



The Creative Edge

VALLEY ARTISTS GUILD

Volume I

Issue 1

June 2011

Peter Kraus on Design and Composition

by Veronica Stensby

What is design? According to guest artist Peter Kraus, a lot of design is about asking the right questions. Looking at the work of members who brought pieces to the May general meeting for critique, he shared thought-provoking suggestions and insights into each artwork.

Kraus observed that a painting is an arrangement, like preparing a dinner. The eye-flow influences the viewer. Since psychology became a science, we study how people see things: that's perception. The discussion flowed to symbols in art, as represented by the buttons in one member's piece. "Add a symbol and allow the viewer to find it," Kraus said. "Each piece needs a primary and secondary emphasis to make it intriguing. You communicate with the viewer in three different areas: intellect, soul, and eye."

On composition, Kraus offered this advice: "Test the compositional structure—the diagonals, verticals, and horizontals.

"Form and color are stepping stones for your eyes," he continued. "Does it feel balanced—shape, color, value, intensity? Does it make more "food" for the eye?" He also suggested that artists know their intent in a picture. All pieces should have significance. And titles can limit the possibilities for the viewer.

An animated speaker, Kraus is passionate about art and teaching. He suggested "what if ...?" questions for all artists and their work. To create better art, ask how your work can become more intriguing—with symbols, layers of meaning, and good design of shapes and values. And be careful with those triangulations near the edges of the frame. (For more, see *Critique* on page 3.)



Calendar

Board Meeting Wednesday, June 8
7 p.m., home of Marie Thomas

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

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

Small Group Exhibit July 16-30
Canoga Park Youth Center, Canoga Park

Art District Exhibit September
Lurie Gallery, Studio City

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

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

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

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President's Message:

More exhibitions in new venues! A new look and format for our newsletter!

What does the phrase “creative edge” mean to you? Having access to new resources? Forming a new way of thinking about yourself as artists? Experiencing breakthroughs in your approach to making art? The Valley Artists Guild is fine-tuning our energy into delivering this “creative edge” to our members, starting with the programming everyone has asked for: more exhibitions in new venues. Take advantage of our new upcoming exhibitions, in completely new venues and galleries, with new potential for sales and recognition.

Our Cutting Edge exhibition will be held in the vibrant downtown L.A. arts district at the gorgeous Terrell Moore Gallery. In the Fall, we will be exhibiting on Ventura Boulevard in the Studio City arts district at the elegant Lurie Gallery. Beginning in November, we will have exhibition opportunities at the Encino Terrace Center. More exhibitions are in the works, and they will provide new ways for you to play an active role in presenting your artwork to new audiences.

Our newsletter, *The Creative Edge*, will make it easier for you to tap into the activities. Our yearly schedule of demonstrators will be easy to access, specific show requirements will be clearly defined, new articles and features will enhance your knowledge of the art world, and an ongoing interview series will highlight our members and our accomplishments.

It is not too late to play an active role in our programming. Give us a quick call or shoot us an e-mail. Getting on the inside is one of the key steps you can take to expand and develop that creative edge in yourself.

—John Paul Thornton

*Art is never finished,
only abandoned.*

—Leonardo da Vinci

Members Are... Exhibiting

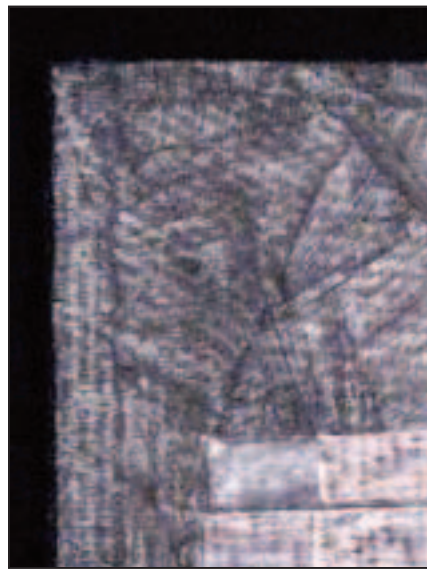
Shula Singer Arbel's painting *Somewhere* won an honorable mention at the Elements: Art of the Earth, Wind, Fire and Sea exhibition. The regional juried show, sponsored by the Arts Council of the Conejo Valley, was held at the Thousand Oaks Community Art Gallery in May.



Lisa August has won Best of Show in the Best of Burbank category at the Burbank Art Association's Past, Present, and Future spring exhibit. Her winning oil painting, *Before Supermarkets—Harry's Produce*, depicts her father in the 1940s with his produce truck. The exhibit showcasing 70 works, held in conjunction with the Best of Burbank centennial celebration, was juried by award-winning Pasadena artist, designer, and instructor Mark Smollin. The exhibit is at Geo Gallery, 1545 Victory Boulevard in Glendale, through June 25.

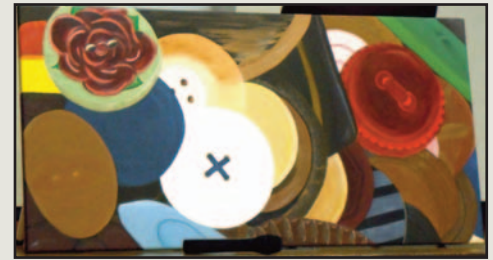


Joy J. Rotblatt's mixed-media work *The Fallen #2* will appear in The End of an Empire anti-war art exhibit as part of the summer Down Street Art season in North Adams, MA. The show features art that deals with military actions the U.S. has undertaken since the close of the Cold War. Joy's piece features the names of service men and women who have lost their lives in the Iraq war, and symbolic shapes. The exhibit, juried by Richard Rand of the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, will be at the Grass Gallery, 107 Main Street in North Adams, from June 23 through August 21.



Critique

Peter Kraus' presentation included critique of members' artwork. His comments offered ideas on elements of design. Among the several works submitted for critique, a few drew interesting commentary on: symbols, use of complimentary colors, and

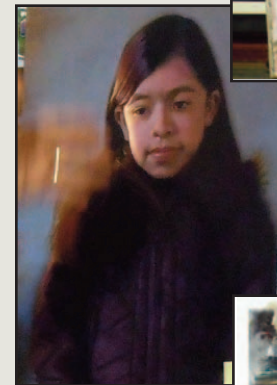


visual flow (top, Linda Marshall). Use of vertical and diagonal elements in a painting. Using an expressionistic style, lovely soft palette, and intriguing subject matter (middle right, Iva Milson).

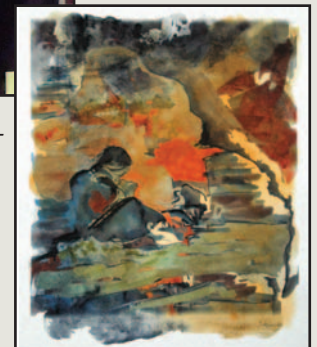
Working with values and edges. Sense of balance in a painting. Making use of side lighting; how clothing can tell



a story about a figure (middle left, Scott Kiche). And a general sense of intrigue



(bottom, Veronica Stensby). Thanks to all who brought in their work.



Members, continued from page 3

Dorothy Shepherd's painting *Tiger, Tiger...* won the Dean's Choice Award at the 24th International Exhibition on Animals in Art held in March and April at Louisiana State University (LSU) School of Veterinary Medicine's library in Baton Rouge, LA. The piece was selected as one of 74 artworks from over 500 international entries. Dorothy's watercolor-on-rice-paper painting was the first purchased by Dean Peter F. Haynes, D.V.M., as part of a permanent collection and exhibit at the school. Diane Mason, president of the Society of Animal Artists, juried the exhibition.



Beth Summer presented her work at a solo show entitled *Mediterranean Moments*, held in Marseille, France, on May 19-20. The show featured paintings created onboard the *Star Flier*, a clipper ship sailing between Italy and France. Beth's paintings showcased landmarks and coastal scenes from Rome, St. Tropez, Corsica, and other Rivieran and Etruscan locales, including this view of the *Bonafacio Citadel* on Corsica. She received seven commissions from this event.



It's Your Newsletter: Submit to The Creative Edge

Your newsletter needs you! We want your reviews of creative books, exhibits, or other events; art inspirations and resources; or story, technique, and material ideas. Tell us about your recent art awards, publications, and current or upcoming exhibits.

When submitting materials, please

- submit electronic files only. Text 100 words or less may be in an e-mail; more than 100 words in a Word or text file.
- use digital photos that are in-focus, high-resolution (150 dpi or higher), in .psd, png, or .jpg or format. Include artwork name or event details, and names of all persons pictured (left-to-right).

Send ideas, articles, and materials to the VAG newsletter liaison, Cat Van Der Heiden, at cvanderheiden@att.net.

Eight Members Elevated to Exhibiting Status

At the April semi-annual jurying session, seven associate members were elevated to exhibiting members by the VAG board of directors. An eighth member was elevated in May. New exhibiting members are David Aswad, Toby Salkin, Barbara Schade, Barbara Schwartz, Diana Stewart, Cat Van Der Heiden, Sophie Van Der Heiden, and Ruben Yadao.

Art Events Calendar

Polemically Small thru June 25
Torrance Art Museum

Tim Burton thru October 31
LACMA, Resnick Pavilion

City and Society thru July 30
Artspace Warehouse, Beverly Blvd.

Summer Cityscape . . . opens July 9
George Billis Gallery, S. La Cienega

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

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

Transcultural Pilgrim:
José Bedia . . . opens September 18
Fowler Museum, UCLA

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

Professional Development

What It Takes to Organize a Small Group Exhibit

by Ken Ronney, Exhibit Co-Coordinator

Valley Artists Guild, as a group, serves many purposes. One is to promote each member's professionalism as an artist.

Our experienced members know that professionalism is much more than making high-quality paintings, sculptures, etc. It includes, among other things, the ability to communicate with art galleries, prepare show proposals, and know how to effectively set up and follow through with all details of a show. Shows are where the artist has an opportunity to sell his or her works. And the bottom line, for many, is selling something.

To give more members the opportunity to learn how to do each of these various activities, the Exhibition Committee, headed by Exhibit Chair Donna Geist Buch, made a major change from the past. In prior years the committee had curated a small group show, held each summer at the Canoga Park Youth Art Center (CPYAC). This year, VAG members were given the opportunity to submit a packet of their own individual group for a show. My group has the honor of being selected as the small group to exhibit at the CPYAC. Here is the story of how we were selected, and our experience of putting together a submission packet and an exhibition.

This year, members who wished to participate in that show had to organize a group and prepare a competitive art show proposal to present to the director of the CPYAC. The winning group would then prepare all details of the show, to include coordination with the Center, show theme, advertising, budget, hanging

layout, labels, handouts, and a reception. The goal is for this to be a learning process for all members of the group.

As one of my small group's coordinators, I will explain the process as it unfolds. Since the show has not yet taken place, we are still working on many details. This is the first installment of a two-part article.

Donna Geist Buch started things out by sending a letter to all VAG members letting them know what was going to happen. The letter included a list of responsibilities of each small group, pretty much as identified above.

After a few fits and starts at the outset, the group organized itself. Dorothy Shepherd and I agreed to be group coordinators. Other members of the group are Norm Beal, Bryan Fair, Loel Jurado, Ilsa Dattinger, and Sophie Van Der Heiden.

As soon as we could, we had a kick-off meeting with all members of the group. Each member brought photos of the five or six works they hoped to display. A few members brought more photos and the group helped winnow

the choices. We discussed as much about the proposal and show as we could, and settled on a plan and format for the proposal. Since we had a short time frame in which to submit our proposal, we went into action immediately.

From the variety of styles and media presented at the kick-off meeting, finding a theme was a bit problematic. Norm's paintings were women in fantasy scenes. Ilsa's were large-format flowers with broken-glass back-



Example of tag sheet with captions; art by Dorothy Shepherd.

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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.

*Color and shapes make a more definite statement than words.
I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn't say any
other way, things I had no words for.*

—Georgia O'Keeffe

Upcoming VAG Exhibitions

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

Cutting Edge Exhibition

TERRELL MOORE GALLERY [website](#)

1221 South Hope Street, Los Angeles 90015 [map](#)

Prospectus [PDF](#)

Juror Terrell Moore

Submission Method photograph

Entry Deadline June 24

Acceptance Notification June 29

Artwork Take-in July 6, 10 a.m.–12 noon

Exhibit Opens July 8; **Gallery Hours** TBD

Artists' Reception July 14, 6 p.m.–9 p.m.

Exhibit Closes August 5

Artwork Pick-up August 6, 10 a.m.–12 noon

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.

Organizing, continued from page 5

grounds. Brian brought nearly-life-size portraits, heads only. Sophie's works were imaginative fantasy scenes. Dorothy's paintings were animals and outdoor scenes on rice paper. Loel's works were large pixel-style geometric works. My pieces were stone and metal sculptures.

We finally decided on a theme: *Contrasting Views*.

Due to the large total number of pieces we would be displaying—something over 35—we decided to format our proposal to present one 8½-by-11-inch photo of each artist's work, and also include a second 8½-by-11 tag sheet with five other photos by the same artist, shown in smaller sizes. Each photo had to have a caption that included the artist's name, work title, work size, and medium.

To make sure the proposal document appeared coherent and not a hodge-podge of photos somehow stuck together, I used Photoshop Elements to do the cropping and editing. But since I was still learning this rather complicated software package, not everything went quite as smoothly as I would have hoped. Probably the biggest single glitch I ran into was with the captions on the full-size photos. It was easy to caption the ones in portrait format, but I absolutely could not get the caption to print properly on the ones in landscape format. I finally worked out a solution by preparing the captions in Word, then overprinting the caption onto the blank space at the bottom of the landscape photos. The final result looked perfect, but getting there was a real challenge.

The illustration shows an example of a tag sheet. I'll let your imagination do the work for a single photo 8½-by-11 landscape with a caption at the bottom (since I can't do it in the electronic version yet).

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Mini Winners



Guest lecturer Peter Kraus gave excellent analysis and suggestions for the participating artists. He selected three for special recognition in the May Mini-Show. First place: John Paul Thornton; second place: Veronica Stensby; third place: Anthony Pelayo.

Organizing, continued from page 7

To complete the proposal, we included a cover letter addressed to the gallery director, a table of contents, the photos arranged alphabetically by artist, and a sheet of artists' statements. All went into a clamp-edge binder with a clear cover.

We submitted the document to Donna Geist Buch the day before the deadline, and she forwarded it to the gallery director.

I'll go into the details of putting the show together in the July newsletter.



The
Creative Edge

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