



The Creative Edge

VALLEY ARTISTS GUILD

Volume I

Issue 2

July 2011

Rick Rotante Brings Sketching Excitement to June Meeting

by Terry Romero Paul and Lisa August

Exuberant and animated artist and art educator Rick Rotante generously shared his philosophy, techniques, and art resources.

He suggested that artists step up to their paintings; if one feels something is worth painting, one should take the time to do it right, and to leave one's hand in the finished work. Artists should interpret—versus copy—what they see, and look to invoke a feeling in their work. He reminded artists that their paintings are their legacy, and that each day should include time devoted to honing their skills.

A representational artist, Rick set up his palate using Danacolor oils in complementary colors plus white and raw umber (no black), linseed oil medium, Damar varnish, and Simmons brushes. A bamboo wand extends his brush to allow for



a looser sketching technique.

The goal in a piece, he suggested, is for the artist to strive to attract a viewer from across the room and to evoke a feeling.

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Calendar

Cutting Edge Exhibit July 8–August 5
Terrell Moore Gallery, Los Angeles

Contrasting Views Exhibit July 9-30
Canoga Park Youth Center, Canoga Park

Art District Exhibit September
Lurie Gallery, Studio City

Board Meeting . . Wednesday, September 14
7 p.m., home of Ken Ronney

General Meeting . . Tuesday, September 20
7 p.m., \$7 members, \$8 guests; Encino
Community Ctr., 4935 Balboa Blvd., Encino

Board Meeting . . . Wednesday, October 12
7 p.m., location TBD

**Encino Terrace Center
Exhibit** November 7–February 3
15821 Ventura Blvd., Encino

General Meeting . . . Tuesday, November 15
7 p.m., \$7 members, \$8 guests; Encino
Community Ctr., 4935 Balboa Blvd., Encino

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President's Message

An Excerpt from My Journal: Art and Haiti

At the end of the narrow muddy road, there stood a modest makeshift tent.

Our team in Haiti had cautiously trudged through a winding, claustrophobic maze of shanties that formed a silver sea of corrugated metal scraps and weathered vinyl tarps. Sixty thousand people lived here in the Pétionville tent city, and a few hundred or so had been able to watch our slow progress past their dwellings, laughing good-naturedly with us when we slipped into the ankle-deep muck and then offering a kind hand to steady us as we proceeded. The stern faces of old women would light up radiantly when we sang "bonjour!" A sunny little bare-foot girl with corn-rowed hair ran ahead of us, directing us past nursing mothers, scrambling over smashed cinder-blocks, and prancing between desperate little dwellings which housed the refugees of Haiti's unforgiving, disastrous earthquake.

Past the noisy boys playing with rusty bottle caps, past the man with one leg, beyond the chickens and the babies and the mango baskets and wandering water-gatherers, we crossed a bridge over a deep sewage trench to arrive at the modest makeshift tent.

"This is it!" called Kathryn Adams, our team leader. "This is where we will be working." Tiny children peered at us from within, through tears in the tarp walls. A lazy white dog snuggled contentedly upon the damp mud floor under four long, wooden benches that would serve to seat our new students.

Open spaces in the tarps let sunlight into the interior, and through these "windows" we could glimpse lush tropical trees and the tent city, rambling up the hillsides around us.

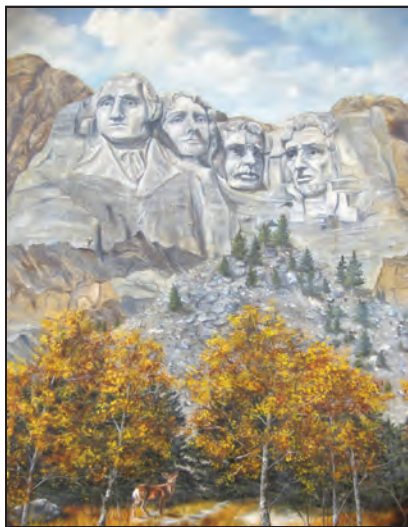
A sacred space for art can happen anywhere. The physical construction is almost irrelevant. The most vital element is the fostering of safety. This humble tent, twenty feet wide and fifteen feet long, would become our sacred space in which visual art, writing, photography, and theater would take place. For a while, this bland makeshift structure, perched beside the latrines on a twenty-five degree downward dirt slope, would become something magical: a safe cultural center for young Haitian girls....



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Members Are... Out and About

Lisa August won second place for her painting of Mount Rushmore at the 2011 Chatsworth Depot Art Show. The annual mid-June event at the Metrolink depot was sponsored by the Chatsworth Fine Arts Council. Thirty local artists from the San Fernando, Simi, and Santa Clarita valleys were featured. The event also included photography, sculpture displays, music, children's art projects, and a people's choice art competition.



Debra Hintz is participating in the Full Bloom exhibition at Red Brick Gallery in Ventura, scheduled to run from July 11 through August 22. The gallery reception is a full-weekend event that coincides with the Ventura ArtWalk on July 23 and 24. Debra will spend some time actually painting in the gallery that weekend. 315 East Main Street, Ventura.

Upcoming VAG Exhibitions

Prospectuses available from the VAG website unless otherwise noted. All dates in calendar 2011 unless otherwise noted.

Art District Exhibition

Prospectus not yet available.

LURIE GALLERY [website](#)

12350 Ventura Boulevard, Studio City 91604 [map](#)

Exhibit Opens September—exact dates TBD

Encino Terrace Center Exhibition

ENCINO TERRACE CENTER [website](#)

15821 Ventura Boulevard, Encino 91436 [map](#)

Prospectus [PDF](#)

Submission Method Photograph

Entry Deadline August 30

Acceptance Notification September 30

Artwork Take-in November 5, 11 a.m.–12 noon

Exhibit Opens November 7; **Gallery Hours** TBD

Artists' Reception TBD

Exhibit Closes February 3, 2012

Artwork Pick-up February 4, 2012, 9:30 a.m.–11 a.m.

Contrasting Views

Seven VAG artists are holding a small group exhibit in Canoga Park. The artists—Norm Beal, Ilsa Dattinger, Bryan Fair, Loel Jurado, Ken Ronney, Dorothy Shepherd, and Sophie Van Der Heiden—each will display five or more pieces. Because each artist has such a distinctive and unique style, the works themselves suggested the exhibit theme, *Contrasting Views*.

The exhibit runs July 9 through 30 at the Canoga Park Youth Art Center, 7722 Remmet Avenue. The opening reception is Saturday, July 9 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.



This exhibit was part of the new VAG professional development project. Group members self-organized under the tutelage of exhibit chair Donna Geist Buch, then went through all exhibit development and planning activities from preparing a proposal to the gallery director to selecting works, preparing advertising, planning show details, and setting up a reception. These tasks are usually carried out by the exhibit committee, but the goal was for group members to learn the full process and all details of putting on an art show. The group's co-coordinators are Ken Ronney and Dorothy Shepherd.

Member Artist Interview

Donna Geist Buch: Involved and Active in Her Art

as told to Barbara E. Jones

Donna Geist Buch is an accomplished, multiple-award-winning, 12-year member of VAG. She has exhibited in local, national, and international shows. Over the past several years, Donna has held several positions on the VAG board and currently serves as exhibit chair. This year, she has been instrumental in executing a vision of creating a diverse selection of exhibits for VAG members to enter. These exhibits are geared toward different target audiences. Donna has spearheaded several committees to execute this vision, and has succeeded in creating multiple exhibit opportunities for VAG members.

Q Donna, tell us about your beginnings. Where did you grow up and when did you come to Los Angeles?

A I grew up in southern Louisiana, received my education there, and came to Los Angeles in the mid 1980s while working as a travel nurse. In the 1990s I met and married my husband, Chuck, and we have two children, our son Errol, and daughter Erica. Our home is in the western San Fernando Valley, where I maintain my art studio.

Q What has your artistic journey been like? Where did it begin and how did you develop as an artist?

A As a young girl I was a self-taught pastel artist and active throughout my youth with local art groups. The wonderful colors of my Louisiana environment, the Mardi Gras, and the seasonal changes of the bayous influenced me. After moving to Los Angeles I was working as a nurse at UCLA and while there, met a fellow nurse who introduced me to Otis Parsons Art Institute in Los Angeles, where I enrolled and took several workshops in pastels and classes from Loraine Veeck. Later, I took advanced painting workshops with Franklyn Liegel, whom I still study with.



Donna Geist Buch gains inspiration from impressionism and cubism. She experiments with color and texture, and continues to study and learn about painting.



Q Who has influenced you and given you inspiration as an artist?

A I love the impressionists—for example, Edgar Degas—who worked primarily in pastels had a big influence on my use of pastels. Famous abstract artists who inspired me were Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque with their early cubism. I was awed by an exhibit of their work at the Guggenheim in New York. I was personally inspired by my mentor and teacher, Franklyn Liegel, who encouraged me to try mixed-media painting. While studying advanced painting with Franklyn, there were several professional artists in the workshops; one in particular who influenced me was Ellen Rose, a former member of Women Painters West. It was in those workshops that I fell in love with mixed media and it has remained my favorite medium and passion in which to express my art.

Q At this stage of your artistic career, how do you view yourself as an artist?

A My work is a conceptual journey and I think of myself as an experimental artist. I use strong colors to show intense emotions,

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Donna Geist Buch, continued from page 4

combined with texture to create an increase in visual and tactile interest. Primarily I work with acrylic mediums and gels, building layer upon layer on my canvas. The quick-drying properties of acrylic paint with the addition of acrylic mediums help me to have better control of viscosity, color saturation, and luster. As an experimental artist, I also fell in love with assemblage, recycling old found objects to create new meanings in 3-D.

Q How do you balance your busy artistic career, family, and service?

A (laughing) Sometimes I wonder, my life is always busy and on the go! Trying to manage young kids, meet their needs, and still find time to paint is challenging. It has always been important to me to be involved and give back to the organizations I belong to; I am an active, not passive member, and encourage others to do the same.

New Exhibiting Member

With the increase in exhibit opportunities, VAG is offering more opportunities for associate members to jury in to exhibiting status. On June 21, new member Leslie Culpepper brought three works for review by the exhibit committee and members of the board of directors. As a result, the committee voted to elevate her status to exhibiting member.



Art and Haiti, continued from page 2

I have wanted to share this bit of my journal with you. It is a description of my first day working in Haiti through a United Nations Foundation-sponsored project in the Pétionville refugee camp. As I re-read it, it served as a reminder to me that art enhances our ability to perceive the poetry in life. I look forward to sharing more and see you all at upcoming art events through the summer and fall.

—John Paul Thornton

Visit VAG on Facebook



Are you on Facebook? If you're not already a member, join in and become part of the VAG Group page. There you will find fellow VAG members who regularly gather to discuss what is happening in the art world. It's a place where you can share your latest artwork in an album, and share your current or upcoming exhibits. Please don't miss this opportunity to keep in touch with your VAG artist friends. On Facebook.com search "Valley Artists Guild" or link direct to: http://www.facebook.com/#!/home.php?sk=group_321990862306

Without art, the crudeness of reality would make the world unbearable.

—George Bernard Shaw

Art Events Calendar

Miracle Mile Art Walk July 16
Wilshire Blvd. and La Brea Ave.

Kurt Schwitters: Color and Collage opens August 3
Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley

Summer Cityscape. . thru August 27
George Billis Gallery, S. La Cienega

Diverted Destruction 4
. thru September 6
The Loft at Liz's, La Brea Ave.

Jennifer Angus: All Creatures Great and Small thru September 11
Craft & Folk Art Museum

Ray Turner: Population
. thru September 11
Long Beach Museum of Art

Radiance and Resilience: Arts of Africa and the Americas
. thru September 11
Fowler Museum, UCLA

Tim Burton thru October 31
LACMA, Resnick Pavilion

Form and Function in the Ancient Americas ongoing
Vincent Price Art Museum, East Los Angeles College

Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A., 1945-1980 October
Citywide and beyond

Living in a Modern Way October 1–March 25
LACMA, Resnick Pavilion



Rick Rotante, continued from page 1

He cautioned artists not to copy what they see but to interpret it, and noted how important it is to edit.

Rick's technique begins by using negative and positive shapes and as many contrasts as possible, such size, color, light and dark, and cool against warm. He starts by laying a wash or tone of sludge on a gessoed and sanded canvas, then begins to loosely brush sketch an outline (no drawing) using a raw umber and odorless paint thinner wash. Working from dark to light, he lays darks down first because he doesn't want to dilute them. Rick suggests painting the general color of something, then going back in to define shape.

"If you set up and start with a bad color, don't worry; just work yourself out of it," he remarked. Other words of wisdom included "I want the paint to speak to you,"

"Don't judge your work," and "Don't blame your tools."

A graduate of Manhattan's School of Industrial Art, Rick is a member of California Art Club and Oil Painters of America. He paints private portrait commissions, has taught pastel at Glendale Community College, and currently teaches painting and color theory at BMAI in Montrose.



Cutting Edge Exhibit Winners Announced

Jurying is complete and the winners of the Cutting Edge exhibition at Terrell Moore Gallery have been announced. First place went to *Live Free or Die* (oil, shown right) by Richard Herd. Second place went to *Tel Aviv* (mixed media) by Shula Singer Arbel and third place went to *Open Pondscape* (acrylic) by Barbara Tabachnick. *Accord* (acrylic) by Cat Van Der Heiden received an honorable mention. More about this VAG exhibit, which opens on July 8, will appear in an upcoming newsletter.



Mini-Show Winners



Congratulations to the winners of the June mini-show. Left to right: Bryan Fair, second place; Trice Tolle, third place; Antonio Pelayo, first place.

VIVA Update

The VIVA location committee is actively on the job of finding a space for its relocation. Things are looking positive and VIVA is now in the negotiating process for a space in Canoga Park. VIVA will follow up with its patrons and founding organization members to keep them in the loop.

Submit to *The Creative Edge*

What's new with you? We need your book and exhibit reviews; art inspirations and resources; and story, technique, and material ideas. Tell us about your recent art awards, publications, and current or upcoming exhibits. Send e-mail or Word files, and high-quality digital photos, to VAG newsletter liaison Cat Van Der Heiden at cvanderheiden@att.net.