



The

Creative Edge

CALIFORNIA ART LEAGUE

Volume II

www.californiaartleague.org

Issue 5

May 2013

California Art League's (CAL) upcoming calendar is full of exciting events! CAL's Open Exhibition, *Journeys*, will have its official opening with a reception on Saturday, June 8, 2013, from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m., at the beautiful Galeria Gitana in San Fernando, California. It promises to be an amazing show, so mark your calendars so you don't miss out! The awards presentation for all of the winners will be at 8:30 p.m. The address is under *Calendar of Events* (to the right).



Interior of Galeria Gitana

On June 28, 2013, immediately on the heels of our Open, is CAL's first exhibition at the historic Blinn House in Pasadena, California. This is a highly prestigious opportunity for CAL and we know it will be a great premiere. More information including the prospectus will be coming to everyone via email soon so stay tuned!

We would love to hear from our membership about suggestions of future demonstrators you would like to see at our membership meetings, field trips you would like to take, and ideas for paint-out locations. The Board is always trying to think of ways to make your experience in CAL more enjoyable, so we would love to hear from you. If you have any suggestions, please let us know. A list of your Board members is on page 5. Please feel free to contact anyone.

We would also like to know if there is anything specific you would like to see included in the Newsletter. Of course, we always want to know what is going on with YOU. If you are part of a show, we would love to share it in our *Member News* section of the Newsletter. We would also love to know if there is a great art show you have recently seen or an art-related book you think our membership might like to know about. Just remember, the **deadline** for the June issue is **May 15, 2013**. Anything Newsletter related can be sent to the Editor, Reece Holland, at: gr-home@pacbell.net.

Calendar of Events

Next Board Meeting:

Wednesday, May 8, 2013
7:00 p.m.

Next General Membership Meeting:

Tuesday, May 21, 2013
7:00 p.m.

Demonstrator:

Smadar Knobler

\$5 members, \$8 guests;
Encino Community Ctr.
4935 Balboa Blvd.
Encino, CA 91316

CAL Open Exhibition (*Journeys*):

Drop-Off of accepted work:

June 1, 2013
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Reception:

Saturday, June 8, 2013
6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Galeria Gitana

120 North Maclay Ave.
San Fernando, CA 91340

Blinn House Exhibition:

Friday, June 28, 2013
160 N. Oakland Ave.

Pasadena, CA 91101

More information to follow

The California Art League is proud to present our May Demonstrator, **Smadar Knobler**

by John Paul Thornton

Smadar Knobler is a versatile artist who works with silk fabric, textiles, watercolors, oil and pastels. Her paintings are both figurative and impressionistic and her textile work is textured and sculptural. Her subject matter varies from landscapes and nature to the abstract. Her unique ability to capture objects in three-dimensional fabric forms has produced a genuinely unique body of work.

Smadar is originally from Israel where she was exposed to art at an early age by a mother who loved to sew, knit, crochet and paint and a father who created three-dimensional sculptures from recycled machinery. Moving to the United States, she later went on to obtain a BA in sculpture and weaving from California State University, Northridge, and a degree in Judaic studies from the American Jewish University in Los Angeles. Her love of the sculptural form has resurfaced in her newest signature pieces which make up the Ancient Bristlecone Pine series. Her exploration of the subject involves the creation of a three-dimensional surface using a variety of techniques such as silk painting, quilting, assemblage, collage and oil painting. The painting, sewing, layering and building of the many-textured surface is intended to give the viewer a sense of a magical encounter with the spirit of these ancient unique trees.

Because Smadar's work is sculptural, it demands to be seen and experienced. It is impossible to perceive the rich textures or to feel what this singular artist feels in the creation of her art by viewing it online or in print. It is this experiential element which allows her work to attain a high degree of vitality and significance and sets her work apart.



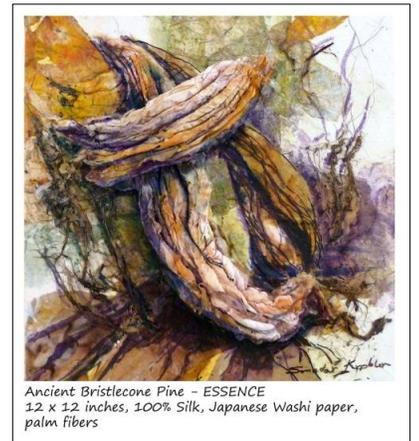
Ancient Bristlecone Pine - Spirit
28 x 32 inches, 100% Silk, Japanese Washi paper

Her desire to create such vital art forms is elemental. She has an inescapable desire to capture the images that dazzle her mind in a visual form. Just like a composer who hears a symphony in his head, she sees visual images of her



composition before she puts a single brush stroke, a stitch, or a sketch on the canvas. When she comes upon a scene in nature that mesmerizes her, she is driven to capture it in such a way that recreates the mood, the light, or the feeling that took her breath away. By changing her designs and techniques as she renders new images, she keeps her work fresh and engaging. Every new piece she creates presents its own challenges and pushes her further to explore new avenues. Also, due to her struggle with major health issues, she sees her art as a personal legacy. Her artistic goal is to move the viewer to experience that same awe and appreciation for nature that inspired her to create it.

Smadar explains, "My parents had a great influence over my development as a textile artist. My father sold and repaired sewing machines in Israel and my mother sewed and knitted all our clothes. As a very small child, I closely watched my mother as she worked with yarn, fabric and paper and my father as he created beautiful small figurines from spare parts. These early experiences infused me with a love and appreciation for textiles, colors, and beautiful handmade one-of-a-kind art. While still a youngster, I moved with my family to the U.S. where I continued to study ART. I graduated from



Ancient Bristlecone Pine - ESSENCE
12 x 12 inches, 100% Silk, Japanese Washi paper, palm fibers

Smadar Knobler, cont. from p. 2

California State University Northridge with a degree in weaving and sculpture.

At the same time, I obtained a degree in Judaic studies from the University of Judaism. These two passions, my love of art and my heritage, are incorporated in my work.

After painting with watercolors for a while, I discovered SILK ART and fell completely in love. Painting on silk is very much like painting on watercolor paper, except that you can wear what you create, and you can feel the sensual fabric against your skin. I now paint on silk almost exclusively. The brilliance of the dyes and the surfaces of the shimmering silk fabric captivate

me. I continue to discover different ways to paint and enhance the fabrics. I hand paint on only the finest silks. The majority of the dyes I use are steam-set to preserve their brilliance, but recently



I've been using heat-set dyes as well. My inspiration comes from Nature and the beauty all around us. My wearable one-of-a-kind art pieces include Chinese blouses, long and short vests, kimonos, scarves, capes and ties. I have also painted Judaic items, such as custom talit, hallah covers and matzo covers. In recent years, non-wearable items such as wall art, Chinese screens and wall hangings, have been added to my repertoire, as have paintings in oil and pastels. I have been painting on silk for quite a few years and my work has been seen in many art shows, exhibits and fashionable boutiques. My pieces have appeared in *Belle Armoire Art To Wear* magazine. I have also designed 2 fabric lines for RJR Fabrics (*MY SECRET GARDEN* and *TRANQUIL WATERS*). My quilt, "Majestic Leya," (pictured to the left) has been published in *The Natural World Art Quilt 2012*.

My newest work has been inspired by the Ancient Bristlecone Pine forests in the High Sierra, in California. To capture the beauty and spirit of these ancient trees, I created a series of sculptural forms in silk and other textiles and incorporated them into a unique and vibrant wall art.

I teach Silk Painting workshop in my studio, and also at various conferences around the state. I also teach watercolor classes, at the Cancer Support Group in Ventura, CA. I love to share my passion for the painted surface with my students. I enjoy watching the pleasure they get discovering all their hidden talents."



Ancient Bristlecone Pine - The Tree That's Alive
96 x 60 inches, 100% Silk, 100% cotton



Circle of Life

Please feel free to visit Smadar's website at:

www.smardardesigns.com

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2013 CALIFORNIA OPEN EXHIBITION

TAG Gallery Juried Exhibition, August 14-30, 2013, at Bergamot Station Arts Center in Santa Monica. Open to U.S. artists 18+ working in computer art, drawing, mixed media, painting, photography, printmaking and sculpture. Maximum size 48"h x 36"w, sculptures maximum size 48"h x 20"w and maximum weight 40 lbs. Cash awards. Juror: Edward Goldman, Art Critic, National Public Radio and The Huffington Post. Fee: \$40/1 to 2 entries, \$10/each additional, 6 maximum. Online submissions. Entry Deadline: June 26, 2013. Prospectus: www.caopen.net. Questions: 310-829-9556 or e-mail caopen@taggallery.net.

Every artist dips his brush in his own soul, and paints his own nature into his pictures.

Henry Ward Beecher

OPEN CALL FOR ARTISTS

The prospectus for the June 9th *Depot Art Show* is now available. The Annual Depot Art Show has been presented by the Chatsworth Fine Arts Council for the last 15 years at the Chatsworth Metrolink Station. The Depot Show is both an outdoor booth art show, and a themed single-piece, all media, exhibit hung inside the Depot building. The outside show is open until full - early entry recommended. Entry deadline for the inside show is 5/29/13. The prospectus with details and entry forms is available at www.chatsworthfineartscouncil.com, or request by email at chatsworth-arts@att.net, or call 818 772-1639.

As many of you know, Robert Burridge is the juror for our CAL Open exhibition. In an April 24, 2013, article by Courtney Jordan, Editor of *Artist Daily* entitled, *I think I pulled a muscle...Artistically Speaking*, there is a section on Robert we thought you might enjoy:

According to Robert Burridge, a California painter who teaches numerous workshops, many students are overly focused on the final product. "I tell people that it doesn't have to look like something and be ready to sell," Burridge says. "You can just have fun." He says he hands out 6"-x-9" pieces of paper—"so they don't feel they've wasted a good piece of watercolor paper"—and asks students to paint action words taken from a thesaurus. There may be five or six words, and for each word they get one minute to communicate the concept visually in a painterly or graphic way. Between each one the students show what they did and talk about it. "There's a lot of laughing. I'll be ready to move on, and they'll say, 'Give us more of these,'" the artist points out. He also says his workshop participants cherish these little drawings, and that the exercise adds to the camaraderie of the class.

For Burridge, the warm-ups are an opportunity to be spontaneous and noncerebral. "It quickly gets students into the creative side of their brains," he explains. On the occasions when he hasn't done these exercises, he has found that students are scared of doing something wrong. "I just have a harder time getting them into the painting mode," he says.

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President's Message

Plein Air: The Ultimate Challenge

By Teri Starkweather

I just got back from attending the Plein Air Convention in Monterey, California, hosted by *Plein Air Magazine* and Eric Rhoads. It was three days of painting beautiful landscapes in Monterey with about three full days of watching demos by well-known plein air painters. It was really very fun and exciting to watch other artists do a painting right in front of us and share some of their painting tips. Eric Rhoads also presented a 'Marketing Boot Camp' early each morning, full of valuable information for marketing your art. I had a great time and highly recommend it to anyone who can attend next year.



Plein Air painting is the most incredible kind of painting. You are surrounded by nature, and you paint a study of your impression of what you see in the most immediate way. The sun is always moving so you have about two hours at most to get the paint down and depict your scene. It is quite challenging, but also gratifying and fun.

One of my favorite watercolor artists, Alvaro Castagnet, paints plein air. I just received his newsletter in which he explains his philosophy. He believes that the painting should reflect your spirit, and that you should not copy the subject exactly. He feels it is better to paint the ambiance and mood of the place and time. He is always trying to give his painting a certain magic by searching for the surprising element of the day. He claims that the painter should not strive to make a pretty or pleasant image. He feels we need to look deeper than that and have "guts" in the painting.

Painting is poetry that is seen rather than felt. and poetry is painting that is felt rather than seen

Leonardo da Vinci

Member News!

Teri Starkweather is in the Salon International Exhibition at Greenhouse Gallery in San Antonio, Texas. The show runs from April 12 to May 3, 2013. Her painting *Earl and Oscar* is an oil painting of her father, Earl Madery, with the Oscar he won for sound mixing on the movie, *Jaws* (1975).



Earl and Oscar
Teri Starkweather



In a Dream
Joy Rotblatt

Marian Fortunati has 32 paintings hanging at the Colony Theatre Gallery in a show called *Precious Gems*. The Colony Theatre is located at 555 N. Third St., Burbank, CA. The show runs through May 22, 2013.



Joy Rotblatt has two large paintings in a group exhibition called *The Spirit of Place: Memorable Interior Spaces* at Galeria Gitana, 120 N. Maclay Avenue, San Fernando, CA 91340. The exhibition runs from April 13 to June 1, 2013.



Erella Teitler has 4 pieces in the Pasadena Society of Artists' show entitled *Changes* at the Pasadena Central Library located at 285 E. Walnut Street, Pasadena, CA 91101. The show runs from May 1-31, 2013, with a reception on May 4 from 1:00-4:00 p.m. on the patio.



CAL Member **Beth Summers** sent out a wonderful email sharing her process of painting from camera to finished work. I asked Beth if I could share this with you and she politely accepted. From her email:

Here is a sequence in painting that is also useful when you want to accomplish or change something. Each stroke no matter how small can make a difference over time's picture.

I am using the iPad for recording photo information of the moment, as the shadows rush so quickly by, while I paint another look at Sycamore Canyon Trail, this time in winter.

1) Photo from iPad



2) Sketch on the trail



3) Shape with my "butter" Palette knife



4) Fashion with knife edges more details of feelings: birdsongs, sage, fragrance



5) Expand to another version of possibility



6) The finished image:



Spring Sycamore Canyon Trail

Now try this sequence with something you want to change or accomplish:

1. **Photograph** something that you really want, to remind you of your wish.
2. Pencil **Sketch** a list of ideas for getting by.
3. **Shape** one idea you can achieve today.
4. **Fashion** the good feelings of accomplishment, noticing fragrance and song.
5. **Expand** the feeling.

Art Studio Secrets



Floral Ideas: Take Your Pick

By Marjorie Sarnat

Spring flowers provide infinite inspiration for abstract paintings. Mother Nature provides artists with color palettes and compositions galore.

A Bouquet of Shapes and Patterns

Explore a bouquet of flowers as abstract shapes and patterns. Showcase patterns by repeating shapes and by contrasting colors, such as darker and lighter flowers in alternating positions. Shadows under the blossoms also create strong patterns.

The shapes of most flowers are hollow cones or a combination of cones and cylinders. You'll also find spheres and flat circles, ovals and rectangles. Gather a bunch of floral geometry and paint it.

The Powers of Flowers

Select a group of flowers that have interesting forms and beautiful colors. Blur edges and merge shapes into each other until larger shapes are formed and flowers are only vaguely recognizable. Emphasize lines, colors, and *negative spaces* until your artwork is unified into a strong abstract composition.

Blossoms in Sunshine and Shadow

Observe how a flower catches the light and shows contrasts of light and shadow. Select a small section of your flower, cropping out much of the overall form so that part of a flower with its brightest light and cast shadows suggests an abstracted composition.

A Rose Is a Rose Is an Abstract Beauty

Enlarged petal shapes make interesting backgrounds for any subject. Blend, blur, and lose some edges while using bolder and sharper edges in the foreground.. Keep working until your floral suggests other forms. Incorporate new imagery into your composition if you wish.

The myriad of geometric and organic shapes, spectrum of colors, cast shadows, and leaf forms found among 10,000 identified species of flowers can jump-start a beautiful series of paintings. Stop and smell the possibilities.



The Powers of Flowers:

In these mixed media paintings, fragments of petals are vaguely recognizable in the background with suggestions of leaves and flowers throughout.

Images courtesy of artist Marilyn Scher.

Marjorie is the author of the Art Studio Secrets series of books, available in paperback and eBook formats. Her website is www.sarnart.com.

Norm's Corner

Victorian Muses IV: Anne Marie Hagen (WHO?)

By Norm Beal

In 1883, while visiting his friend and supporter, Gustave Caillebotte, Pierre Renoir painted the portrait of Mlle Charlotte Berthier, the 'companion' of his host. This is likely the same young lady who began appearing in Caillebotte's works around 1881. Could it have been possible that she was any relation to Napoleon's famous Chief of Staff, Marshall Louis Berthier?

In 1881, Caillebotte and his brother, Martial, purchased a site on the banks of the Seine at Petit Gennevilliers, across from Argenteuil. Around 1888 he moved there permanently. Accompanying him was Mlle Berthier, who remained with him until his death in February 1894, at the age of 45. Prior to that, in 1883, Caillebotte had already bequeathed to her in his will a life annuity of 12,000 francs.

In truth, any connection of Mlle Berthier to the Napoleonic hierarchy is unlikely; she was actually born Anne Marie Hagen, probably from a family of modest means. She was possibly an actress, seventeen or eighteen when she met Caillebotte in 1880 or 1881. She soon began to pose for him, becoming the acknowledged subject in such works as *A Woman at Her Dressing Table*, 1880, *Rising Road* and the remarkable *Nude on a Couch* 1882. With *Couch*, Caillebotte not only challenged the proscriptions against showing female pubic hair and suggestive self-touching, his life-sized painting went beyond even Manet's *Olympia* in its near-clinical analysis of the female form.



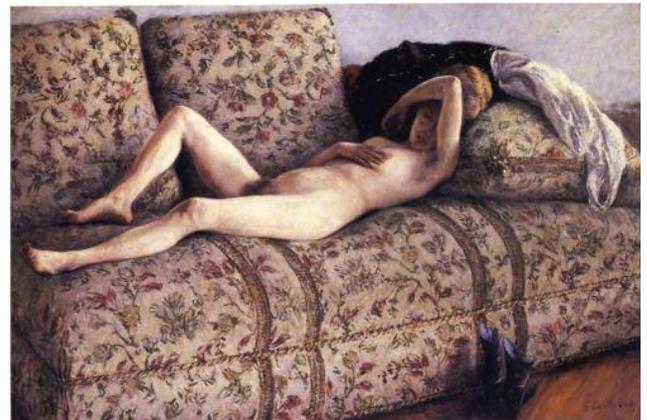
A Woman at Her Dressing Table

By the time of his move to Petit Gennevilliers, the young woman, now Mlle Berthier, had become a major element in the life of the artist. (The census of 1891 lists her as a "dependent in the household at Petit Gennevilliers, Charlotte Berthier, 28 years, friend").



Rising Road

Information regarding the artist's private life is limited and after his move to Petit Gennevilliers, he began to obscure many of the faces in his paintings, thus their identity may only be surmised. He was famously uncomfortable in being a wealthy member of the upper class amid many of his less well-off friends. This probably contributed to his taking a mistress rather than a wife, and evidence suggests that he did not reach the level of misogyny common to the era. In fact, it was his frequent depictions of women in more than their normal secondary roles compared to the male that contributed to various criticisms directed at some of his works.



Nude on a Couch

After Caillebotte's death, Charlotte Berthier was left a small house on the property, clear of all probate taxes, and was still alive in 1910 when Martial Caillebotte died.

Quinton Bemiller Shows us the Alchemy of color

by John Paul Thornton

Photographs courtesy of Veronica Stensby

Our April group meeting was graced by Quinton Bemiller, whose painting demonstrations are unlike any others. Instead of a product or end result which displays technical skill, Quinton fills our minds with an awareness of process, building his paintings before our eyes in a way which puts technical prowess on the side, focusing instead upon the spirit of play, discovery and thoughtfulness about process.



Nothing is taken for granted. As Quinton speaks, he softly discusses the nature of the flat surface, the two-dimensionality of the canvas, the way a large, unchanging blue shape can appear to have depth. He slows the process of painting down...pouring bright colors from containers with

deliberate intention. The fluidity of acrylic paint is explored with relish. "I remember back to when I was a small child...the way I used to mix my ice cream together with my chocolate syrup...it was playtime," but with the same deliberate intentions Quinton Bemiller engages in when he paints.

And, of course, to watch Quinton's surfaces become alive with color is to savor the simple act of transformation which we as artists are addicted to. We love to handle materials. We love to spread paint...to change blank surfaces into something rich and deep. We love to see it done before our eyes.



In the time of the seventeenth century, Alchemists worked in the court of Rudolph II in Prague. Their feverish mission was nothing less than miraculous...to change common metals into gold. They worked

as half-scientists, half-magicians. They were in the business of transformation, just as Quinton Bemiller is. While the Alchemists of Prague never found the answer to their goals, their solutions and experimentation promoted new scientific ways of thinking. They pushed the boundaries of knowledge. They became more involved in the journey than in the destination. Quinton's demonstration embraces that same spirit. He reminds us that the process itself is worthy of our time, and the true "gold" is in the act of doing, playing, searching, mastering the medium while letting go of expectations.

Artists as Alchemists? Painting whose nature comes from the Zen act of letting go? Entertaining these notions is a part of watching and listening to Quinton Bemiller.



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