



The Creative Edge

VALLEY ARTISTS GUILD

Volume II

Issue 1

January 2012

Now's the Time: Renew Your VAG Membership

It's time to renew your VAG membership. Annual dues are \$45 for exhibiting and associate members. Renewal notices were sent out by mail to all current VAG members in early November. If you haven't sent it in yet, please don't forget.

Please send your check in the addressed return envelope. Never received it? Lost the envelope and notice? Just send your renewal check to Ken Ronney, Membership Chair, 7357 Hesperia Ave, Reseda, CA 91335.

If you'd prefer to pay with your credit card, VAG now accepts renewals through our new PayPal account. It can be accessed on the VAG website's membership section at <http://www.valleyartistsguild.org/membership.html>. The PayPal option is towards the bottom of the page.

Questions? Call Ken at 818-996-1630 or send e-mail to kronney@aol.com.

February Guest Artist

Kathi Flood's Urban Art and Guerilla Narrative

by Karen Robbins

Using etching, fiber, drawing, text, and found ephemera to build assemblage, "wallworks," and installations, Kathi Flood creates art that tells colorful and farcical narratives about life in Los Angeles. Her messages with a sociological basis and expressed through her visual art, but also through writings, spoken words, and arts activism.



Her work takes on the guise of a champion's flag, to "heroicize the sweaty, vulnerable, fumbling, stuttering, impulsive aspects of

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Calendar

Winter Soirée Saturday, January 28
Champagne Brunch, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.,
Odyssey Restaurant, 15600 Odyssey Drive,
Granada Hills 91344

Board Meeting Wednesday, February 8
7 p.m., location TBD

General Meeting Tuesday, February 21
7 p.m., \$7 members, \$8 guests; Encino
Community Ctr., 4935 Balboa Blvd., Encino

Board Meeting Wednesday, March 14
7 p.m., location TBD

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

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*To create one's own world
in any art takes courage.*

—Georgia O'Keeffe

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President's Message

Can Art Heal a Viewer?

An aura of piety and gentleness is implied if we speak of art as a vehicle for cleansing and healing. Can art softly caress those who experience it, like soothing water? Can the act of creating art heal the artist who created it? Can the act of creating art function like a ladder—leading the practicing artist out of depression, like a shining light in the darkness? The romantic notion has been that the healing properties of art could be thought of as a kind of vacation, and a rest from a harsh reality. And while a brief respite or relaxing interlude with art may be conducive to rejuvenation, art carries the reputation of being the chief ingredient in a life-changing process of a most profound magnitude. Yet it may be argued that art does not heal. Rather, the artist who is finally able to focus through art, becomes quieted enough to heal him or herself.

The ability to embrace courage as an artist takes many forms. All forms are meaningful, in that they reflect our true character. After teaching art for over 20 years, I have seen all varieties of students enroll in class. They, like me, bring with them a degree of self-doubt, misconception, trepidation, and emotional baggage. They also display a sincere faith in themselves. In every student I have ever worked with, I have caught a glimpse of real courage. In fact, some of them have exuded it, radiated it, or learned to embody it to a degree that has truly led me to believe that art has the power to be the vehicle by which people may transform into their highest selves.

And, perhaps healing in the classic sense of the word never takes place. I am aware of many remarkable people who are undergoing pain and illness right now. Maybe the healing that I am speaking of is not so much a destination but an ongoing search. Maybe it is a never-to-be-resolved process. If this is so, then the message of art has got to play some sort of symbolic role in this process.... Decide for yourself what that message is.

I wish you all a remarkable and meaningful 2012.

—John Paul Thornton



Members Are... Showing

Lisa August was the featured artist at the Chatsworth Train Depot for the month of December, 2011. Each month a member of the Chatsworth Fine Art Council displays his or her art in the windows of the train station. Lisa also was awarded Best of Show—Honors Division (Karen Bauman Memorial Award) from the Burbank Art Association in November at its 2011 Fall Art Show.



August's *Poppies*.

Donna Geist Buch's artwork *Every Nook and Cranny* (see page 6) has been accepted into the 2012 Juried Open show at the Topanga Canyon Gallery. The show opens January 11 with a reception from 2 to 5 p.m., and runs through January 29. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Saturday from 10 a.m.–3 p.m. and Sunday 11 a.m.–5 p.m. 120 North Topanga Canyon Boulevard, Topanga, 90290.

VAG honorary member and past president **Oren Cooper's** painting *Fisherman's Village* was juried into the 2012 Donor Exhibition at the National Watercolor Society Gallery. The show opens January 14 with a reception from 3 to 6 p.m., and runs through February 5. Gallery hours are Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m.–3 p.m., and first Thursday (February 2) from 6–9 p.m. 915 South Pacific Avenue, San Pedro, 90731.



Cooper's *Fisherman's Village*.

Five of **Fritz Suter's** artworks appear in the 14th Annual All Media Juried Online International Exhibition presented by Upstream People Gallery of Omaha, Nebraska. Four of the pieces received special recognition from the juror/curator Laurence Bradshaw, Professor of Art at the University of Nebraska.

Last Chance to get Your Tickets for the 2012 Winter Champagne Brunch Soirée

Don't miss this exciting opportunity to socialize and network with fellow VAG members! This promises to be a very festive occasion at the beautiful Odyssey Restaurant.

- Delicious Buffet: Over 200 items, unlimited champagne.
- Featured Speaker: John Paul Thornton
- Several Gift Baskets to be raffled off!
- Fun events planned for everyone, bring a finished 4"x4" canvas, wrapped in clear cellophane in order to participate.

Date: January 28, 2012

Time: 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Place: The Odyssey Restaurant & Event Center, 15600 Odyssey Drive, Granada Hills, CA 91344

Tickets: \$40 per person, \$80 for two (includes tax and gratuity)

Pay by check made payable to Valley Artists Guild, mail to VAG Winter Champagne Brunch Soirée, c/o Barbara E. Jones, 7901 Woodlake Avenue, West Hills, CA 91304 OR pay by PayPal on the VAG website at <http://www.valleyartistsguild.org>.

Questions? Contact co-coordinators Barbara E. Jones, bjones2796@aol.com or Ken Ronney, kronney@aol.com.

The ethereal quality of inspiration is the most exciting thing about being an artist.

—Lance Letscher

Rick Rotante Artist's Workshop

by Judith Bloch

On November 13, 2011, many artists improved their skills by participating in a very educational and stimulating workshop led by artist and educator Rick Rotante. His enthusiasm for teaching caught the attention of all who attended.

Rick is a graduate of Manhattan's School of Industrial Art, and a member of the California Art Club and Oil Painters of America. He paints private portrait commissions, has taught pastel at Glendale Community College, and currently teaches oil painting at Studio Sinaloa in Pasadena.

Rick started out the day discussing the principles of art. According to Rick, they are unity, harmony, variety, balance, emphasis, contrast, proportion, and pattern.

Movement/rhythm is the way of giving the feeling of action and guiding the viewer's eye to flow throughout the artwork. "You, the artist, control the movement of what the viewer sees, much like leading the viewer on a path through your painting to the item that you want them to be led to—the focal point."

Emphasis/proportion is the point of attraction in a piece of art. "When a point is emphasized it will stand out among the shapes, lines, and viewing points of the painting or drawing." Rick shared that the Renaissance artists recognized the connection between proportion and the illusion of three-dimensional space.

Harmony is achieved by using similar elements throughout the artwork. "Harmony gives an uncomplicated look to a painting and makes the art flow."

Balance is arranging elements so that one part of the work doesn't overpower any other part. The three different kinds of balance are symmetrical, asymmetrical, and radial. "Symmetrical or formal balance is when both sides of an artwork, if split down the middle, appear to be the same. Asymmetrical balance is the balance that does not weigh equally on both sides. Radial balance is equal in length from the middle."

Contrast is created by using elements that conflict with one another. It can be created by using complementary colors or extremely light and dark values. Contrast is used to make a painting look interesting and often draws the eye to certain areas.

Color is used to move the eye. Rick said to put the same color in different areas of your painting. Color can be used to elicit emotion or strength or sadness. Contrasting colors near or next to each other add vibrancy to your painting. Rick suggested using color sparingly.





Rick discussed ideas to achieve success in our paintings and called these ideas his dos and don'ts. Several of them are: "Don't paint things; paint the idea of things and paint how you feel about the thing. If you don't feel anything, don't paint it. Paint the light, not the object; look for the way the light hits the objects and paint these light patterns. Forget what you know; put aside all preconceived ideas of a given subject. Paint your own work; you can emulate a style or a technique but don't paint what you saw earlier in another painting by someone else. Take as long as it takes; take your time, paintings are not done in two or three hours all the time. Don't paint everything; less is more, to develop your focal point and leave the rest vague."

Rick talked about the idea of the artist being noble. He said we should see ourselves as doing something worth doing. "If it's worth doing, do it well." Rick encouraged us to work every day drawing, painting, or thinking

about art. He said that when you start thinking you start painting better. Discipline involves mastering our materials and painting tools that will bring us satisfaction. And finally Rick said to "Have fun! This is a process, a lifelong process. You have to keep moving forward."

After giving us a half-hour lecture, Rick with his engaging and fast moving pace then gave prepared demonstrations: one on landscape and a second on portraiture. He then did a demonstration of a still life. Rick talked about the three steps in making a painting: layout (general lines with big shapes), lay-in (placing in local color and holding off of detail; "If basic color is wrong everything will be wrong"), and having the JOY OF PAINTING as the last step—adding in the details.

Many thanks to Rick for providing VAG with the opportunity to study with him. We wish him every success in his current show and with his teaching career. Rick also has books he has written that are for sale and more information can be obtained at his website RickRotanteFineArt.com or at RickRotante@aol.com to sign up for his classes.

Page 4, from top: Rick instructs Rita Hamilton (VAG); Joe Marino works on a portrait (continued page 5); Janet Yoo (VAG) and her landscape piece. Page 5, from top: Rick explains light and volume; Joe Marino (continued from page 4); Rick demonstrates to the group; Linda Marshall (VAG) paints a landscape.



Start Creating Now to Enter the Gold Medal Exhibition

Exhibiting members should start preparing their entries now for the VAG 2012 Gold Medal Exhibition. The show will be held in March at the Venice Arts Gallery, located on Lincoln Avenue in Venice. It is open to all media—except video, film, and photography—that follow prospectus guidelines. The juror is watercolor and acrylic painter, curator, and designer Mark Wood.

The 2012 Gold Medal Exhibition prospectus is available for download from the VAG website. Artists are asked to keep in mind that this gallery holds art classes for young children who may see the art during their time in class.



Buch's *Every Nook and Cranny*.

Kathi Flood, continued from page 1

humanity in the face of corporate globalization and its resultant dehumanizing effects,” Flood notes. With an affection for Americana and a penchant for the tongue-in-cheek, she works photography, textiles, antique objects, “gutterwalk findings,” and hand-made bits into tales not so tall about “bad drivers, singles ads, overstimulation, and the qualities it takes to maintain a creative life.” Her aim is to “describe the absurdity of urban life today in a way that encourages everyone to express themselves.” Her stories are humorous, sentimental, and goofy responses to urban life. The resulting art gains both empathetic potential and a rugged complexion from its collection of worn, revised, and reinvented objects and surfaces.



Flood's *Sky Form* (drawing/mixed media).

Her work “ponders whether we can still choose to do things for their own sake in the face of a technological society that has been categorized, quantified, and processed...” according to Nancy Kapitanoff writing in the *Los Angeles Times* Calendar section in 1994. Installations such as *Blotista's Resume* consider identity and character in times of social and personal stress, while *Sky Form* (above) translates a stained and outmoded dress form into a map of the artist's environment.

Flood received her MFA in studio art from CSU and University of Washington. An art educator for three decades, Flood has taught at Cal State Northridge and Taft High School as well as other institutions. She received national board certification, and is the recipient of an Apple award and a Teacher of the Year prize, and is a two-time Music Center BRAVO nominee.

Flood has shown her work in more than 250 exhibits in the U.S. and Europe. She has also curated and produced visual and aural events, created film costumes, created stage sets, released a CD of her spoken-word stories (*Rocky Road Peep Show And Paperhanger's Directory Point-of-Purchase Dreams*) and performed spoken-word and poetry pieces, and written a textbook on creative writing (*Hotwords, A Student's Guide to Writing Truth*) for

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Send Your Ideas to *The Creative Edge*

Do you know a great quote about art or a quote by an artist? We'd love to hear it. Where do you find artistic inspiration? Has a VAG member inspired you? Do you have news? Tell us about it! Can you review an art book or exhibit, or write a how-to article about an art technique, method, or material?

Submit your ideas and articles! The next **deadline is February 8** for the March issue. Send submissions to VAG newsletter liaison Cat van der Heiden at cvanderheiden@att.net. Let her know if you can take on a writing assignment.



Raffle-winner Ofra Dor (left), a guest at the December 2011 VAG meeting, poses with her prize: John Paul Thornton's demonstration painting, a portrait of a young girl in a red hat. Model Nicole is at right.

Kathi Flood, continued from page 6

students. She is currently exhibiting a traditional etching with a twist, *First Marriage*, at the San Luis Obispo Museum of Art's *Traces, Marks & Fragments: Juried Exhibition of Traditional Printmaking* sponsored by Central Coast Printmakers and juried by Sandow Birk (January 20–February 26). She has also exhibited with Women Painters West, Collage Artists of America, and LAMAG. You may remember her work *Stark & Emma* that won second place at the SCORE VII exhibit.



The
Creative Edge

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