

Journal of the Portrait Society of America

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THE ART OF THE PORTRAIT®



director's letter



FROM THE DESK OF CHRISTINE EGNOSKI

Each year the Portrait Society sends out an annual appeal that assists us with specific programs or projects. Last year, you generously helped us fund the replacement of our aging roof. I'm pleased to report, we raised enough to replace the leaking roof, and all is high and dry at the Portrait Society headquarters!

For the current appeal, we are focusing on adding a new program that has been on my wish list for the past year: **A Podcast channel** that will be launched in 2023. Costs to make this a reality include recording equipment, software, production costs, editing, uploading, music, artwork, and a podcast hosting account.

Funding the arts and staying relevant is challenging and requires a constant vigilance to make sure we are on the forefront of our discipline and on solid financial ground. **This is where your support makes a difference.** The Portrait Society now hosts over 30 educational programs and publications, a multi-page website, and we have 100,000 followers on social media. All these efforts have kept portraiture in the forefront of fine art, but we always want to be looking forward and broaden our reach. I believe a podcast will do both, reach a new audience and support our continued mission of furthering fine art portraiture and figurative work.

In addition, the Portrait Society is based on three principles: to educate, inspire, and connect artists from all over the world. A podcast fits perfectly into this rubric, and donations can be made online through our website: www.portraitsociety.org/donate or call our office toll-free at 877-772-4321.

As our way of saying thank you, **your name will be listed** (if you approve) on our podcast channel site as one of our **founding funders**.

Won't you join with others and support this worthy effort?

Cheers to a New Year filled with artistic endeavors,

Christine Egnoski
Executive Director

table of contents

- 3 **New Works:** Thomas Caleb Goggans, Mardie Rees, Richard C. Nelson, and Jeff Hein
- 4 **Cecilia Beaux Forum:** Sally Ryan by Janelle Hatherly
- 6 **Self Portrait Competition Winner:** Sarah Lacy by Christine Egnoski
- 8 **Instructional:** The Art of Growing-Part Two by Charles Miano
- 11 **State Ambassador Report:** Kerry Vosler
- 11 **The Sargent Circle** by Christine Egnoski
- 12 **Mary Qian: An Open Diary in Paint** by Krystle Stricklin
- 17 **Materials and Techniques:** Achieving Dynamic Color with Pastel by Susan Lyon
- 20 **Portrait Society Member News**
- 22 **New and Renewing Members:** September, October, November
- 24 **2023 The Art of the Portrait conference**

Cover:

Mary Qian, Sarah, 40x30", oil

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Staff & Newsletter Contributors

Kim Azzarito, Assistant Director
Amanda Oliver, Membership Director
Allison Gilliard, Special Programs and Outreach
Kerry Vosler, Writer, State Ambassador Coordinator

Mailing address:

Portrait Society of America
P.O. Box 11272
Tallahassee, FL 32302

Shipping address:

1109 S. Magnolia Ave.
Tallahassee, FL 32301
Toll free Telephone: 1-877-772-4321
Fax: 850-222-7890
Web: www.portraitsociety.org

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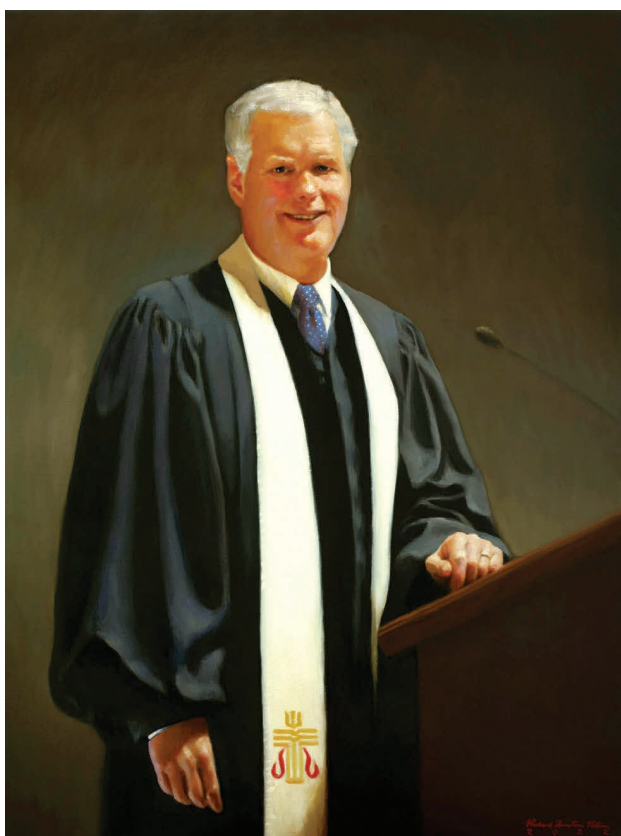
Design

Charity Myers | THE CREATIVE POOL DESIGN
charity@thecreativepooldesign.com

new work from members



Mardie Rees, *Saint Anne, Saint Anne Hospital*, Bronze, 15"x9.5"x7.5", Maquette for life-size



Richard Christian Nelson, *Reverend Steve Hancock*, 40x30", Oil



Thomas Caleb Goggans, *Jeff*, 30x24", Oil on linen



Jeff Hein, *Sarah George, former Director of the Utah Museum of Natural History*, 32x24", Oil on panel

SALLY RYAN: BALANCE LIFE AND ART

By Janelle Hatherly

I first came across Sally Ryan when I joined the Portrait Society of America and saw she was a fellow Australian and Australia's only female member to have achieved Signature Status. I admire Sally's work and her technical mastery. We arranged to meet at her newly-established Hamley Studio.

Like so many artists, Sally can't remember a time when she wasn't drawing or involved in some kind of art. When she left school, Sally trained as a graphic designer but became a primary school teacher instead.

Then, as is typical for so many women, life got in the way. Marriage, creating a home and raising children left

her with little free time for her own creative interests. In her forties, Sally experienced two major life-changing events: her father became ill and her teenage son Ben suffered a life-threatening brain aneurysm. Aneurysms can be hereditary and soon after Ben, Sally underwent brain surgery as a preventative measure.

Five weeks out of hospital and looking for some part-time art experience, Sally walked into Julian Ashton Art School (JAAS), the oldest continuous art school in Australia. She wasn't sure what they offered but found tutors who, like her, cared about traditional realism.

Here, Sally would forget about everything and focus intensely on drawing accurately from life. Her eyes light up as she recalls her favourite tutors – hard task masters with kind hearts, generosity of spirit and wealth of experience.

This classical approach struck a chord with Sally, and she knew she'd be back for more. She attended whatever classes she could manage around a busy home life and health constraints, slowly developing her skills in both drawing and oil painting.

She set herself a new goal: pulling together a portfolio for a JAAS scholarship. To her delight she won one which gave her a full year of study in 2010. Thus began her full-time commitment to figurative art. Sally went on to teach at the school.

Sally isn't drawn to landscapes though she sometimes puts them in her paintings. She's interested in people and what makes them tick. Still lifes, interiors and everyday scenes also appeal because of the human connection. Through design and light, Sally wants her paintings to give viewers an intimate glimpse into people's lives.

Sally has been a finalist in nearly every major Australian art competition. Her first success was while still a student at JAAS. Her portrait of Yaw, a Ghanaian man, was selected for the Portia Geach Memorial Award, a women's only national art portrait prize.

The painting Sally thinks launched her career as a portrait artist is the one of Dr. Catherine Hamlin (obstetrician and gynaecologist) which was selected as a finalist for the 2013 Archibald Prize, Australia's oldest and most prestigious portrait prize.

In her typical self-effacing manner, Sally assumes she was selected because of who she painted. However, two weeks after this painting was hung on public display, Sally received her first unsolicited portrait commission.



She adds: "One advantage of being a realist painter is that if people are going to commission a portrait, they generally want a recognisable likeness."

Sally is now regularly called upon for private and public commissions and her paintings of prominent public figures hang in universities, schools, government, and religious buildings.

During Covid, Sally completed her magnum opus – a huge multi-figured Biblical painting to celebrate the year of St. Joseph (2021) for Sydney's St. Mary's Cathedral. "The canvas was two metres high, and I couldn't reach the top!" says petite Sally. Having painted the Archbishop of Sydney a few years before, Sally was then asked to create this historical painting for a contemporary audience. As the only female artist to hang inside this magnificent public building, this a significant milestone for Sally and for female artists in general.

When I asked Sally what her favourite paintings were, she answered: "Probably the portraits of my children. I particularly like the one I did of Ben which won the People's Choice in the Archibald Salon des Refuses in 2018. It was from the first time Ben came into the studio for some serious painting, and for four months we painted each other."

When Ben said he wanted to make his living as an artist, Sally started hiring regular life models, and they slowly set up Hamley Studio. They now paint and teach together, helping students of all abilities develop skills by painting over and over again from life.

Sally believes drawing is everything and that skills increase enormously just by repetition and confidence. "Learn to draw – it is essential. A painting is just drawing with a brush. Also, slow and sustained attention to concepts such as proportion, shape, value and colour all help to achieve form and ultimately likeness in a portrait."

In this unusual mother and son relationship, Sally and Ben are evolving individually as artists and together as teachers. They discuss at length what and how they are going to team teach. They do exactly what they ask students to do, stopping occasionally to demonstrate and teach specifics. Like other ateliers, rather than art schools, they draw on their own competencies to train students to master realistic drawing and painting skills. Like any skill, this requires focused practice and step-by-step learning with each individual moving at their own pace.

Sally is genuinely passionate about helping others on their own creative journey. She gets excited when female artists come to the studio, especially young ones. She says women are very good at putting themselves down and criticising their own work. She shares her journey to build up their confidence and assertive decision-making skills.

For Sally every painting has its challenges, and when she reaches the end, she wants to start again. Inevitably over time, as her mark-making changes and her sophistication grows, there are paintings she wants to improve – especially compositionally. She thinks there will never be a point where she's happy with her skill level and feels she will run out of years before reaching her full potential.

Why does she keep going? "I paint because it's what I want to do. It's a pull rather than an obsession. It's compelling and completely fascinates me. If I have a choice between painting or something else – I paint."

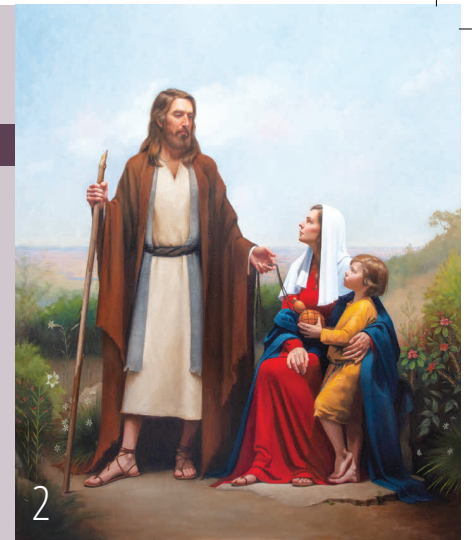
And as a result of this interview, I've now joined Sally and Ben's Wednesday class.

1. *Yaw*, 167cm x 106 cm, oil on linen (2010)

2. *Return of the Holy Family from Egypt*, 200x170cm, oil on linen (2022)

3. *Portrait of the Artist's Son Ben Ryan*, 170x110 cm, oil on linen (2018)

4. *Dr. Catherine Hamlin AC*, 105x78 cm, oil on linen (2013)



SARAH LACY: UNBREAKABLE

Christine Egnoski

Thank you to everyone who participated by either entering or voting during the 2022 Self Portrait Fundraiser, *A View of Self!* Two years ago, we challenged artists around the world to paint, draw, or sculpt their self-portrait, and we kept this challenge going last summer. Artists uploaded their entries to a public site, and then juror **Mary Whyte** selected the top 50 entries. The winner was decided by people's choice via online voting from those top 50 self-portraits. Meant to be a fundraiser as well as an art sharing project, the project received world-wide participation and raised more than \$12,000 in support of the ongoing educational programs and publications of the Portrait Society. It was inspirational to see the variety and depth of work being created. The top three winners, **Sarah Lacy** (1st Place), **Dayán Batista-Angarica** (2nd Place) and **Steven Clevenger** (3rd Place) were announced and interviewed live on Facebook on September 13, 2022, by me. The following is a recent interview I did with 1st Place winner, Sarah Lacy.

Egnoski: Can you tell us about how you came to be an artist?

Lacy: Growing up I always loved to draw. The underside of my parents' kitchen table can attest to that! But I didn't grow up wanting to be an artist - I wanted to be everything from a brain surgeon to a ballerina to a paleontologist to a therapist. Right before my 13th birthday, I got sick, and instead of getting better, I stayed sick. Eventually I was diagnosed with acute chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia, and I spent most of the next six years in bed. When I turned 18, everyone else was going off to university, and I wouldn't finish high school for another 2 years. I knew university was off the table. I had to start thinking about how to make a different kind of life. Throughout those 6 years, I'd turned to art more and more as a way to cope because art was something that I could do from bed. When I was about 16, I found a copy of Sister Wendy's *1000 Masterpieces of Western Art* at the library. I devoured it, and when I reached the page on Diego Velasquez, something about his work just floored me. I thought to myself, "If I can achieve even a quarter of what this man has achieved in this one painting by the time I die, I will die happy." I think that's the first moment when being a professional artist felt possible. Shortly after, I discovered Frida Kahlo and her story, which obviously felt very relatable to my teenage self, and that sealed the deal - I was going to be an artist. I had a path forward.

I was self-taught at first and started to sell my work in my hometown. I learned how to manage my symptoms in my early 20s, so I can lead a fairly normal life as long as I'm careful. I knew I wanted to learn the skills of the Old Masters but wasn't sure where to get started. Around 2010, another artist sent me some painting and drawing advice that they'd received from an artist called Timothy Stotz. I looked him up and found Studio Escalier, the school he runs with Nicole Michelle Tully in

France. I saw their website and thought, "This is it. This is what I've been looking for."

I studied there from 2011-2013, and it was deeply transformative. Their teaching really informed the artist that I am today, both from a technical skills perspective



Maria Ignota, 16x20", oil on board

but also in terms of being encouraged to develop a sensitivity towards the human in front of you. I was taught to respect and appreciate the specificity of who they are.

As I developed as an artist, my childhood dreams became a part of the unique perspective I bring to my work. My classical ballet training feeds my love of grace and movement. My interest in therapy became a devotion to deeply understanding my subjects. My love of bones & medicine transformed into a love of anatomy and knowing how the human body is put together.

Even though as a teenager it felt like I was losing all of my dreams, it's beautiful to be able to look at the life I've built now and see how I brought those dreams with me.

Egnoski: Storytelling seems to be important to you. When approaching a portrait, how do you incorporate that into your composition?

Lacy: I'm always thinking about storytelling in both tangible and intangible ways when I'm developing a portrait.

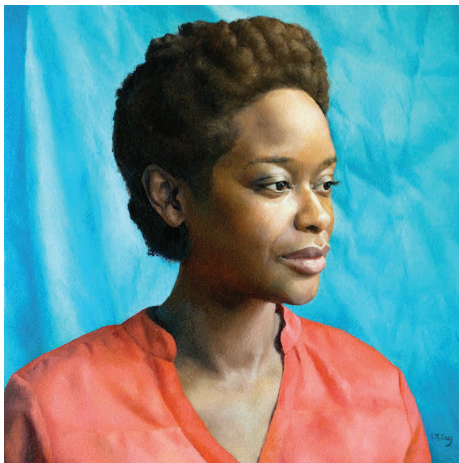
On the tangible side, I'm thinking about clothing, accessories, the background, and any objects that are around them. Even the colour harmonies we choose are important - some people are bolder, others more reserved. The



Portrait of Danielle, 18x24", oil on linen

pose tells a story as well; how someone moves through the world is telling.

I'm working on a military portrait right now, and we're really playing with storytelling with the background elements. The sitter is in the Air Force but spent a lot of time at sea, so we've divided the background equally between the sea and sky to hint at that. In the distance, you can see the ship he was typically posted to. He flew Sea King helicopters for most of his career, and they remind him of pelicans, so we've actually got a little symbolic pelican sitting on some rocks. It's a story that's personal to him.



Unlabelled (Doreen), 18x18", oil on Arches oil primed paper

But the intangibles of a portrait tell a story as well, and it's one I'm

even more interested in: this is the invisible story of our lives that gets written on our skin, muscles, and bones. It's the way we smile, the way we hold the muscles of our face when we aren't thinking about it, the fine lines and creases, the subtle expressions at the corners of the eyes and mouth. These things tell a non-linear narrative

about who that person is in the world: how they've responded to life's challenges, how they've loved, how they've grieved. It's this subtle storytelling that I think matters most in a good portrait.

Egnoski: I love the quote you wrote: "I believe that portraits can be transformative, liberating, healing." Can you elaborate on that?

Lacy: I've seen how powerful it can be to see yourself through somebody else's eyes - to see your power and grace, strength and dignity reflected back to you. I've had clients cry when they see their finished portrait and models I've hired gasp with delight to see themselves. We often get so bogged down in our daily lives that we stop seeing ourselves clearly. I paint all of my portraits out of a love of humanity, with kindness, and with compassion. It doesn't mean I'm not honest, but I don't think honesty means only seeing the negative in people. I think honesty means *really* seeing someone: seeing their whole character, quirks and all, which is what makes them interesting and richly layered individuals.

Egnoski: Are there any specific series, commissions, or projects you are currently working on?

Lacy: The most significant series I'm working on at the moment is a series of self-portraits; my winning painting for the View of Self was one of those pieces. The series is called "Adamantine" which means "unbreakable," and it's my way of transforming some of my life's challenging experiences into something that others can relate to and connect with.

Egnoski: If you could give an emerging artists advice, what would that be?

Lacy: This is a great question! I have so much to say, so I will try to limit myself.

Give yourself time to follow your own voice. For some people, that happens quickly and for others, it takes time. Let yourself unfold at your own pace. Don't worry about keeping up with trends or making art that gatekeepers tell you is the "right way" to make art - if you value your own creative independence, you will find others who value it as well.

Don't be seduced by the glamour of social media; social media fame isn't what it's cracked up to be, and you can often build a much more sustainable career by developing relationships with collectors and fans in ways that involve very little social media.

Finally, if you want to make art your main income source, get comfortable with your numbers and learn a little about the business side of art - even a little bit of knowledge about this will give you the power to make better decisions and make sure that your career is sustainable and supports you. You get to advocate for yourself. Just because you want to be an artist does not mean that you have to starve.

THE ART OF GROWING - PART TWO

Charles Miano

"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand." ~ Confucius

In the previous article, I explained a philosophy of practice that has guided my teaching over the last 20 years. I am an advocate of one of the oldest forms of learning: apprenticeship training. Beginning in ancient times, this system of one-on-one, in-person instruction has created some of the greatest master artists who ever lived.

Apprenticing provides students an opportunity of what we now call experiential learning. With an experienced professional as a mentor, they absorb firsthand what it is like to be a practicing artist. This is not unlike skilled laborers learning a trade in a variety of fields.

What is experiential learning? Experiential learning is the process of learning by doing. When students are engaged in hands-on experiences and reflection, they are better able to connect the theories and knowledge learned in the studio to real-world practice. Experiential learning occurs when carefully chosen experiences are supported by reflection, critical analysis and synthesis. Students participating in experiential art education by training in a working atelier, gain a better understanding of all aspects of what being an artist means: a broader view of the art world, an appreciation of community and invaluable insight into their own skills, interests, passions, and values. In addition, they are building opportunities to collaborate with other artists and organizations. Finally, and most profoundly, artists build positive professional practices and masterful skill sets.

The primary goal of the Miano Academy experiential apprenticeship is the acquisition of skills to be better able to liberate one's creative dreams. We advocate taking artists out of a classroom and involving them in a working studio. In our approach, we set achievable, appropriate, and measurable outcomes and, in so doing, our artists are achieving the most rapid progress. Maintaining constant practice toward a well-formed outcome is what helps artists continuously grow throughout the years.

What is a well-formed outcome? A well-formed outcome is an outcome one wishes to achieve, which meets certain conditions designed to avoid unintended consequences and resistance to achieving it. It is more than a vague wish or goal. It is an objective that is integrated with all aspects of one's intentions. For instance, if we have the intention of becoming more accurate at capturing shapes, values, and edges in our artwork, then we need to form an appropriately outlined

course of action that will get us to that outcome. This is the philosophy behind the program at the Academy, and the apprenticeship uses 3 key strategies to achieve successful outcomes: practice, method, and guidance. Theory, by itself, can lead one in the correct direction. However, one can read many books and gain theoretical knowledge about drawing or watch a hundred tutorial videos and painting demonstrations, and ultimately never improve. Art requires not only a set of guiding principles, knowledge, and philosophy, but also the ability to "see" as an artist, together with a facility with tools. Developing fine motor skills, or eye-hand coordination, plays a role. Missing from the adage, "Practice makes perfect," is that one must practice the correct things. Practice alone, without theory, is a winding path to nowhere. Knowing this, one can move forward incrementally with the combination of both theory and practice. However, in art, without guidance under the tutelage of a trained eye, one is destined to veer off the path, lose sight of the ultimate goal, and waste a lot of time. A mentor's role is to prevent the student from distraction and improve the speed at which he or she can learn by coaching, setting a real-world example and preventing wasted time on unfruitful experiments.

So, what are some specific methods we can practice that give us the fastest achievable results? First, as outlined in the last article, our goal is to learn from nature and capture its magnificent light. Our system of study aims to break down every aspect of that goal into two distinct categories of study: direct practice and indirect craftsmanship. Or, in other words, short-term exercises in combination with long-term projects which complement one another.

Direct Method: Practice Exercises

Rare in many academies is the direct method, which is an important part of an artist's development. It teaches one to be confident, bold and expressive as well as builds eye-hand coordination and improved accuracy of proportion using only the eye.

We do hundreds of specifically designed drawing and painting exercises weekly from life, which help students learn to master the universal principles of line, shape, articulation, structure, proportion, gesture, anatomy, value, edge, and form. We concentrate on these one by one so artists can slowly and thoroughly build their confidence and improve their coordination. Quick sketch drawing and painting exercises develop the artists'



A more direct method with anatomical study can enhance one's ability to capture the gesture, life and energy of a pose.

1. Charles Miano, Achilles, 21x27", sanguine on paper

2. Charles Miano, Reaching Man, 24x30", charcoal on paper

3. Charles Miano, Allegro, 21x30", charcoal on paper

ability to express themselves without inhibition and capture the life and energy of poses from the model.

Indirect Method: Crafting a Project

Building an artwork from start to finish is an important skill which improves craftsmanship and the ability to push our finish to fantastic levels of competence. Measuring techniques such as comparative or sight-size may be employed to capture accuracy even if your eyes are not fully developed. The goal of these projects is to capture mastery of several elements including design, visual order, light effects, color, modeling, surface quality and finish.

The projects include master copy, cast drawing and painting, and still life, portrait and figure paintings. Through these projects, artists find a new understanding of art and what makes it good. The great masters of the past had the ability to balance the expressive nature of human consciousness with accuracy and craftsmanship. Our curriculum is based on this balance of logic and expression, of intelligence and emotion, to form a holistic embodiment of what human beings are capable of—spontaneity and naturalness combined with structure and craft. This could be considered the middle way, a twofold path or, indeed, the Tao of painting.

instructional

At the academy, we teach the language rather than the art itself because we feel that students who enter the academy are already creative individuals when they come in the door. It's who they are; they just need the grammar and tools to bring out their inborn nature and to best be able to express their dreams with competence. Sometimes, along the way, they discover new avenues and aspirations.

By engaging in this hyper-focused, twofold approach, apprentices of the academy are finding their internal resources aligning with powerful long-lasting effects. We find that some personalities gravitate toward a more expressive style, while others gravitate toward a more finished result, however both are learned, and one complements the other. Many are building confidence, exploring their deepest passions and finding out a lot about themselves in this transformative process.

Finally, a coaching framework provides encouragement to remain consistent and simple guidance to get students to the destination of mastering the fundamentals in the fastest way possible. Mentoring eliminates wasting time, jumping around from style to style and neglecting the more important fundamentals. I know what you're thinking: this sounds like a lot of work. However, once you start, you don't see it as work, and that is the beauty of passion and finding your purpose. Time is going to pass whether you commit yourself to study or not. Isn't it better to spend that time doing what you love and increasing your joy and confidence by stimulating self-betterment?

An atelier-style training can bring incredible outcomes: fine work, encouragement, help and lasting friendships along the way. The family-like community often has a profound effect on the work produced there. Advanced apprentices are encouraged to help the newcomers. Artists enjoy a nurturing and upbuilding environment from which to launch their artistic endeavors and live a lifestyle of creative passion.

There are hundreds of turning points in a person's life. One such turning point might be when we decide to align our dreams with specific actions. Art is like life in that way, and at Miano Academy, you will learn specific processes and strategies for lasting results. The possibilities are not overstated. As Leonardo da Vinci said, "Learning is the only thing the mind never exhausts, never fears, and never regrets."

Charles Miano (b. 1977) is a fine art painter and an advocate for the atelier movement. As an educator and anatomist, he teaches art students of all levels who are interested in improving their work through traditional principles. His distinguished Atelier Apprenticeship program provides a proven method for artists to elevate their craft to a professional standard. He is the Founder and Director of the ARC Approved™ Miano Academy of Art located in Sarasota-Bradenton, Florida, a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of classical methods.



Apprentice Fargol Hasani working on her painting of the Giuliano de Medici mask.

Projects such as cast drawings can lead apprentices to a better understanding of the fundamental language of representational art.



ARC Salon Finalist and Apprentice Li Volk working on her still life painting, "Undefended Peace."



ARC Scholarship recipient Ashlyn Monroe working on her cast drawing of Voltaire's Hand.



Apprentices working from the model on a portrait drawing project.

state ambassador

As we transition to another New Year, it remains clear that our ambassadors are filling a vital role in the wellbeing of our membership. We welcome our newest ambassadors, **Linda Smith** and **Ray Freeman**, for the state of Nevada. Here are a few great successes from 2022.

Crystal Despain (CO), **Shari Lyon** and **Rachel Christensen** (UT) joined forces and planned a PSoA Art Show at a gallery which sold several of their works. It was so well received they are going to take it to a semiannual or annual show.

Denice Belcher, **Cathy Kline** and **Anne Molasky** (MO/KS) hosted a PSoA Holiday Art Show in the Kline Gallery in Parkville, Missouri. They plan on having several museum tours this year for their members.

Nanci France-Vaz (NJ) continues to impress us with her series of interviews with masterful artists, most recently with Jon DeMartin and Natalie Featherston regarding their studies with Michael Aviano, famed teacher of the Reilly Method. In November, Marvin Mattelson spoke about his studies with John Frederick Murray. These personal interviews are insightful and historical in their content.

Jennifer Wharton and **Laura Schuler** (SC) planned a PSoA member art show at the University of South Carolina Beaufort called "Portraits and More." The opening night had a historic attendance of over 125 guests and visitors.

Scott Jones (WA) is planning a paint-in with members at a location to be announced in 2023. He provided a very interesting talk for our ambassadors at our last Zoom meeting and will be doing a talk on "The Business of Art" in May at the Cole Gallery in Edmonds, both in person and via Zoom live.

A Face-Off is in the works for 2023! **Carol Fairlie** (TX/NM) is planning a Labor Day Face-Off and En Plein Air weekend in Alpine, TX. Artists Felice House, Dan Sorenson, Richard Curtin, and Matt Greenwalt are just a few who will be participating.

Donna Catotti, **Nancy Angelini Crawford** (AK) and **Janis Casco Blayer** (HI) are planning a show for Alaska and Hawaii members in 2023. The Maui Arts League will host master figurative artist, Mian Situ, March 27-30, 2023.

Janelle Hatherly (Australia/New Zealand) continues to gather members for regular Zoom meetings and reports that Covid restrictions are finally lifted. I enjoyed being a guest at their last gathering and



Kerry Vosler talking with the Australia/New Zealand Ambassador Janelle Hatherly and other Portrait Society members Down Under during their Zoom meeting.

meeting everyone down under. Watch for Janelle's 7th Down Under newsletter featuring member news.

Kathleen Ericson and **Robert Scudder** (MI) span two different parts of their large state. Their outreach continues as Kathleen will do a guest lecture at the local community college to talk about art and business and what to do after college.

The strength of a community of artists is boundless. When our ambassadors plan even the smallest gathering, it is nurturing to artists and ideas take hold for future events. Have you contemplated an idea for an event in your community? Consider reaching out to your state ambassador and sharing your thoughts. You can find the full list at www.portraitsociety.org/state-ambassadors.

Kerry Vosler
National Coordinator

INTRODUCING THE SARGENT CIRCLE

The Portrait Society was founded in February 1998, and for the last 24 and half years, we have grown to be the premiere non-profit organization focused solely on fine art portraiture and figurative art. However, funding the arts can be a challenging endeavor. This year we are unveiling The Sargent Circle, a funding arm of The Portrait Society. Building on the philanthropy of generous individuals over the past almost quarter of a century, members of The Sargent Circle play an important role in helping to sustain the Portrait Society into the future with the same ambition of the founders.

Members of The Sargent Circle make an initial donation and an annual sustaining gift. There are three levels: Silver, Gold, and Platinum. Initial donations start at \$5,000 with a sustaining gift of \$500 annually.

This group of supporters share an interest in art education and help preserve the legacy of The Portrait Society for generations to come. If you are interested in the program and want to hear more about the benefits, please call Christine Egnoski at 850-878-9996.

One of America's greatest portrait and figure painters was John Singer Sargent, pictured here in his Paris studio, ca. 1883-4. His commitment to exceptional quality and education was undimmed in his lifetime and inspired the name of our new funding arm, The Sargent Circle.



feature

MARY QIAN: AN OPEN DIARY IN PAINT

Krystle Stricklin



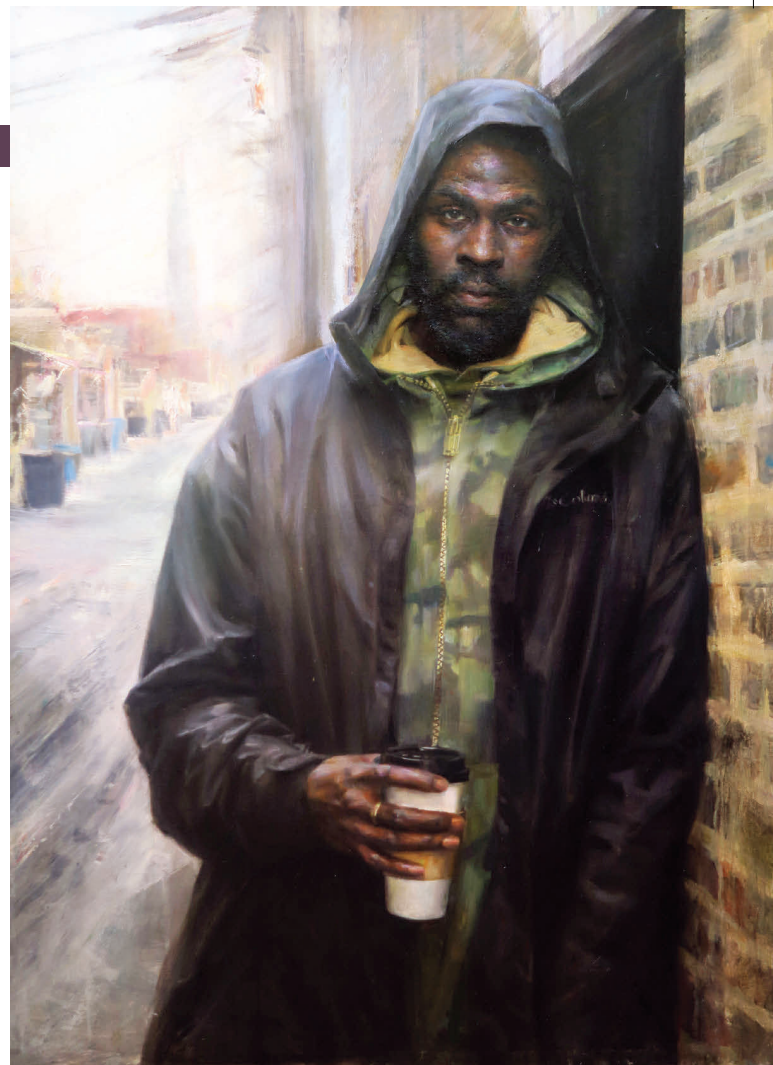
White, 32x19", oil

Artist Mary Qian has often said that her work is like “an open diary; it records your life and the life around you.” Through her paintings and portraits, Qian has created a poignant visual record – or diary – of the places and people who have inspired her throughout her decades long career as a figurative artist.

Born in China and originally from Shanghai, Qian currently lives and works in Chicago. She earned her B.F.A. in Fine Arts and Illustration from Brigham Young University in 1998. From an early age, Qian’s studies focused on the sciences as both of her parents are scientists. Yet, even from her earliest years, Qian also felt a passion for the traditional art form of Chinese calligraphy. After high school graduation, she planned to focus on science in college. However, her parents listened to her desire to study art, and her mother recalled a good friend in the US who worked at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Qian applied and was granted permission to come to the US to study for six months. She ended up staying in Utah for five years, earning degrees in both representational painting and computer animation. Out of college, Qian found a career in digital art and began a job working for a division of Warner Brothers specializing in video games.

After moving to Chicago in 2002, she turned her attention to painting and began studying at the renowned Palette & Chisel Academy of Fine Art, winning second place in their 2004 Gold Medal Show and first place a year later. Finding a supportive and stimulating community there, Qian now maintains a studio nearby and serves on the club’s board of directors. “In Chicago, I discovered the historic Palette & Chisel where I became addicted to drawing and painting live models,” she said. “Those early experiences were instrumental in my decision to become a figurative painter.” Qian gradually developed her own distinctive style of figurative work, which is characterized by a dynamic combination of realism and impressionism. Her work can be viewed as a synthesis of two great artistic influences – the masters of European figurative painting and the elegant traditions of Chinese calligraphy and watercolor.

“My father is a chemist, but his real passion is painting,” said Qian. “Under his influence, I fell in love with art as a child. My interest in human faces has evolved into a love of western art and the great masters who practiced it.” Like so many artists before her, Qian was deeply inspired by painters such as Rembrandt, Johannes Vermeer, Ilya Repin, Antonio Mancini and many others. “They gave me the inspiration and desire to create portraits,” she recalled. “They were all extremely



Chicago, 40x30", oil



Blue, 16x12", oil

feature

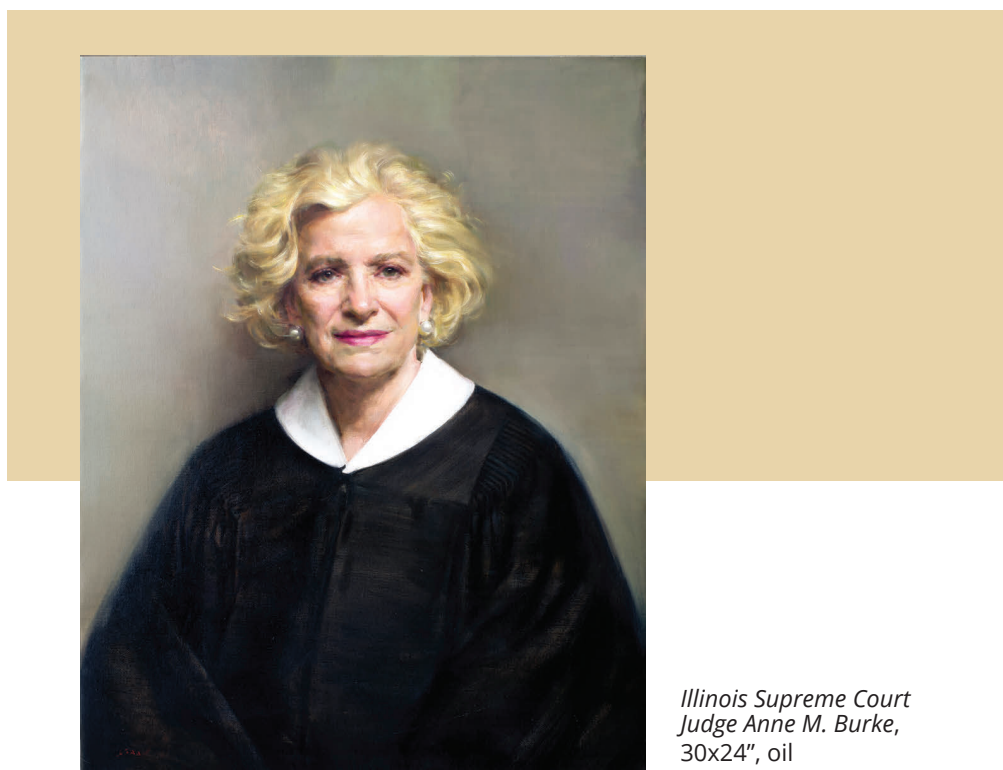
humanistic, and you can feel their unspoken connection to the subject - a bridge from past to present." As for modern artists, Qian named Richard Schmid, David Leffel, and Steven Assael as particular inspirations for her.

Her work reflects a lifetime of studying the human figure and learning how to express the individualities of the human spirit in paint. "For me, it's about capturing the human spirit, not just addressing the technical side of painting. My best paintings happen when the model is taking a break or even taking a nap." In her work, *Blue Kimono*, Qian depicts a youthful woman dressed in a vibrant blue kimono and holding a small teacup in her lap. The woman is poised seated and gazing outward with an uplifted chin in a confident and determined stare. "I hope those who view my work can feel a subtle connection with me," said Qian. "I want the viewer to see the subject through me, to feel that they are observing a real human being, a person with the characteristics and strengths that come with being alive."

She explained further, "There's a certain human dignity that we all possess regardless of stature. I hope to express this by reaching an inner connection where the sitter and my interpretive sense connect. Thus, as an artist and model we both emanate from the painting." Over the years, Qian has completed a number of commissioned portraits of distinguished sitters, including Anne M. Burke, an associate justice of the Illinois Supreme Court and Professor Wendy Doniger, a Mircea Eliade Distinguished Service Professor Emerita of the History of Religions at the University of Chicago Divinity School. In her portrait of Professor Doniger, Qian portrayed the woman sitting at a desk with one of her beloved dogs in her lap. The bright colors of her shawl and jewelry are echoed in the various paintings hanging in the office space behind her.



Admiral Grace Hopper, 50x40", oil



Illinois Supreme Court Judge Anne M. Burke, 30x24", oil

In another portrait, Qian captures the strength and resolve of Admiral Grace Hopper (1906-1992), an American computer scientist, mathematician, and US Navy rear admiral. Hopper received a master's degree and a Ph.D. in mathematics from Yale University and is best known for her trailblazing contributions to the development of computer languages. Hopper co-developed the COBOL, one of the earliest standardized computer languages. Qian depicts the admiral standing assertively in front of a table with one hand on her hip and the other atop a stack of folders. She is shown wearing her Navy uniform with breast insignia and gold stars on the sleeve indicating her rank. In the background, Qian included a chalkboard with sprawling calculations and the letters 'COBOL' which reference her contribution to the field of computer science.

On finding the right balance between teaching, painting, and family life, Qian said, "My main concern is staying connected with the humanity of my subjects. I need to spend a certain amount of time working from life to feel alive." One way she finds inspiration is by monitoring open studio painting sessions at Palette & Chisel. "It is always fascinating to see the various



Blue Kimono, 19x13", oil

interpretations of the model from different artists," Qian said. "Painting used to be my only hobby. Now, it is my profession. I do try hard to stay in contact with my family, especially my parents who are in Shanghai. The pandemic made it both more challenging and more important."

As a teacher, Qian is often asked advice from students who are just embarking on a career in the arts. "To me, choosing a career in arts must come from passion," Qian shared. "Whether you call it dedication or obsession, hours and hours of work at the easel should never be felt as work. Mastering the technical aspect of the

process is the first step and then you must balance priorities. Are you going to stay more on the commercial side or land more on the creative interpretive side? Or mix the two? Persistence is the key."

Mary's work is included in the permanent collections of several prominent institutions as well as numerous private collections across the United States. She has been the recipient of a number of awards, including the Oil Painters of America National Silver Medal, American Impressionist Society's 18th Annual National Juried Exhibition, Second Place, and she has been a finalist in the Portrait Society's Annual International Portrait Competition. This May, Qian will be a faculty artist at The Art of the Portrait Conference in Washington D.C.



Professor Wendy Doniger, 40x30", oil

ACHIEVING DYNAMIC COLOR WITH PASTEL

Susan Lyon

This coming May 11, 2023, I will be teaching a one-day Pre-Conference workshop for the Portrait Society of America's annual conference in Reston, VA. The class is called "Dynamic Color with Pastel," and I thought it would be fun to give you a preview of the technique I'll be teaching.

As a portrait artist, the number-one focus is usually a perfect likeness and exact flesh tone colors. We painstakingly soften our brush strokes and edges to achieve as realistic a portrait as possible. For years, this has been my primary focus. Recently, I've felt unsatisfied with my usual way of working and have spent some time experimenting with a different direction in my art. Maybe some of you can relate to this feeling.

I have done pastels before, but usually use sepia-colored pastels and let the paper show through for the lights. I'd rub and rub and rub the pastel into the paper with a paper towel or blending stump to create a soft ghost-like tonal effect. This is a one-layer technique, similar to a traditional charcoal drawing. It's very controlled, time-consuming, and methodical.

Suddenly, I felt the need to break out of my routine. To see my strokes! To feel energized by vibrant and surprising colors! To be more spontaneous and take risks!

Practicing with small portraits—and completing them quickly in one session—allowed me to experiment. Some came out better than expected, and some were lessons about what doesn't work. I kept telling myself to leave strokes alone without blending so I could see definite color changes without greying the colors by smoothing them out. Forcing yourself out of your comfort zone is difficult, but only by allowing yourself to fail can you eventually succeed.



A Touch of Pink and Green, 14x11", pastel

materials & techniques

I knew I had to work with different papers than I was used to, so I tried a multitude of sanded pastel brands. Clairefontaine PastelMat, Canson Mi-Teintes Touch, and Sennelier Pastel Card are a few I experimented with.

I think it's easier starting with hard pastels and leaving the soft pastels for the last touches, since it's difficult to make sharp lines with the hard pastels over the soft pastels but easy to apply the soft over the hard. My favorite way to start is with Pastel Pencils (I think most of them are equally good, but I mainly use the brand Conte à Paris).

After starting out with the pastel pencils, I progress to the hard-pastel sticks like the ones that Holbein or Nupastel make. You can also buy hard-pastel sticks from Conte à Paris—I love these because the pencils and the sticks are the exact same colors.

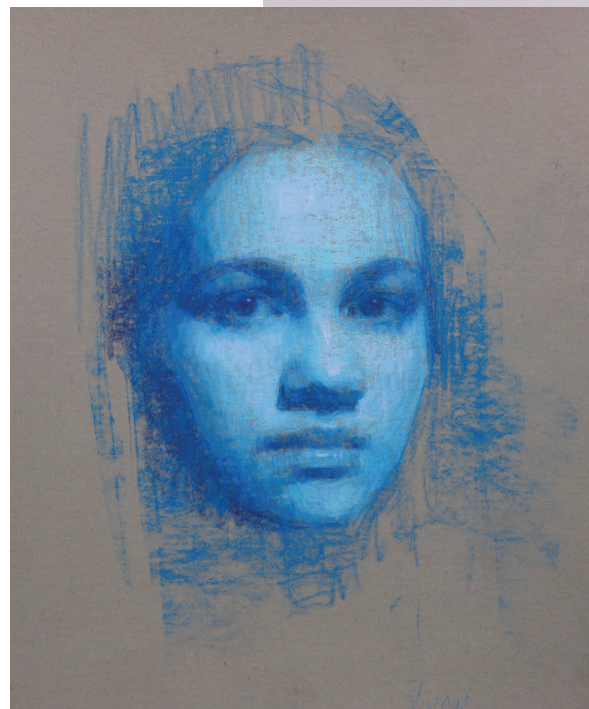
It's tempting to use the luscious soft pastels from Pastels Girault, Unison, or Terry Ludwig too soon. I love them for top layers, but you might want to hold back on using these until you have your drawing and values correct, because they apply such a heavy layer they're difficult to work on top of.

You can do an excellent work of art with the harder pastels alone. In school, our teacher Mr. Parks would have us choose no more than 8 pastels, and I still feel comfortable using a limited set when I work now. This forces you to learn how to mix colors on the paper for a more impressionistic feel—like placing strokes of pure blue and pure red side-by-side to allow the viewer's eyes to visually perceive purple even when there isn't a spot of purple on your drawing. This is the magic of impressionistic color!

I used sanded papers as a surface because it forbade rubbing with my fingers or stumps as I have done for years. This was exciting! I had to use actual strokes, instead of blending everything together. This also allowed some of the paper's color to peek through for additional depth. I wanted that impressionistic effect, letting the viewer's eyes blend the colors. I created transitions by placing colors right next to each other—or gently on top—but never completely hiding what was underneath. This requires a gentle touch when applying the strokes to keep from becoming too opaque.



Festival Pink, 12x9", pastel



I Come in Peace, 12x9", pastel

My first attempts were small 6" x 8" or 8" x 10" portraits with one color on top of a complimentary-colored paper. Then I tried a warm and cool version of the paper. Then I chose the craziest color I could imagine for the face, something that would be shocking for me to attempt. I was learning what these colors make me feel. This would be too scary for me to tackle in oil with all that temptation to blend the colors together. Pastel is perfect for this manner of experimentation.

The latest thing is using black paper, which is nothing I have ever done before! Why was that? Where did I get the judgement that working on black paper was bad? You might laugh at this, but the first time I put down a high-key color on all that stygian blackness to show the light of the face, I felt nervous jitters. After a few portraits on black, I am obsessed now, wanting to go bolder with my color choices and challenge myself to see how direct I can apply the pastel.

I normally block in the shadows first on a portrait and choose lighting that creates strong shadows. I am having to un-train my mind, and it's opening doors in my imagination.

If this article does anything, I hope it sparks a desire to try something that is totally opposite to what you feel comfortable doing. Follow your goosebumps and see what surprising revelations you'll have!

I hope you come and join me for my pastel pre-conference workshop at the Portrait Society's annual conference on May 11. I will demonstrate a pastel portrait from a reference in the morning and will also give a slideshow of different ways to use pastel. In the afternoon, you will work from the same reference I used in the morning. I think this will be an easier way to try my approach, since we will all be working from the exact same reference photos I will supply.

Let's play with color and not be afraid to experiment! We can all bravely fail together, so we can eventually succeed in our own unique and unexpected ways!

Susan Lyon, inspired by the work of Georgia O'Keeffe, enrolled in the American Academy of Art in Chicago to study painting. She first exhibited work with the historic Palette and Chisel group and at the age of twenty-three, she became the youngest winner of their Gold Medal. Working primarily in the mediums of oil and charcoal, her focus of her work is to represent common still life objects in challenging and original ways. Currently residing in North Carolina with fellow artist and husband, Scott Burdick, Susan Lyon seeks to create art that engages the viewer and "makes them smile".



Let the Moon In, 14x11", pastel

Charlotte Arnold's pastel drawing *Sleeping Beauty* was accepted into the American Artists Professional League's 54th Annual Exhibition at the Salmagundi Club in New York this past November.

Lindsay Carroll's painting *Wildflower* won second place in the annual Best of the Blue Ridge juried exhibition held by the Ashe County Arts Council in West Jefferson, NC.

1. Nanci France-Vaz won 2nd Place in Southwest Art Magazine's Artistic Excellence 2022 Competition for her painting *Ode to a Flower Child*, 34x24", oil.

2. Tracy Frein's artwork entitled *Being Eleven* was awarded the 2022 Cippy Award and Best in Show at the 30th Annual Colored Pencil Society of America's International Exhibition at Dunedin Gallery in Dunedin, FL.

3. Maria Bennett Hock was featured in George Mason University's *Horizon* magazine. The article highlighted her 45 portraits in 45 days featuring essential staff at Duke University Hospital.

4. Stephen Mangum's "Bending the Arc" exhibition at The Annex Gallery in Cincinnati opened last November as a presentation of the eleven-painting "Illusions of My Childhood" social justice project three years in the making.

5. Dean Mitchell was awarded the First Place, Guy Beattie Award, in the Florida Watercolor Society 51st Annual Exhibition for his painting, *Uptown Houses*.

6. Sivananda Nyayapathi's painting *Reflection*, 36x36", oil on linen, won First Place in the Georgia National Fair Fine Arts competition.

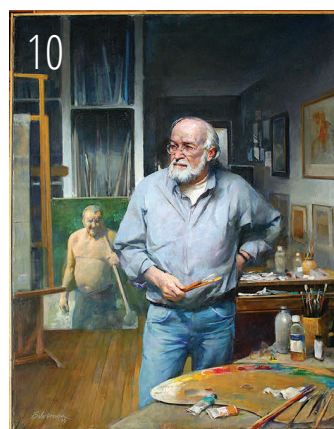
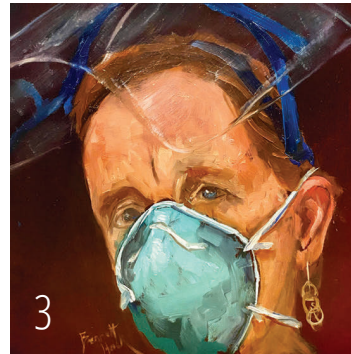
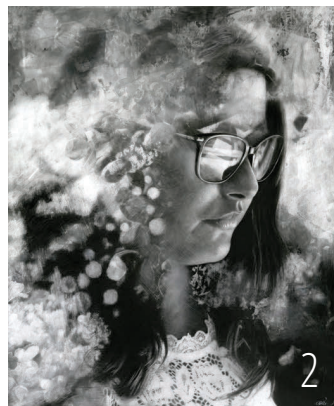
7. Carol Peebles was awarded First Place in the National Exhibition for the Great Lakes Pastel Society 2022 with this piece, *They/Them, She/Her, He/Him* - embellished demos from life for BlueEaselClub.com.

8. Susan Perrish is honored to receive the American Art Collector Award of Excellence for her painting *Delilah* in the International Guild of Realism (IGOR) 2022 Fall Salon Online Exhibition.

9. Andrea Schneider had two portraits that were juried into the Catherine Lorillard Wolf Art Club exhibit at the Gallery of the Lyme Art Association in Connecticut. Pictured: *Portrait of Sheila*

Judy Schubert was commissioned by the Strawberry Banke Museum to paint Captain and Mrs. Keyron Walsh, circa 1802, for the permanent collection. The portraits will hang in the parlor of the historic home "Walsh House", which will reopen Spring 2023.

10. Burton Silverman's self-portrait entitled *In My Place* has been reproduced in the December 2022 issue of *Fine Art Connoisseur* magazine, in its feature called "Classic Moment."



exhibitions

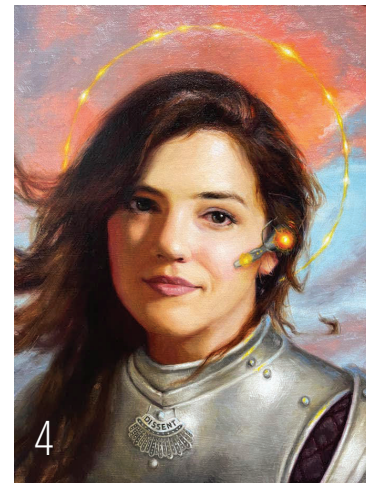
1. Michele Amatrula is part of Arcadia Contemporary's comprehensive group show, Winter Group Exhibition, January 1 through February 25, 2023, featuring the gallery's entire artist roster. You can learn more about the exhibit at arcadiacontemporary.com. Pictured: *Cola Wars*, 9x12", oil on canvas



2. Dana Lombardo was juried into the Cowgirl Artists of America Juried Exhibition "Wild Flowers," in conjunction with Western Gallery. The show will be online in February 2023. Pictured: *One Who Walks with Peace*, 36x24", oil on linen



3. Mariah Kaminsky and **4. Terry Strickland** are part of the group virtual exhibition "Circle of Light: Halos in Contemporary Art" with 33 Contemporary Gallery online, January 1-31, 2023. Artwork is accessible through the Artsy website (www.artsy.net). Pictured: Mariah Kaminsky, *Think Again*, 20x24", oil and silver leaf on canvas; Terry Strickland, *Fragile Like a Bomb*, 16x12", oil

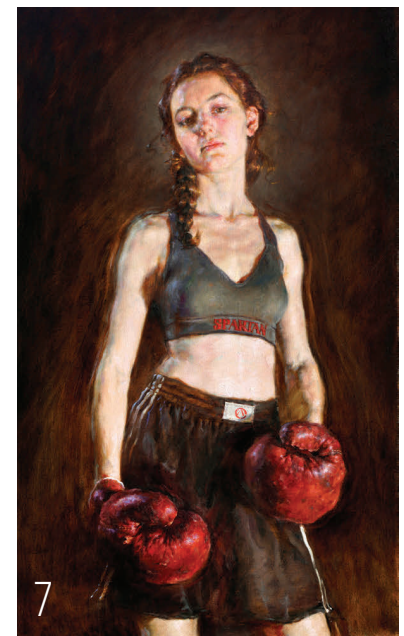


workshops

5. Join Portrait Society member and faculty artist **Anna Rose Bain** on an epic adventure to South Africa, May 1-11, 2023. This workshop features an exclusive masterclass en plein air painting, a workshop on painting children, and a luxurious full immersion wildlife retreat with wine tastings included. Learn more at www.workshopsinsa.com. Pictured: *A Child Will Lead Them*, 20x40", oil on linen

6. Kerry Dunn is teaching a Studio Incamminati "In Your Town" Workshop on June 19-23, 2023 in Haines, Alaska, hosted by Alaska Ambassador **Donna Catotti**. In this 5-day portrait painting workshop, students will learn how to get a better likeness through more accurate drawing, how to use flesh tones to build the forms, exploring color through studies and how to apply color to a longer pose, and finally putting it all together with further development and finishing. Learn more at www.studioincamminati.edu. Pictured: Kerry Dunn, *Bryan Greene*, 16x20", oil on canvas

7. Robert Liberace is teaching a "Portrait and Figure: Drawing and Alla Prima" workshop at Scottsdale Artists' School, February 27-March 3, 2023. This class will explore both the organized and elegant manner of classical drawing, and the dynamic, fresh approach of contemporary Alla Prima painting. Learn more at scottsdaleartschool.org. Pictured: *Spartan*, 48x30", oil on canvas



renewals & new members

RENEWING MEMBERS

A special THANK YOU to our renewing members in September, October, November

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Susan Lyon, Retrospection (detail), 12x16", oil