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Tu B'Shevat – New Year of Trees Art Exhibition February 6-26th 2009

Biographies

Sandra Benhaim, Painter

A master's degree graduate of Temple University's Tyler School of Art, Sandra has exhibited her paintings widely. She has always been deeply inspired by the beauty of nature. The works included in this exhibit were created a few years ago when she was working solely in a representational manner. The artist feels that these are most appropriate for this celebration of the "birthday of the trees." Sandra is honored to be included in this exhibit and for the opportunity to show these works.

Recently, Sandra has created purely abstract images, expressing in unabashed and exuberant color her passion for nature. These may be viewed at her website, www.sandrabenhaim.com.

Paulette Bensignor, Painter/Printmaker

Paulette Bensignor was born in 1948 in Philadelphia, PA. Ms. Bensignor was awarded a scholarship to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and the University of Pennsylvania where she earned a B.F.A in 1970. She went on to pursue graduate work at Temple University, Philadelphia, PA and the University of Paris, France.

Since 1966, Ms. Bensignor has exhibited her work primarily in the New York, New Jersey, and the Pennsylvania area. Her work was included in several exhibits in Japan. In 1985, her work was exhibited in a show at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and again in 2003. Since 1973, her work has been on continuous display at a number of well known New York City galleries. Her work can be seen in a number of public and private collections in the United States, England, France, Germany, Italy, South Korea, Belgium and Portugal. Ms. Bensignor's work is in such corporate and museum collections as Dupont Corp., Fidelity (PNC Bank), Colonial Penn Insurance Co., the Delaware Trust Co., Green Tree Insurance, Verizon, Dupont. & Wyeth Pharmaceutical, Hilton Corp., NBC Offices, NYC., McGraw Hill Publishing, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia Museum of Fine Arts, Delaware Museum of Art and others.

This work that I'm doing is an attempt to push the form of "Landscape Painting" to an intellectual level that it has not been in style since The Hudson River School of Art in America, 1820-1880's. The importance of thinking and reacting to our environment is extremely valid to humanity. I am trying to allow all who view my work not only to become emerged in it meditatively, but to allow the viewer to think about merging by using a fusion, the mixing of perspectives from the East and

the West with color and line, to make the illusion of two and three dimensional forms. This carries over into how I view the world. Optimistically, I view this world as changing and the mixing of ideas, culture, and traditions are forming a homogenized landscape.

Stephanie E. Dorfman, Sculptor

Stephanie Dorfman grew up in homogenous Plainsboro, New Jersey where she was trained as a classical pianist. It was during a concert tour of European villages in 1999 that Stephanie was drawn towards the Renaissance Masters. Ending her musical career early, she began training as a painter at Syracuse University graduating with a BFA. Stephanie came to Philadelphia to obtain her MFA in Painting from The University of The Arts. Because of friends, family, and her spacious Port Richmond studio she is excited to stay in Philadelphia and continue being part of Philadelphia's rich art scene.

Lisa Learner, Painter

I received my BFA from Tyler School of Art and my MFA from the University of Pennsylvania. In addition to creating paintings, I have been teaching painting and drawing classes for thirty years.

I paint what I see and what I experience - familiar figures in local landscapes. I have always been interested in exploring how individuals fit into their environments. My subjects are usually people outdoors, in natural settings or at train stations. These paintings are about the light and shadows, but they also explore the contrast between the human form and the landscape or architecture: contemplative people against soft backgrounds of plants and soil, or against the sharp angles, strong light and the distant perspectives of the rails.

My recent paintings are painted on heavy Arches watercolor paper that has been sized to protect the paper from the oil paint. My husband is a woodworker and a gilder. He 'floats' these paintings on archival boards covered with linen, surrounds them with sink mats wrapped in matching fabric, and creates a hand-carved, water-gilded frame for each one. Lisalearner.com

Sharon Ritz, Mosaic Artist

Sharon Ritz loves glass! And as an emerging mosaic artist, she is always looking for new ways to work with glass in her mosaic pieces. Sharon has had the good fortune to have had great teachers including Jackie Stack Lagakos, Gina Hubler and Jonathan Mandell and has also been a student at The Studio at The Corning Museum of Glass. Sharon's work has been shown at the Perkins Center for the Arts in Collingswood, NJ and was included in the New Haven Symphony Art Violin Project. And of course, she has had the great privilege of showing her work at the Old City Jewish Art Center.

Sharon enjoys creating secular and Judaic art pieces and her Judaic craft pieces include tzedakah boxes, suncatchers and challah boards. Sharon is a stay-at-home mom as well, and lives right across the bridge in New Jersey with her husband and three sons.

on "Drawn In"

"Stumbling upon this lovely path lined with trees, I found myself *drawn into it*, wanting to follow it to see where it led, excited by the adventure of it ... " sharpartsmosaics.tripod.com

Rona Cordish Satten, MCAAT, ATR, MQP

Maker of nature etchings that evoke the mysteries of life

My art focused education includes a B.A in Art History, a Masters in Creative Arts in Therapy degree from Hahnemann Medical College, and 3 years study at the Barnes Foundation. I founded, and for over 20 years, taught at Paintpourri, a unique art program for young children and their parents in Ardmore, PA. Currently, my life long art making is unfolding at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Other passions of mine include taiji, qigong teaching, and my developing medical qigong practice. These practices enhance the deep connection I feel with the natural world. As an outgrowth of that, over the past 7 years, I have been drawn to create with real leaves, revealing nature's complexity and beauty via the etching process. My award winning prints have been widely exhibited and are in public collections including Le Salle Bank and Atlanticare Hospital, and in numerous private collections.

My etchings invite looking, thinking, and sensing on many levels. The leaves I choose as I walk outside are always perfect: sometimes perfectly balanced, sometimes perfect in their "imperfection" as they reveal decay from seasonal change or disease or holes from being insect food. I think they are beautiful in all of their forms and I try to print the plates to reveal this. Sometimes an individual leaf seems to embody the wisdom of the entire universe. In other prints it's the relationship between the leaves, how I compose them, that elicits the flow of associations.

As fellow living organisms, leaves remind us of body with its organs, veins and cells. They mirror our strength, fragility, complexity, beauty, and transitory nature. We are all part of the mystery and majesty of the universe. My leaf images embody this awe and remind us how fortunate we are to be alive in this abundance.

Mark Segal, Professional Puppeteer

Mark S. Segal graduated from Boston University School of Fine Arts in 1974 and has been a performing puppeteer since 1977. Over 40,000 people see Mark's shows each year. He is best known for "Tooth Buddy Tales" a show that appears regularly within the 5 county areas each year. Since 1985 Mark has built and performed shows for Jewish organizations. His professional involvement in the Jewish Community was due to an association that started with Lubavitch and Rabbi Menachem Schmidt in 1985. Mark is honored to be part of this exhibit as well as to be considered a "friend of Lubavitch. segalpuppets.com

Zipporah Segal, Collographs by Zipporah Segal

Zipporah is a Head Start teacher in the Philadelphia School District who enjoys making collographs. "A collograph print is a collage printmaking technique. I used paint, glue, cardboard, and leaves".

Dori Spector, Fine Art Realist Painter

Dori Spector was born in Allentown PA. She graduated from Moore College of Art in Philadelphia in 1978 with a BFA. After graduation, Ms.

Spector worked in the Advertising and Illustration fields acting as Art Director for the Clothes Garden in Wynnewood PA and doing courtroom sketching for TV news. From 1986 until 1989 she attended The Art Students League of New York full time on a Merit scholarship. At the Art Students League she studied painting with Harvey Dinnerstein and David Leffel. From 1990 to the present she has studied privately under many teachers such as Burton Silverman, John Osborne, and Nelson Shanks. Ms. Spector continues to study painting at Studio Incamminati, founded by Nelson Shanks, and also continues her printmaking at The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art. She is represented by Artists House Gallery in Philadelphia PA, Rutledge Street Gallery in South Carolina, Grenning Gallery in Sag Harbor New York, and The Carol Schwartz Gallery in Chestnut Hill, PA.

"I struggle to refine my skills, and bring my skill level up to my idea level. As I go about my day, I am drawn to a full range of subject matter, and feel compelled to paint everything that calls to me. Time and limited energy are a big hindrance. I am drawn to paint things that are fleeting, especially the flowers and the changing landscape. I am also inspired by the way people interact with one another. I can find ideas for painting by easily walking down the street or watching my daughter and her friends. In the future I would like to concentrate more on the figure and travel to other painting locations around the world." www.dorispector.com

Ruth Wolf, Painter

Trees have engaged me since I first picked up a pencil. All compositional aspects of the picture plane can be addressed by the tree - shape, color, light - from the stark vertical of the trunk in a cold winter's sky to the dense web of branches and leaves in a summer's haze. From these elements color next to color, pattern next to line, light capturing and releasing mass the organic narrative unfolds. Trees relate a personal vision to a world we can all experience. www.ruthwolf.com