

# Wilmette Arts Guild NEWSLETTER

March 2008

Sunrise at Birch Harbor, Maine  
by Julie Ressler

## Calendar of Programs

### "First Tuesday Critiques"

At the WAG Office,  
1131 Central Ave  
Wilmette, IL 60091

7:00PM-9:00PM March 4<sup>th</sup>, April 1<sup>st</sup>, May 6<sup>th</sup>, June 3<sup>rd</sup>

A variety of WAG Board Members and interested visitors attend each session. Suggestions are offered with kindness and support for your "artist child." We never cease to learn and grow.

### Programs at the Wilmette Library Auditorium Space

1242 Wilmette Ave  
Wilmette, IL 60091

#### **WAG's Young Artist's Show and Awards Reception**

was held on February 7th, 2008. Sixty-seven awards were given out to high school and junior high school students of the New Trier School District. A \$1500 Scholarship Award was given to Alexandra Barnard of Winnetka. She was the first photographer to win the top prize in the nineteen years WAG has been presenting these awards. .

The judges said that every entrant should feel like a winner. The choices were so incredibly difficult this year. Congratulations to all!

**March 15, 2008 Saturday 9:30AM - 12:30PM** Fran Vail watercolor demonstration. Fran is famous for her vivid trees and foliage. Come and learn how she does it! See write up further on in this newsletter.



Alexandra Barnard  
2008 WAG Scholarship Winner  
and her parents Craig and Charlene



Dear Friends of WAG,

2008 opens in a burst of enthusiasm and new programs. We have three new board members! Linda Carroll has redone the bios for the Galleries and has whipped the WAG computer into shape. Cynthia Gehrie and I are preparing templates for fundraising and grant proposals. I have taken on the 2008 Festival of Fine Arts. Ted Ressler who is volunteering has taken the newsletter under his wing. Please contribute!

We have calls for all sorts of art. We have a new columnist, Everett Campbell, who will be writing about contemporary subjects. Cindra Macciomei will be searching for inspiring words for the visual. New gallery opportunities are blossoming as I write. Please join us! We are inclusive and collaborative. Ted will take calls for the newsletter 6 AM to 7 PM. Monday-Saturday..773-338-4332 or [ted@julieressler.com](mailto:ted@julieressler.com)

Editor

*Julie Ressler*

## Calls for Art:

**Horizontal Image** - for the WAG Newsletter banner. To be changed with each newsletter.

**Scenes of Wilmette** - for the Wilmette Sidewalk Sale. WAG will have its own booth July 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, 8:00AM – 5:00PM We need images!. Contact [ted@julieressler.com](mailto:ted@julieressler.com)

**Members' Show** - Drop off one piece of your art, March 31, 4:00-8:00 PM. PARTY TIME: April 11, 6:30-8:00PM for all artists and friends of WAG. April 27<sup>th</sup> Pick up your art! 6:30-8:00PM

**Poetic Images** - Paintings of the images in Emily Dickenson's poem, *I Taste...* Call Cindra 847- 496-7906 for details or to submit finished images by August 15<sup>th</sup> 2008. See write up further on in this newsletter.

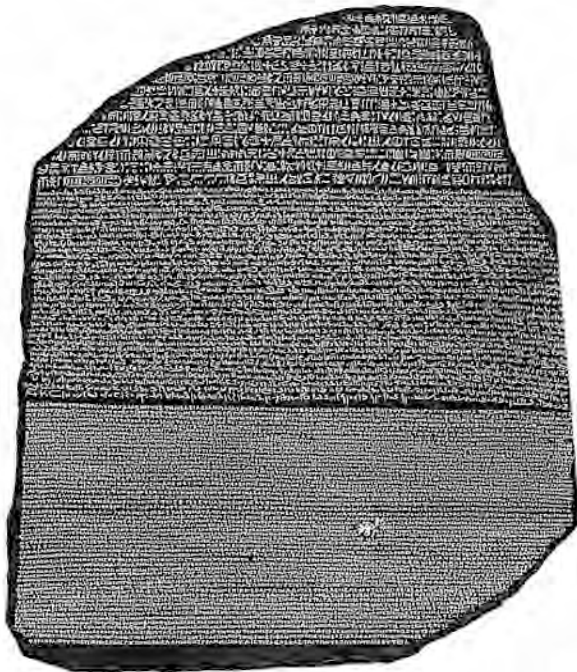
**Self-Portrait Competition** – deadline May 1<sup>st</sup> 2008. Enter online today in the Competitions area of [www.myAmericanArtist.com](http://www.myAmericanArtist.com). The fee is \$20.



# A Rosetta Stone for Contemporary Art?

By Everett Campbell

EverettLeeCampbell@gmail.com



The Rosetta Stone

Everyone knows that art is a language and one that is used to express the entire range of human experience. What is sometimes paradoxical is the fact that a large part of the viewing public is often at a loss as to how to process and understand this language when they are confronted with contemporary art. Major museum exhibitions celebrate the works of artists who simply do not speak to the average viewer. The stumbling block is most commonly a lack of a recognizable subject, that is, non-representational art. Two frequent complaints which are heard: "that is not art" or "a six year old could do that". When viewing works that do not appear to represent a recognizable object the first response is to reject it. This is quite understandable. And yet in other areas of life people are used to dealing with information which has been abstracted into some new form. Take a parking lot: a visitor from Mars would see all those parallel lines next to a building and think it was a picture ---- yet the public correctly sees it as a place to park cars. When the same members of the public see non-representational art they are at a loss and ask, "What is this for?" They are looking for a key, a tool that allows them to translate abstract paintings and sculpture into their own language. Back in the 1790's French archaeologists found a stone tablet in Egypt that had two kinds of Egyptian hieroglyphics together with a verbatim copy into classical Greek. This was the first time that any one had seen the two languages

written down side by side. They were then able to start deciphering certain kinds of ancient Egyptian writing for the first time. In today's world many people have longed for a Rosetta Stone for contemporary art, something that gives them a way to translate abstract images into experience which they can understand.

Sometimes there is an actual key that connects the artwork to specific information in the outside world. The Metro System in Washington, D.C. has a stylized map posted in each car on the train. It is the essence of simplicity and yet it conveys all the information you need to use the system. This is an abstraction. A realistic map would be unwieldy and hard to use on the train itself. Although it refers to the geography of the city, the map is also self-contained as a freestanding expression of the relationship among all the lines and circles. If it were hung as a work of art one might say "that isn't really art" but that would be a value judgment. Once the viewer makes a connection he or she can read the work for what it is. The map is useful as a reference but at the same time it is a colorful image in its own right.

So an abstracted work can have a direct relation to the world outside of its borders. But it doesn't have to. Think of the beautiful patterns found in Oriental rugs. Usually there is a lot of symmetry among the figures which are abstract shapes. The rug may be enclosed in one or more large rectangular borders. There are an infinite variety of ways to fill the space within these borders. What these rugs do have in common is beautiful design and exquisite workmanship. But there is no connection to the outside world---no recognizable object, no scene, no message. What we see is a large picture (the rug itself) that is made up of a myriad of images and patterns. These objects are totally self-referential. None of the component parts are related to the world outside of the rug; yet in combination with the rest of the images they make a beautiful picture. People who are knowledgeable about such rugs understand the language of this art. They speak of the various types of design, the specific patterns, the number of knots per inch and so on. So to get the most out of appreciating these rugs you will want to learn some of that language. But even the novice with no background information can have a wonderful experience just looking at them. Why? Because they look at and marvel at the beauty of design, of color and construction. No key or translation device is required to appreciate the fact that these rugs are works of art.







Antique Konya

So we find that indeed there are many experiences we have with images that are abstract and perfectly capable of being processed and appreciated without need for a translation or answer key. So what is different about the art gallery? For one thing it is the name “art gallery.” As soon as something is hung in a gallery it has become “art”, at least by declaration. The viewer is confronted by strange shapes and colors, but with no recognizable subject. A nagging suspicion says that someone may be pulling something over on him or her. Such a viewer wants someone to supply a key, a Rosetta Stone, to translate all these images into something that is understandable. What he or she should be looking for is not a key to translation but rather an approach, a way to see and understand an aesthetic experience which involves new kinds of images including those which are non-objective. It is important to look at art on its own terms, not to compare it to anything outside of the work itself. Then you can begin to decide if a given work of art does anything for you. If the answer is “yes” then the art is said to “work”. If no response occurs, that is OK too. A given type of art, like some cheeses, can be an acquired taste. The most useful strategy is to experience art by simply looking at it, to experience the work wholly without judging it or yourself.

How does this work in practice? Let's look at a contemporary work by Chicago artist Franco Muscarella. This piece entitled “2D Slice” was on exhibit last month at the Andersonville Galleria. What we find is a form that is vaguely reminiscent of a two dimensional CAT scan taken through the body of an animal. A well-defined border surrounds a jumble of interconnected forms within it. Looking closely at these forms we see that they are made up of small units of lines and squiggles that combine and attach to each other until the space is filled within the borders.

There is a sense of tension and energy like a coiled spring within the form. The inter relationship of the multiple small units creates a sense of an organic whole. There is no correspondence to any recognizable object. Yet looking at the work and letting it settle into your mind, there is much to admire. First is the craftsmanship, second is the sense of forms, and third is the way that all the component parts combine to create a sense of dynamic energy even though it is a stationary object. What we have then is a way of looking that lets the viewer appreciate the work for what is there. No effort is made to translate it into anything outside of the work itself. Thus the question should not be “Is there a Rosetta Stone for contemporary art?” but rather “What approach can we take to appreciate contemporary art?”



2D Slice  
Franco Muscarella

## Cindra Macciomei's Pocketful of Poems

*(The Verbal Inspiring the Visual)*

*Introduced by Julie Ressler*

I keep graphite sticks, erasers, sometimes tubes of paint, crumpled bits of papers and notes, especially shapely leaves, maybe a rock or two in my pockets so that when I am finally at my table, I can remember or reconfigure them into something esthetically useful.

Cindra came to one of my shows and stayed for a long time. She told me how much she liked my art and all the things an artist loves to hear. Then, she told me that she herself was without art, but kept a pocket full of poems, in case she needed them.

She began to recite. Gradually the entire room was standing silently, listening, absorbed in these marvelous images and Cindra's honeyed voice. I was overwhelmed with paintings I wanted to do.

What would “tankards scooped in pearl” look like or “inns of molten blue?” If you will do a work inspired by these images, we will have a show of them later in the year.

Call Cindra – (847) 496-7906 for details.

I TASTE a liquor never brewed,  
From tankards scooped in pearl;  
Not all the vats upon the Rhine  
Yield such an alcohol!  
Inebriate of air am I,  
And debauchee of dew,  
Reeling, through endless summer days,  
From inns of molten blue.  
When landlords turn the drunken bee  
Out of the foxglove's door,  
When butterflies renounce their drams,  
I shall but drink the more!  
Till seraphs swing their snowy hats,  
And saints to windows run,  
To see the little tippler  
Leaning against the sun!

-a poem by Emily Dickinson



# Brushes With Art

## *Artists' Personal Experiences*

### The Fauve Landscape by Julie Ressler



Picking up Deadwood  
by Maurice de Vlaminck

People tell me I have a joyous palette. I do. Color has power that is beyond understanding until you see its effects. The Fauve Landscape Exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1991 was a perfect example of this transforming power. The night was bitterly cold and rainy. By some miracle we found parking on the street and traffic had not been terrible, but we were all really uncomfortable and exasperated by the time we got rid of our coats and umbrellas. My husband, a stoic museum-goer, even at the best of times was with people he did not care for and the evening was looming into never-ending tedium for him. I could see it clearly. He was just about to not say a word.

We navigated the brackish, beige stairs to the second floor. We turned the corner. Instantly we were seized by the fabulous reds and oranges, blues and brilliant yellows, turquoise and purples that these men made into their joyous palettes that had caused them to be called wild beasts or Les Fauves in the early 1900s. Their passion grabbed our faces and kissed our eyes over and over again until we were soon gasping, "Look at that! Have you ever seen that color before?" We were pulling each other from painting to painting. Very soon, our tired faces were transformed to that special clarity of wonder and renewal of being in color.



Boats at Collioure's Harbor  
by Andre Derain

*(Please write or phone Ted at [ted@julieressler.com](mailto:ted@julieressler.com) or 773-338-4332 to tell*

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# “Just Trees” watercolor demo by Fran Vail

Wilmette Public Library auditorium; free admission.

Saturday, March 15, 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM



Spring is a great time to study trees. You can see their structure, characteristics and personalities. Learn how to translate these observations into dramatic watercolor landscapes. Fran Vail will demonstrate techniques that take advantage of watercolor’s spontaneity of several different species. She will then paint a complete painting showing how to put it all together.

Fran is a board and faculty member of the North Shore Art League and a member of the new Gallery 659 in Glencoe, where she currently has a show from Feb. 1 - 26, 2008.



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**Franco Muscarella**  
**FrancoInk.com**



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# PATRONS OF THE ARTS

Before



After



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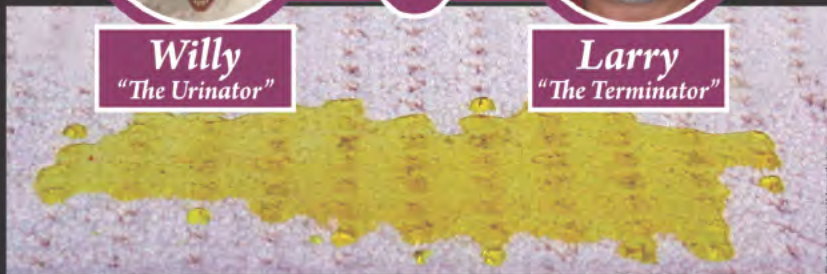


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# First Tuesday Critique

By Cynthia Gehrie



Before

I went to the WAG "First Tuesday of the Month Critique" and had a really great experience. I am enclosing two photos, one a before, which shows my painting next to a still life set up. The other is the painting (see the pins on the board) after I came home and worked more from the critique.

I had become stuck. I knew that the colors in the background were not right, and it did not have the richness that I try to get with pastels. Part of it came from the new paper I was using, which was extremely thick and rough, and I was not sure how the soft pastel would adhere, etc.

Ralph Greenhow held up a white paper, and showed me how to use it to capture the reflection of the still life in the table, and to bring the colors into play, instead of just working on objects that cast their own shadow on the table surface. He also showed me how to work with the unity of color. He suggested that I look at the paintings of Chardin, especially his still lifes, with strong volume objects and glazes that create unity of color and warmth.

So I came home and got to work, and really made progress.

The critique is a fantastic resource. All of us learned from one another, and felt the depth of community



After

## Thank You!

A big thank you to Mike Zidman and Allan Waner at Allegra Graphics for their fine work on the fundraising letter. Many thanks to Mark Nystuen for his fundraising efforts. Marge Graham for proof reading everything, and Barbara Breakstone for lending a hand with the WAG bookkeeping duties. Thank you! Thank you!



### Wilmette Arts Guild Membership Form

Note: memberships run from July to June

- Individual membership \$40 annually
- Family membership \$60 annually
- Corporate membership \$100 annually
- Patron \$200 annually
- Benefactor \$500 annually
- Angel \$1,000 annually

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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 City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Website \_\_\_\_\_

- I am a practicing artist (NOT required!); my medium is \_\_\_\_\_
- Please send me an application for the 2008 Fine Arts Festival (to be mailed January)
- I may be able to help with Arts Guild activities; give me a call or email me.
- Please link [www.wilmetteartsguild.org](http://www.wilmetteartsguild.org) to my website.



photo by Jonathan Roob - JonJRoob@gmail.com

#### Members of the Board, Autumn 2007

Seated	Standing	Missing from Photo
Donna Rice	Julie Ressler	Kristen Beaulieu
Gloria Moschel	Ed Willer	Wayne Brewer
JoAnn Dominic	Laurie Walker	Richard Campbell
Barbara Roseman	Lindsay Brown	Virginia Mallard
LeRoy Cox	Joan Hall	
	Marge Graham	
	Ralph Greenhow	
	Cynthia Gehrie	
	Linda Carroll	

Please make check payable to Wilmette Arts Guild and mail with this completed form to:  
 Wilmette Arts Guild Membership Chair, P.O. Box 902, Wilmette, IL 60091.

**WELCOME!**





Kristina's Photos can be seen at Premier Bank

## Many thanks to our Galleries

Premier Bank  
 Coldwell Banker Real Estate Office  
 Wilmette Park District  
 Community Recreation Center  
 Boris' Cafe  
 Don Olson-State Farm Insurance Office  
 Chinoiserie Cafe  
 Lakeside Interiors  
 Roman Room  
 Curves  
 Prairie Shore Properties  
 Mrs. D's Wilmette Cafe  
 Edens Bank - Ridge Rd  
 Edens Bank - Lake Ave.

## A Warm Welcome to all Wilmette Arts Guild New Members 2007

Please be sure we have digital images of your work for inclusion in our newsletter and website gallery.

Judith Aladjem	Michael Mettler
Michael Banks	Miguel Munguia
Audrey Barrett	Franco Muscarella
Ruth Bolotin	Terri Myer
Marsha Boythe	Hans Olson
Diane Czerwinski	Kelly O'Rourke
Susan Daly	Daro Pohl
Bonnie Eastwood	Pricilla R. Powers
Nick Engelhardt	Kellie Rigney
	Peter Rujawa
Anne Leuck Feldhaus	Carol Rutberg
Jacqueline France	Phil Saxon
Nathan Fredenburg	Julie Schilf
Eric Futran	Kris Schroeder
Sadie Gerbic	Lisa Slodki
Shelley Gilchrist	Ryan A. Synovec
	Joey Szymanski
	Amy Taylor
Tal Gold	Linda Treshansky
Peter Hessemer	Nancy Tudor
Ala Jaron	Kenneth Von Kluck
Jadwiga Jasinska	John Wurzell
	Ying Zhou
Igor Menaker	Michael Zidman

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photo by Mike Zidman

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