

AUGUST ART SHOW PREVIEW

Northern Exposure

Howard/Mandville Gallery in Kirkland, Washington, is the site of the 2009 Oil Painters of America Western Regional Exhibition.

Oil Painters of America, the leading oil painting association in the United States, will host its 2009 *Western Regional Exhibition* at Howard/Mandville Gallery in Kirkland, Washington, August 8–30, 2009. The exhibition will feature approximately 150 paintings from many of the finest oil painters located in the western half of the United States and Canada.

Collectors and art lovers are invited to attend the opening reception on August 8, from 6 to 9 p.m., with the awards presentation at 7 p.m. There will be a two-day preview period on August 6 and 7 to give buyers an opportunity to view pieces in person before the opening reception and sale of art.

This year's show will include works by many OPA Masters, and the juror of awards for this year's show is OPA Master artist Jeffrey Watts.

Among the distinguished artists juried in to this year's show are **Dan Beck**, **Gene Costanza**, **Raenell Doyle**, **Amanda Fish**, **Lori Forest**, **Debra Groesser**, **Gary Holland**, **Karen Leoni**, **Laura Lewis**, **Bryce Cameron Liston**, **Jennifer McChristian**, **Olga Plam**, **Sandra Power**, **Elizabeth Pruitt**, **Pauline Roche**, **Anne Spoon** and **Yan Tian**.

Olga Plam has been a member of OPA for more than 10 years and was granted status of Signature Member in 2003.

"In the last three years I was juried in five times. This is a big honor for me; the competition is very tough and there is a lot of very good artists who would like to participate," says Plam. "I have a passion for painting, especially for still life and florals. Flowers, graceful branches, fruits and simple beautiful things are all inspirational, but most of all I am inspired



Bryce Cameron Liston, *The Woodlands*, oil on linen, 18 x 14"

by the painterly process itself."

Raenell Doyle lives on five acres in beautiful western Washington state, where she works from a home studio.

"Working from life using natural light, I find an abundance of flowers and plant materials in my garden and woods on my property," says Doyle.



Gene Costanza, *Dive Shack Belize*, oil on linen, 16 x 32"



Olga Plam, *Lady Apples*, oil on board, 20 x 22"



Amanda Fish, *Deconstructing an Orange*, oil on canvas, 8 x 16"

Jeffrey Watts, *Model With Downcast Eyes*, oil, 16 x 12"



Gary Holland, *Carefree*, oil on canvas, 30 x 24"



Lori Forest, *Return to the Rawah*, oil on canvas, 24 x 36"



Jennifer McChristian, *Ol' Blue*, oil on panel, 11 x 14"



Yan Tian, *Day Dream*, oil on linen, 20 x 17"

In creating studio landscapes, Gene Costanza says he finds he can take “mental vacations” and revisit the places the sketch was made.

“For instance, when it is cold, wet and dark in Oregon in the winter, I can return to Belize in no time at all, ergo my juried-in piece *Dive Shack Belize* was created in a series of tropical pieces while it snowed. It is at times my wintertime vitamin D,” says Costanza.

Dan Beck is confident that OPA has

helped open a lot of doors for him and says to exhibit with such high-caliber artists is an honor.

“I really like the power of suggestion in painting, to not spell everything out quite so literally,” says Beck. “I think it helps add a bit of mystery to the painting and it parallels how I feel about life. To me, that’s the aim of an artist, to paint in such a way that it reflects how we feel.”

Jennifer McChristian blends dual influences in her painting, combining

French impressionist traditions with contemporary American subject matter.

“My works focus on plein air and studio paintings, encompassing both urban and rural environments,” says McChristian. “I attempt to pull order from chaos, direction from aimlessness and reveal what I hope is a new perspective on nature.”

The imagery in Bryce Cameron Liston’s painting *The Woodlands* is intended to reflect the metaphor of a child’s transcendence into the realm of adolescence.



Elizabeth Pruitt, *Lilacs and Lace*, oil, 24 x 24"



Sandra Power, *Oil Can with String*, oil on canvas, 18 x 24"



Dan Beck, *Almost Spring*, oil, 20 x 16"



Raenell Doyle, *Hanging in There*, oil on linen, 24 x 18"



Pauline Roche, *The Fruit Seller*, oil on linen, 12 x 9"

"She's curious to see what lies beyond as she gazes into the sunlight," says Liston. "Adolescence can be a time of uncertainty and even darkness for a lot of young people. But it can also be a time of such promise and optimism. These ideas are juxtaposed in the darkness and light of the woodland landscape."

A resident of Colorado for most of her life, Lori Forest's images reflect her fascination for the sublime beauty and quiet power of the West. Backcountry

explorations often bring her face-to-face with wildlife in their natural habitat. These personal experiences are the subjects of her paintings, including her piece *Return to the Rawah*.

Pauline Roche, who has exhibited exclusively at Newbury Fine Arts in Boston for over 10 years, loves to capture the gesture and stance of a person and to reveal a connection with their surroundings. This love inspired her juried-in piece, *The Fruit Seller*.

"I was fortunate to travel to Egypt this year and was captivated by the colorful scenes of people going about their everyday lives, often in wonderful historical locations," says Roche. "This scene of a fruit seller carefully arranging the fruit on his cart in an old marketplace in Cairo was simply a painting waiting to happen. There was a sense of connection to the past, as though this kind of scene could have been present in that same spot hundreds of years ago."

Amanda Fish creates still life paintings that have a traditional look but have a painterly feel and application.

“Painting brings me great joy and I hope viewers can feel that. I’d like to touch the viewer with beauty and interest,” says Fish. “I concentrate, study and strive to be the best that I can at this moment, so it is a wonderful honor, and I am thrilled to be acknowledged for my painting in the OPA *Western Regional Exhibition* this year.”

Sandra Power is attracted to old oil cans, as evidenced in her painting *Oil Can with String*.

“I gain much inspiration from their strong shapes and rich patina. They lend themselves well to the minimalist, tonal paintings that are my current focus,” says Power. “*Oil Can with String* demonstrates beautifully how the dramatic form of the oil can provides the star power for a compelling design. All that’s left is to add the supporting cast and create the mood.”

For his painting *Day Dream*, Yan Tian was drawn to the harmony created by the soft lighting and the colors of the sitter’s garment and her surroundings and tried to capture that melodious moment.

Gary Holland endeavors to paint the emotional spirit of his subjects as well as the visual impression.

“In the painting *Carefree*, one can experience the innocence of two young girls from Xichuanbana, along the southern border of China in Yunnan province,” says Holland. “Proceeds from the sale of these paintings is donated to For the Children, Inc., a charity I founded 10 years ago to support underfunded orphanages that I’ve come across in my travels.”

The inspiration for Anne Spoon’s painting *Anticipation*, which is one in a series of wrapped presents, was her memories of childhood.

“My mom would always wrap our gifts in the Sunday funnies, money being tight, it was the perfect thing, colorful and fun,” says Spoon. “This painting brings back memories in so many people who have seen it whose moms did the same thing.”

Laura Lewis grew up on the High Plains, where she says the best scenery is the sky. Her selected painting is titled *Night Work If You Can Get It*.



Karen Leoni, *Garrapata*, oil, 12 x 16"



Laura Lewis, *Night Work If You Can Get It*, oil on panel, 11 x 14"



Anne Spoon, *Anticipation*, oil on linen, 16 x 20"

“I love colorful sunsets, and while pursuing them, have discovered the world of modern agriculture,” says Lewis. “This image of a cotton harvest at night depicts a boll buggy dumping into a module builder, where the locks of cotton are tamped down. The blazing headlights of the boll buggy cut through the gloom while the hydraulic spikes of the module builder pierce the sky, adding to the drama of this farmscape.”

Karen Leoni credits the natural beauty of her surroundings in California for much of her inspiration.

“I especially appreciate those perfect days, such as the day I painted *Garrapata*.

I remember the sun warm on my arm as I lifted the brush to apply paint,” says Leoni. “Time always seems to slow down when I paint or sketch, which in turns brings about an inner peace and sense of calm.” ●

Oil Painters of America Western Regional Exhibition

When: August 8-30, 2009

Where: Howard/Mandville Gallery,
120 Park Lane, Suite D, Kirkland, WA 98033

Information: (800) 544-4712 or
www.howardmandville.com.