blue washes (symbolizing sadness?) create a cathartic response to her best friend, who’ll be remembered, whenever she stares at “Processing Grief”.

Patricia Klein, “My Morning Walk” Honorable Mention, Mixed Media category

Had the artist not stated that this piece was in fact acrylic painting over a photograph, one would simply think it’s an urban landscape painting. The judges appreciate the honesty in revealing that this painting is on top of a photo and also appreciate the refreshing look to this mixed media painting full of expressionistic bravura brushwork and lively color that command one’s attention.

WATERCOLOR

Elizabeth Sheehan, “Georgi Girl” Best Watercolor Award

There is a relaxed breezy feeling to this watercolor, which for the most part is competent in the handling of the watercolor medium and it is of no consequence that the image is not loaded with social commentary as some images in this exhibit display. That is not the point here. It’s simply a tribute to the artist’s dog for whom she clearly has great affection. Formally, the white dog contrasts nicely with the dark background and the perspective of looking down on top of the dog, fence and potted plant are fairly consistently observed. One suggestion; there is a bit of confusion or vagueness as to how one reads the dog’s right leg, which appears to be both on the ground yet raised above the ground plane. A more definite cast shadow could anchor that leg down.

Clare Stokolosa, “Ship by the Bridge” Honorable Mention, Watercolor category

This particular watercolor appears to be inspired by John Marin, in terms of subject and handling. It has several attributes including the loose handling of the sky and water, which reads fairly convincingly as a surface plane with streaks of light and dark indicating striations within the water’s surface. The handling of the landscape in the foreground also works well in conjunction with the water, sharing some of the same colors (warm & cool) creating a convincing atmosphere. However, the bridge lacks some stability at the base on the left, because it is not convincing that it could hold up the bridge. Likewise, the ship on the right as a dark silhouette shape appears flat without dimension and awkwardly situated in relation to the bottom of the bridge structure, which vaguely appears to rest on the ship instead of behind it and finally the distant shore is too

dark a value to sit convincingly back in space as it should.

QUILTS

Marilyn Hamilton, “Melting Complexity” Best Award for Quilt category

This is conceptually a very clever and highly disciplined quilted piece made even more visually evocative by choosing to create it as an unusual applique of solid patches of color cut and carefully arranged onto black cloth to simulate a Rubik Cube seen in perspective, that then appears to be melting and dissolving into a sea of blackness. This piece has strong graphic impact.

Susan Louis, “Fantasia” Honorable Mention in Quilt category

The cornucopia of color and texture in this quilt that fans out while also appearing to be swirling something like a spiral staircase, visually grabs the viewer’s attention. While both this and “Melting Complexity” could have been executed in another more conventional medium, such as painting or collage, instead they pack a visually stunning punch by being created as quilted fabric.

FOLK ART

Fred Adell, “Leader of the Pack” Best Folk Art Award

There is a cathartic combination of mixed media creating an expressionistically energetic, chaotic intensity in this narrative painting, with an equally bizarre story as to how this most unusual “self-portrait” materialized. The obsessive-compulsive feeling is palpable here presenting a unique psychologically strange vision, transcending conventional academic self-portraiture.

Barbara Silver, “Strawberry, Anyone?” Honorable Mention in Folk Art category

Folk Art is often recognized as art by someone who was not academically trained, but instead is largely self-taught. While this particular painting has inconsistencies with perspective and proportions such as in the lopsided plate that appears to be hovering or floating above the table plane or strawberries in the background, there is nevertheless something visually captivating about the handling of the ‘jelly’ on the plate and on the spoon. In other words, despite errors in perspective, there is a visionary truth transcending the visual contradictions.

Charles Vivona, “Illusion of Hempstead Harbor 1” Honorable Mention in Folk Art category

This landscape is unconventional in that it does not depend so much upon traditional or atmospheric perspective, but instead operates on a naïve approach yet with obsessive attention and consistency of uniform pattern found in the handling of the medium that creates a truthful adherence to its own rules. The different colored patterns and texture in the foliage is what appears to be a paramount concern to the artist’s vision.

Archana Santra, “Soul Music” Honorable Mention in Folk Art category

Based on the title this artist does not appear to be illustrating what American Culture would label Soul Music such as that associated with James Brown or Aretha Franklin etc. Instead, it would appear the artist is tapping into her own SOUL in a symbolic and or psychological manner. Painting a woman in a long golden/yellow dress holding an unusual instrument, which seems to be something resembling a sitar, sitting next to what suggests a window onto a dark blue night

sky with a crescent moon might hold very personal value to this artist. This is far from depicting reality and more about portraying something of symbolic significance. It sings its own truth.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Trisha Chang, “Refraction in Reflection” Best Photography Award

In her artist’s statement she mentions that she can “find beauty in anything, anywhere and anytime even when we don’t expect it.” That certainly is true in this fantastic photograph that works on so many levels from the composition in which the glass, its reflection and the angle of the white vs dark is so well balanced as is the fact she discovered the abstraction in reality while also creating a sense of movement in how the object is cropped plus the duality of point and counterpoint between glass and its reflection. It’s a superb image!

Edison Weinstein, “Chipped Beak” Honorable Mention, Photography category

What makes this photo so special has everything to do with timing as well as the strong graphic impact created by capturing that stark black and white duck juxtaposed to the abstract fluid patterned striations running through the water in the background and in the reflection surrounding the bird complimenting and reiterating the black, white and gray patterns in the duck’s wing. All elements contribute to the overall harmony.

Willy Airaldi, “Bailando en el Parque” Honorable Mention, Photography category

Timing is everything, particularly in action photography as is evident in this photo indicating a well-balanced sense of movement capturing the fluid energy of these two dancers appearing somewhat angelic looking holding their white dresses out, looking like wings.

Hannah Mrakovčić, “Abandoned LIRR Station, Richmond Hill” Honorable Mention, Photography

What makes this rather mundane scene something special and somewhat haunting is that the station is trapped in time because it is abandoned, creating a sense of isolation and loneliness.

Tim Peters, “Quincy Dredge No. 2” Honorable Mention, Photography

This photo has a harmonic balance of lights and darks, from the white puffy clouds to the mid-grays in the sky, river and road, to the dark grays in the distance and foreground to the dredge itself. However, the dredge helps this transcend just another landscape because there once again is a sense of time stood still and isolation with what appears as abandoned manmade machinery and other manmade elements, roadway and bridge, yet with no actual people seen anywhere.

Laura McManus, “Peaceful Pastels” Honorable Mention, Photography

It’s obvious that the artist was drawn to the sunset, which prompted her to pick that title, however, what the judges found noteworthy is the total composition including the oval light at the top right reiterating the oval in the Amoco sign as well as how the powerlines, balance or reiterate the blue neon line in the station overhang as well as the yellow stripe in the roadway below. This image also is reminiscent of two artists who portrayed modernity in gas station images, Edward Hopper’s 1940 painting titled Gas as well as Ed Ruscha’s 1966 Standard Station.

***EL, “Three Saviors” Honorable Mention, Digital Photography category**

This strangely surreal image appears to have been inspired and appropriated from art history. Juxtaposing a Biblical figure (perhaps Jesus) with an alien is a twisted take on a theme that is quite familiar in art history, yet brought up to date to these modern scary times of uncertainty.

OIL PAINTING

Geoffrey Atkin, “A Vista” Best Oil Painting Award

What makes this a standout social commentary painting is the juxtaposition between the top of the painting, which is presenting a pastoral scene to the stark contrast of what occurs at the bottom half of the painting with what appears to be an abandoned camper trailer and car with junk strewn about the place. The top of the painting is perhaps inspired by artists like Claude of Lorraine in Europe or Thomas Cole of the Hudson River Valley, but the bottom of the painting smacks of the disrespect and messiness of modernity gone amuck. Perhaps the artist was inspired by a series of paintings by Thomas Cole called “The Course of Empire” showing Nature in a pristine, unspoiled state before and after man has invaded it, conquered and abandoned it.

Julia Ennis, “Dial Tone” Honorable Mention, Oil painting category

In this surrealist painting of a stylized house swirling round a vortex within turbulent water, as if it’s being sucked down a drain, one wonders whether this is a nightmare illustration or what exactly? Regardless, it is well conceived and convincingly executed.

Paul Schrynemakers, “Stormy Sunset at Acadia” Honorable Mention, Oil painting category

There is an overall consistency in how the paint was handled creating a convincing mood in this tonalist painting. It is apropos to have that textural impasto present throughout the surface of the painting because it contributes to the moody turbulence of the rough seas crashing upon the foreground rocks. Additionally, the artist is successful in interweaving a pinkish gray tone from the sky down into the sea and across the rocks creating an overall subtle color harmony.

ACRYLIC PAINTING

Ian Zdatny, “Bridge Screen” Best Acrylic Painting

This ambitious painting has been created onto panels, forming a folding screen of medium substantial size (48x46”). Everything appears well conceived and well executed from the folded screen format to the image of a modern suspension bridge juxtaposed to the cloud patterns that counterbalance the suspension tension cables moving on a diagonal opposite to those cloud striations across the sky, to the handling of the paint creating the metallic car reflections. Even the folded angles of the screen panels adds another dimension effectively warping the painting imagery creating an additional abstract element which would not exist if painted on a flat canvas.

Stacy Carner, “Fire and Ice” Honorable Mention, Acrylic painting category

As the artist has stated, she wants “to express her feelings rather than define them.” And her method of pouring acrylic paint is how she created this very expressionistic abstraction, which unleashes a sense of tremendous energy in the clashing colors intermixing that coalesce into what she calls “Fire and Ice”, a fitting title for these juxtaposing colors representing such opposites.

Luis Caros, "Throgs Neck Bridge Seen from Fort Totten" Honorable Mention, Acrylic painting

This impressionist painting exhibits an uncomplicated refreshing freedom in terms of the composition, whereby the bridge is cropped by the trees and the lively abstract shadow pattern across the warm pinkish path keeps the viewer's eye moving hither and yon.