

HARLINGEN ART FORUM

Issue: MAY 2007

Thursday, May 24, 2007

Good Art/Bad Art: Pulling back the curtain

“Since World War I the contemporary visual arts as represented in Museum exhibitions, University Art Departments, and journalistic art criticism became little more than juvenile, repetitive exercises at proving to the former adult world that [artists] could do whatever they d... well wanted ... sadly devolving ever downwards into a distorted, contrived and contorted notion of freedom of expression. Freedom of expression? Ironically, this so-called "freedom" as embodied in Modernism, rather than a form of "expression" in truth became a form of "suppression" and "oppression." Modernism as we know it, ultimately became the most **oppressive and restrictive** system of thought in all of art history.”

So began a speech by Fred Ross, Chairman of the Art Renewal Center on June 7 2001 at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, at the American Society of Portrait Artists (ASOPA) Conference. Six years after this ground breaking blast at Modernism and Post Modernism the Art Renewal Center continues to

champion the representational art exemplified by past masters and present day aspiring artists and the public at large. He continues...

“Every reasonable shred of order and any standards with which it was possible to identify, understand and to create great paintings and sculpture, was degraded ... detested ... desecrated and eviscerated. The backbone of the painters' craft, namely drawing, was thrown into the trash along with modeling, perspective, illusion, recognizable objects or elements from the real world, and with it the ability to capture, exhibit, and poetically express subjects and themes about mankind and the human condition and about man's trials on this speck of stardust called Earth ... Earth, hurtling through infinity with all of us along on board, along with everything we know and everything we hold dear.

Reason philosophy religion literature fantasy dreams, and all of the feelings, emotions and pathos of our every day lives (continued on page 2)

Beachcombers Sand Pit

Only a few more days to get your application in for your own booth at the 48th Annual Beachcombers! Registration closes June 1st so hurry up if you were planning on applying.

So far the hall is more than filled and it appears we will reluctantly be turning some applicants away.

The Harlingen Art Forum booth has some openings, so if you'd like to show but don't need your own booth be sure and register to be part of the HAF booth.

Volunteers will be needed soon for completion of the successfully applicant packet mailings and to

assist with recruitment of show sponsors. Don't forget, volunteer and keep up with the clues and you could be the treasure trove winner!

The clue for May – while actor Johnny Depp could have used his famous “scissorhands” to trim the sails, and hooking up with Disney may have gotten him to Orlando, where does he need to be in late July to truly haul in the loot?

SPECIAL ITEMS OF INTEREST:

Over 500 works of art, priced from free to “lotsa' money” are available at D'Arte Centre, home of HAF.

**HARLINGEN ART FORUM
MEETING IS MONDAY May 28th**

6 PM AT D'ARTE CENTRE

The Harlingen Art Forum meeting on Monday May 28th will feature two very important activities and host an informative discussion by CC “Slim” Owen.

The HAF Graduating Senior College Scholarships will be presented to three outstanding young artists during the meeting. Please arrive early and take the opportunity to view all the student applicants work.

Election of officers for the next biennium will also be held during the meeting.

... all of it was no longer worthy of the painter's craft. Any hint by the artist at trying to portray such things was branded as banal, maudlin, photographic, illustration, or petty sentimentality.

Our children, going supposedly to the finest universities in the world, being taught by professors with Bachelors or Arts, Masters of Arts, Masters of Fine Arts, Masters of Art Education ... even Doctoral degrees, our children instead have been subjected to methodical brain-washing and taught to deny the evidence of their own senses. Taught that Matisse, Cézanne, and Picasso, along with their followers, were the most brilliant artists in all of history. Why? Because they weren't telling us lies like the traditional painters, of course. They weren't trying to make us believe that we were looking at scenes in reality, or at scenes from the imagination, from fantasy or from dreams. They were telling us the truth. They were telling it like it is. They spent their lives and careers on something that was not banal, and not silly, insipid or inane. They in fact provided the world with the most ingenious of all breakthroughs in the history of artistic thought. Even the great scientific achievements of the industrial revolution paled before their brilliant discovery. And what was that discovery for which they have been raised above [Bouguereau](#), exalted over [Gérôme](#), and celebrated beyond [Ingres](#), [David](#), [Constable](#), [Fragonard](#), [Van Dyck](#), and [Gainsborough](#) or [Poussin](#)? Why in fact were they heralded to the absolute zenith ... the tiptop of human achievement ... being worthy even of placement shoulder to shoulder on pedestals right beside [Rembrandt](#), [Michelangelo](#), [Leonardo](#), [Caravaggio](#), [Vermeer](#) and [Raphael](#)? What did they do? Why were they glorified practically above all others that ever went before them? Ladies and gentleman, they proved ... amazing, incredible, and fantastic as it

may seem, they proved that the canvas was flat ... flat and very thin ... skinny ... indeed, not even shallow, lacking any depth or meaning whatsoever.

And the flatter that they proved it to be the greater they were exalted. Cézanne collapsed the landscape, Matisse flattened our homes and our families, and Pollock, Rothko and de Kooning placed it all in a blender and splattered it against the wall. They made even pancakes look fat and chunky by comparison. But this was only part of the breathtaking breakthroughs of modernism ... and their offshoots flourished. Abstract expressionism, Cubism, [Fauvism](#), minimalism, [ColorField](#), Conceptual, op-art, pop-art and post modernism ... and to understand it all ... to understand, took very special people indeed, since the mass of humanity was too ignorant and stupid to understand. Like that famous advertisement in the NY Times said so many years ago ... Bad art ... or Good art? You be the judge, indeed.

During most of the 20th century, the type of propaganda that has been hurled at academic artists is so insidious that people have been literally trained to discredit, out-of-hand, any work containing well-crafted figures or elements, or any other evidence of technical mastery. All the beauty and subtlety of emotions, -- interplay of composition, design and theme, -- the interlacing of color, tone and mood, -- are never seen. The viewer has been taught that academic painting on a prima facie basis is bad by definition -- bad by virtue of its resorting to the use of human figures, themes or stories and objects from the real world.

[...] Modern artists are told that they must create something totally original. Nothing about what they do can ever have been done before in any way shape or form, otherwise they risk being called "derivative". How utterly absurd.

These critics like to say Bouguereau's work is really only derivative, harking back to earlier artists. Only in the 20th century has such a thing ever been scorned. To this I have one thing to say:

WHAT, dear friends, IS WRONG WITH BEING DERIVATIVE?

That's one of the core beliefs of modernism that must be soundly vanquished by common sense and logical analysis. Nobody can accomplish anything of merit if they are in fact not derivative. Only by mastering the accomplishments of the past and then adding to it can we go still further. Every other field of endeavor recognizes this truth. Without the knowledge of the past we are doomed to everlasting primitivism.

And, as far as holding our works up to the old masters, that's what we want to have happen. If we are to accomplish things of true merit and excellence, we must germinate and nurture great masters in the next millennium, too. Bouguereau was quite aware that his work would be compared on the altar of past accomplishments, as did his contemporaries. It was precisely because they mastered the techniques of the past, built upon them and then opened them up to an avalanche of new subject matter and Enlightenment ideals, that they accomplished the greatest half-century of painting in art history."

The Art Renewal Center is devoted to the following principles and beliefs

1 To create the largest on-line Museum on the internet, with hundreds of thousands of oversized high quality images of all the known works of the greatest painters and sculptors in human history, cross referenced to the largest encyclopedic

online art reference library of historical texts, essays, biographies and articles.

2 To promote a return of training, standards and excellence in the visual arts.

3 To provide responsible views opposing those of the current art establishment when warranted, especially as expressed in critiques of current art exhibitions, and in aesthetic philosophy.

4 To disseminate the rich artistic heritage of 2500 years of accumulated knowledge in creating traditional, realistic images touching upon universal and timeless themes.

5 To advance the understanding that Great Art begins with great themes and expresses them poetically through mastery of all aspects of technique.

6 To repudiate the idea that development in art requires destruction of boundaries and standards, pointless emphasis on 'newness,' or pursuit of the bizarre and ugly as ends in themselves, and to expose as artistic fraud those works conceived only to elicit outrage.

7 To provide a technical and historical resource for artistic information, including referrals to experts.

8 To provide a forum for dialogue and exchange of expert information among educators scholars, curators, collectors and artists.

9 To promote scholarship and research on the artists of the past and the rediscovery and preservation of their techniques and methods.

10 To establish basic visual literacy standards across the world. Drawing must be introduced as part of the core curricula in K-12 and developed progressively until high school and beyond.

11 To provide impetus for the reestablishment of high standards of performance in the visual arts of painting, drawing, and sculpture, and to promote the concept of

recognizable quality as a primary criterion for the judgment of Fine Art.

12 To offer a platform for discussion - both scholarly and informal - on art history, aesthetics, technical considerations, art education and other related issues, and to maintain honesty and frankness in our interaction with everyone, regardless of predisposition

To see more about the Art Renewal Center and to view their magnificent collection of online art visit

<http://www.artrenewal.org/>

Member news

Kandyce Waltensperger will participate in the Licensing International Expo 2007 show in New York City. The event is held at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in June from the 19th to the 21st.

You can view her work at D'Arte Center or her website:

www.kandyce.com

Bernice Coleman exhibited at the Texas Art and Book Show in Rockland Texas in May.

Please send any info about HAF members to

forumcontact@harlingenartforum.com

Portrait Society of America

The purpose of the Portrait Society is to foster and enhance an understanding of the practice, techniques and applications of traditional fine art portraiture and figurative works. The activities undertaken by the corporation are

educational in nature. Our projects will increase the aesthetic and technical knowledge for the practicing artist, the aspiring amateur, student artist as well as the general public. Projects to accomplish these purposes will include the following:

As part of our ongoing mission to provide the public with examples of fine art portraiture and figurative work, your membership will include a subscription to International Artist. A full color, bi-monthly 164 page magazine in which the Portrait Society co-edits a regular feature dedicated exclusively to portrait art.

Conduct a national conference annually to present lectures, demonstrations and exhibitions on the discipline of fine art portraiture. This will offer the general membership and others access to the skills and knowledge of the leading portrait artists of the day.

Collect, write and publish a 16-page newsletter covering issues germane to fine art portraiture. Areas will include fine art techniques, profiles of accomplished portrait artists, technical and aesthetic advice, announcements of member's accomplishments and other issues pertinent to fine art portraiture.

Coordinate volunteers in each region of the country for the purpose of membership development and recruitment as we attempt to build a national membership base.

Establish a voluntary code of ethics and standards for general members. This will serve as a guide for the technical and aesthetic standards of general members. This activity will further the practice of traditional fine art portraiture.

Provide the membership access through an 800-telephone service to expert advice on techniques, aesthetics and related information. The organization provides an informational home page on the World Wide Web. This activity will allow educational information to be shared between experts in the field and others.

Offer portfolio review opportunities at an annual conference to assist and guide members in furthering their knowledge and artistic skills.

Recognize and honor those artists of distinction who have over the course of their careers produced bodies of work that epitomizes excellence within the discipline.

Organize exhibits that will exemplify different facets of fine art portraiture and figurative works. They will be open to the public, at no charge

More information about the Society is available at

<http://www.portraitsociety.org/>

INTERESTING PLACES TO VISIT ON AND OFF THE WEB

<http://www.arts.state.tx.us/studios/stateartist2.asp>

The Texas Commission on the Arts has announced its appointments to the positions of state poet laureate, state musician, state two-dimensional artist and state three-dimensional artist. These positions, created by SB 1043 of the 77th Legislature, will be filled by one-year appointments. The eight appointees named for 2007 and 2008 were selected for years of excellence and dedicated commitment to the arts in Texas.

The new appointees include:

2007 STATE ARTISTS

- * State Musician - Dale Watson, Austin
- * State Poet Laureate - Steven Fromholz, Kopperl
- * State 2-D Artist - Lee Herring, Rockwall
- * State 3-D Artist - David Keens, Arlington

2008 STATE ARTISTS

- * State Musician - Shelley King, Austin
- * State Poet Laureate - Larry Thomas, Houston
- * State 2-D Artist - Janet Eager Krueger, Encinal
- * State 3-D Artist - Damian Priour, Austin

Free Website Hosting for artists

<http://www.artistsites.org/>

ArtistSites is a FREE online virtual community, created by artists for artists, as a way of providing a customizable and professional online gallery solution for the art community. ArtistSites offers FREE Websites for Artists and Photographers. Even if you already have a personal website, you can still join ArtistSites and benefit from the additional exposure, traffic and indexing from Google and other search engines!!

Calendar of Events

Ongoing through Friday June 29
A South Texas Ceramic Sampler
This exhibition will be on display at the STC's Pecan Campus Library through June 29, 2007. It will feature a variety of ceramic works from students and faculty from five Texas

schools including STC, UTPA, Texas A&M at Kingsville, The University of North Texas and The University of Texas at San Antonio. Admission to the exhibition are free and open to the public.

Recordando Aquellos Placenteros Viajes (Remembering Those Pleasant Trips) It's not often a child's photos become a piece of history, but 14-year-old John E. Huegal captured the ending of one era and the start of another in photos he took from 1944 to 1961. Huegal captured images of the end of the steam era in Mexican railroads and the beginning of the move into diesel-powered engines in 30 photographs that are featured in the exhibit **The exhibit will open, free to the public, with a reception at the Brownsville Heritage Complex on Thursday, May 31, 2007 at 6:30 p.m.** The exhibit will also be on view until July 6, 2007 at the Heritage Complex during regular museum hours.

June 2 - August 31 ~ Museums of Port Isabel Special Exhibit. "Photography by Valerie Bates". A perspective of photographs and art taken and created by Valerie Bates, photographer, artist, owner of Rio Bravo Gallery and Marketing Director for the City of Port Isabel. Ms. Bates started her career at an early age during high school working as a commercial artist and designer for newspapers and marketing firms. Her talents as a photographer and artists have led her work to be shown in local and major publications and television. Her work will be displayed through prints and video. <http://www.portisabelmuseums.com>

Many Many Many activities for kids are listed at www.rgvarts.com