



# The Creative Edge

VALLEY ARTISTS GUILD

Volume II

Issue 2

February 2012

## March Guest Artist

# From City to Canyon, Jose De Juan Finds Beauty Everywhere

by Karen Robbins

Devoted plein-air painter Jose De Juan feels that “Beauty is everywhere if you look close enough.” He finds his inspiration in the city and its surroundings, from freeways and dilapidated structures to canyon hillsides and marinas. Whether working in watercolor or oils, he strives for a luminosity in his work inspired by light and weather. De Juan is able to capture remarkable vitality and power in his brushwork, while conveying depth and space to landscapes that many might otherwise overlook. Through juicy impastos, rich color, and moving surfaces, he



*continued page 6*

## Do It Now! 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](mailto:kronney@aol.com).

## Calendar

**Board Meeting** . . . . .Wednesday, February 8  
7 p.m., home of Ken Ronney, exhibiting member jurying

**General Meeting** . . . . .Tuesday, February 21  
7 p.m., \$7 members, \$8 guests; Encino Community Ctr., 4935 Balboa Blvd., Encino  
Guest Artist: Kathi Flood

**Gold Medal Exhibition**  
Opens . . . . .Monday, March 5  
Venice Arts Gallery, 1702 Lincoln Blvd., Venice

**Gold Medal Exhibition**  
Reception . . . . .Saturday, March 10  
5–8 p.m., Venice Arts Gallery, 1702 Lincoln Blvd., Venice

**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  
Guest Artist: Jose De Juan

**Gold Medal Exhibition**  
Closes . . . . .Saturday, March 31

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## President's Message

# Moving On, Moving Forward

It has been an honor to serve as President of the Valley Artists Guild and watch our organization grow, expand, and transform. I have faithfully delivered this President's message in our newsletter since 2004 and have learned so much about the meaning of community, education, art, and most importantly, people. I have watched fellow artists on their journey towards success, self-examination, and expression. I have seen skills sharpen, friendships develop, and comfort-zones shatter. I have said good-bye to a few dear associates and loved ones and seen our member's children grow up to become inspiring and talented young artists in their own right.



As I complete my duty as president of the Valley Artists Guild, a few people have paid me kind compliments; but the truth is, I have been surrounded by a group of amazing supporters who have done all of the hard work. Every Board member I have worked with since 2001 has dedicated so much time and effort into making things better and better. Our artist members have given me so much joy. I have felt blessed to have had the chance to lead an organization that had brought with it so much friendship and passion.

I will still be serving on the board as Vice President and head of Programs. There are wonderful developments coming in our future! The Valley Artists Guild has been in motion since 1949 and it will continue to support artists through exciting exhibitions and opportunities. Let's continue to expand together, and be the creators we are meant to be.

—John Paul Thornton

*You have to go through almost  
excruciating boredom to become  
spontaneous and creative.*

—Lance Letscher

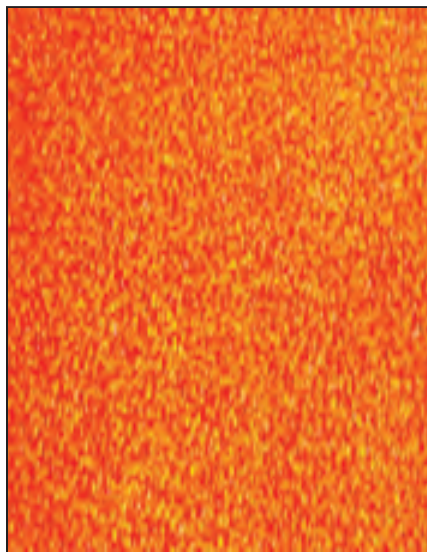
## Members Are... Exhibiting

**Richard Herd** and **Barbara E. Jones** were juried into Collage Artists of America's 2012 winter member exhibit, *heARTworks*. Richard's piece is titled *Nevermore* and Barbara's is *Mummy*. The exhibit runs February 10–March 10, 2012 at Modest Fly Studio Art Gallery, 7578 Foothill Blvd., Tujunga 91042. Juror is noted Chilean mixed-media artist Guillermo Burt. Reception is Friday, February 10, from 6–10 p.m.

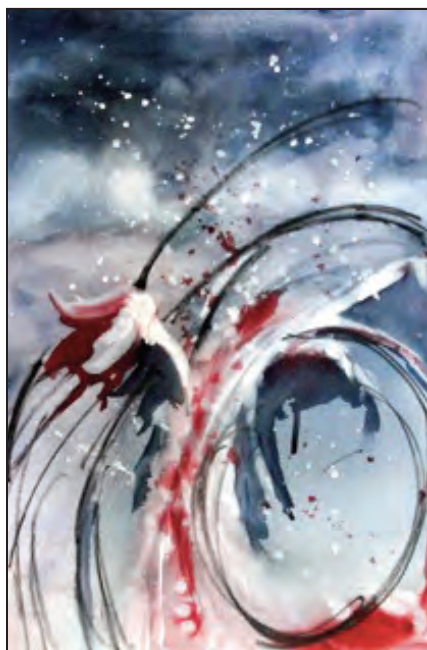
**Joy J. Rotblatt** has two paintings (*Intervals #9* and *Intervals #10*) juried into the RED show at the Women's City Club of Pasadena, curated by Margaret Danielak and the Club. The show runs February 2–April 2, with a reception on Thursday, February 9, 6–9 p.m. Located at 160 North Oakland Avenue, Pasadena 91101 (historic Blinn House).

**Marilyn Stempel's** watercolor, *Flower Nebula* was accepted into the Thousand Oaks Art Association 2012 Open Juried Show, juried by Katherine Chang Liu. The show runs February 2–26, with a reception on February 5, 1–4 p.m. Located at the Thousand Oaks Community Gallery, 2331 Borchard Road, Newbury Park 91320. Marilyn also has a sculpture and painting installation at the Chatsworth Methrolink Station during the month of February.

**Beth Summers** has four pieces in the RED show at the Women's City Club of Pasadena, curated by Margaret Danielak and the Club. The show runs February 2–April 2, with a reception on Thursday,



Rotblatt's *Intervals #9*.



Stempel's *Flower Nebula*.

## The Art of Drawing

By Sergio Enriquez

Hello VAG members and a Happy New Year to you! I wanted to talk a bit about the art of drawing. It seems that more and more artists these days are returning to the basics of good art and have been putting their pencils to good use as well, once again. I began sketching many years ago—when quite young—and have always felt a deep satisfaction for this particular art form. For those who truly wish to become great artists some day, this is the magic road to success. Taking pains to make a few sketches each day will not produce instant results; but in time, if the practice is kept up faithfully, you will be surprised at your progress. Rome was not built in a day, as it is said, nor was any great drawing created without many years of dedicated and persistent effort! Every major artist in history first learned to draw from a master—it was the only way in those days—whether it be Michaelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Rubens, Rembrandt, Ingres, Monet, or Degas. They all had mastered pencil or chalks before taking up paints and brushes.

I recently finished reading *Dear Theo* (the letters of Van Gogh to his brother Theo). In it you will read how passionate Vincent was about drawing. Oh, he suffered much in many ways. But here, in his search for self improvement in drawing at least, it paid off and made him one of our all time greats. This is my New Year's message to all VAG members. Now take up that pencil and draw!

*Draw... draw... draw  
and don't waste time.*

—*Michelangelo*

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*Art Studio Secrets***Developing Your Signature Style***by Marjorie Sarnat*

**M**ost artists wish to develop a distinctive style that sets their work apart from the artwork of others. Like handwriting, every artist's touch with a brush is her own. We each have color and composition preferences, too. As individuals, our visual interpretations and artistic statements are ours alone, as well.

Style is separate from subject matter. Any subject could be painted in any style. However, selecting a specific subject to explore often leads to style as you find your way in depicting it. Some artists consciously apply surface techniques to their paintings. This produces decorative artworks, but the approach is “crafty” and not true style. True style emerges through your observation, interpretation, artistic choices, and handling of materials. It flows out of your sincere effort to create art. Your style will evolve throughout your creative career as you continue to grow and change as an artist.

Here are some ideas that may inspire you.

**ANIMAL SPECIALIST**

If you have an affinity for a particular kind of animal become an expert painter of the species. Study its anatomy, features, colors, textures, and body language. Learn about its natural environment and get to know your critter in depth. Sketch it over and over again. The art world abounds with artists who paint cats, owls, and horses. If you also love them, bring a fresh interpretation to your portrayals. However, it may be more rewarding to select a creature that is not so often the subject of art. Show the world the wonders of turtles, kangaroos, seahorses, armadillos, flamingos, sloe-eyed sloths, and water buffalo. Many people collect particular animal motifs. You may attract a following of others who love your creature, too.

**THAT SOMETHING SPECIAL**

Become an expert painter of the subject matter that speaks to you, however odd or humble. Every-

thing is worthy of an artist's touch. By portraying a subject, you elevate its importance. Your job as an artist is to show others an aspect of something they might never have contemplated before.

Artists have specialized in portraying weird skies, gooey desserts, weathered brick buildings, tulips, letter and numbers, scuffed sneakers, children playing on the beach, sports scenes, ballerinas, unidentified flying objects, locomotives, vintage valentines, soup cans, baskets of fruit, ancient saints, cowboy gear, lizards, windmills, and on and on. I know an artist whose subject is overstuffed chairs. She developed this passion in an art class. Bored with figure painting, she became spellbound instead by the model's impression left on a chair when the model took her break. From that day forward, Donna painted chairs with the eerie impressions of those who last sat in them.

**INTERPRET A PASSION**

If there is a subject you are passionate about, paint it—and paint it your way. Experiment with media, color, and composition, but most of all, emphasize your own natural style. Don't alter your unique way of seeing to fit someone else's notion of how your subject should look. For example, if you see simple bold shapes in things, and you love roses, which are usually depicted softly, your bold way of seeing can bring a jolt of the unexpected to your subject. Boldly painted roses could be your natural expression, your artistic style. Believe in your artistic instincts.

*Excerpted from Marjorie Sarnat's book, 151 Effective and Extraordinary Art Studio Secrets to be published in 2012. Marjorie's current book, 151 Uncommon and Amazing Art Studio Secrets, is available in paperback on amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com. For artists not afraid to drip paint on their ebook readers look for it on the Kindle, NOOK, and iBook stores.*



*An object added for effect instead of affection will always look like an affectation.*

*—Rose Tarlow*

## VAG Elects New Board of Directors



We are pleased to announce the new Board of Directors for the 2012-2014 term.

**President** Teri Starkweather  
**1st Vice President-Exhibits** Marian Fortunati  
**2nd Vice President-Programs** John Paul Thornton  
**3rd Vice President-Membership** Ken Ronney  
**Secretary** Bryan Fair  
**Treasurer** Trice Tolle

VAG needs your help! Please contact any Board member and volunteer to serve on a committee that interests you. We need your talent!

Pictured top row, left to right: Teri Starkweather, President; John Paul Thornton, 2nd Vice President-Programs; Ken Ronney, 3rd Vice President-Membership. Second row: Bryan Fair, Secretary; Trice Tolle, Treasurer; Spike Dolomite. Third row: Past Presidents Marie Odenheimer-Thomas and Donna Rogers. Not pictured: Marian Fortunati, 1st Vice President-Exhibits.

## Gold Medal Exhibition Juror and Show Update

VAG is excited that its 2012 Gold Medal Exhibition will be held at the critically acclaimed, innovative, and beautiful Venice Arts Gallery.

The nonprofit gallery is located at 1702 Lincoln Blvd. in Venice, California. Exhibition dates are March 5–31. Take-in date for the exhibition is March 4th. Artists having trouble getting their artwork to the gallery may call a board member who will assist them in getting their artwork delivered for the take-in.



The esteemed juror for this exciting exhibit is Mark Wood. He was born in San Francisco, raised in Napa Valley, and later moved to Thousand Oaks. He attended junior college in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, and Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, where he obtained his BFA degree in 1977. In 2003 he launched the Fine Artists Factory (FAF)—a sketching and painting studio/gallery in Pasadena—to support fellow artists and to pursue his own fine art career. During FAF's four years, Mark curated over 60 gallery exhibits, hosted more than 20 workshops, and coordinated figure drawing sessions four times a week.

In 2008 Mark helped create Studio 2310, where he works with three other artists. His current medium of choice is acrylic. To learn more about Mark, visit his website at <http://markwoodartwork.blogspot.com>.

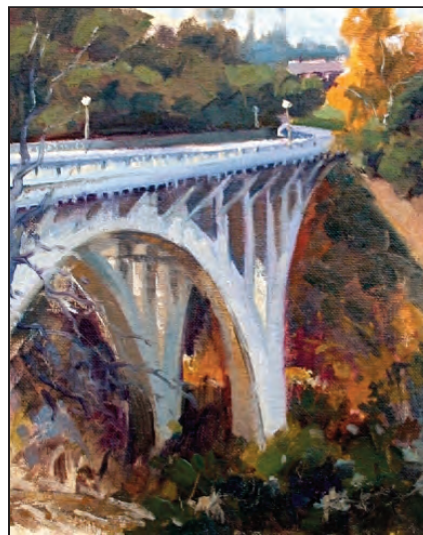
To download a PDF of the Gold Medal Exhibition prospectus, visit the VAG website at <http://www.valleyartistsguild.org>.

*Jose De Juan, continued from page 1*

reminds us that the process of painting is one of building and maintaining a sense of life, as well as light. He has been known to plant his easel somewhere unexpected and look around for any subjects that might have been surprised by a change in the weather or changing light at a given time of day. He strives to show respect for the materials and an honesty of rendition through his representational approach.

A native of Spain, De Juan graduated from the Madrid Art

Academy. He is a veteran of the film industry and has worked in several studios as a computer lighter. But his passion has always been painting. Regardless of medium, his work is all part of his overarching desire to give visual shape to the moment. "I'll admit



pursuing my talents is a battle," he says; it's "...the only struggle really worth my time."

De Juan is a member of the California Art Club, Pasadena Society of Artists, and the National Watercolor Society. He has exhibited widely in the San Gabriel Valley area, and his work is available at Jose Vera Antiques.

*John Paul Thornton also contributed to this story.*

## Winter Member Jurying

Jurying of associate members to exhibiting status will take place at the February 8 Board Meeting. Take-in for jurying is Tuesday, February 7, from 4 to 6 p.m., at the home of Ken Ronney. Pick-up is Thursday, February 9, from 4 to 6 p.m. For more information, contact Ken at 818-996-1630.

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Reach over 150 VAG member artists, and their colleagues, friends, and associates, by promoting your creative products and services here! It's easy and inexpensive. Contact Trice Tolle at 818-345-1671 or [tricetolle@aol.com](mailto:tricetolle@aol.com).

## 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 March 8** for the April issue. Send submissions to VAG newsletter liaison Cat van der Heiden at [cvanderheiden@att.net](mailto:cvanderheiden@att.net). Let her know if you can take on a writing assignment.

*If you want to live your life in a creative way, as an artist, you have to not look back too much. You have to be willing to take whatever you've done and whoever you were and throw them away.*

—Steve Jobs

*Members, continued from page 3*

February 9, 6–9 p.m. Located at 160 North Oakland Avenue, Pasadena 91101 (historic Blinn House).

**Fritz Suter's** work has been selected for the 87th Annual Juried Exhibition of Pasadena Society of Artists. The show runs February 3–23 at Creative Art Center Gallery, 1100 West Clark Avenue, Burbank 91506 (south end of George Izay Park). Artists' reception is Friday, February 3, 7–9 p.m. Gallery hours are Monday–Thursday 9 a.m.–8 p.m., Friday 9 a.m.–7 p.m., and Saturday 9 a.m.–1 p.m.



Summers' *Wildflower Walk*.

**VAG**  
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*The*  
**Creative Edge**

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