

Elin Thomas
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North County Society of Fine Art
November 30, 2018

One can walk a show and find many things that catches one's eye. No exception for your show. I walked the entire exhibited paintings, and those with merit for me as an artist, design teacher and plein air painter rose to the top. Judging is subjective, and so whether one wins or not isn't as important as (in larger shows) making the cut for the exhibit. Awards are the icing on the cake, so to speak. I hope my explanations of why the following twelve artworks caught my eye help everyone to know my thoughts and why I chose the works I did. If you didn't get that coveted prize, please know that issues of design and use of the medium, and the story are the pillars on how I judge. I might also mention

First Place - "After School" Chen, Sherry

The moment I laid eyes on this painting, I was struck by everything that makes a great work of art. This painting has story, first of all. It is the universal recognition of youth's uncertainty and grasp for connection with t

he dog serving as constant. The viewpoint of the onlooker is one of elevation, placing him or her in a position of adult, or supernatural being observing this slice of time. The use of design to present a common theme (person on couch) in an unusual and powerful way was the second reason this painting grabbed me and wouldn't let go. The simplistic yet complicated use of color dominance and subordination also conveys the strength of design with the use of blues so appropriate to the design. As an added comment, the sofa reminded me of the paintings of Lucien Freud with the excellent use of various values to authentically convey the fabric "skin". Excellent overall.

Second Place - "Ocotillo Sunset" Titus, Pat

Howard Pyle, the father of American Illustration, would tell his students, "Thirty minutes, thirty yards." In essence, what he meant was that if the student couldn't put down a design structure strong enough to be perceived from far away, they would have to wipe it out and start over. The award for second place goes to a strongly designed painting with excellent Impressionistic brushwork and a dynamic use of color to convey the message of desert landscape and desert light. Kudos!

Third Place - "Looking for the Right Word" Mansfield, Carol

Lovely use of media to convey a strong yet whimsical message. The viewer can take away many reactions from this piece, both emotionally and intellectually—in other words, this piece touches both the child and adult in each of us.

Judge's Choice #1 - "Apple Pie" Nord, Julie

Excellence in use of medium, design and complexity of layout made this painting stand out from many others. I was especially caught by this artist's use of edge loss in such an extremely detailed work. Delightful. Looking over this steelyard design (check with Edgar Payne for more information on that), the negative space on the right beautifully balances the lone egg on the left. Well done!

Judge's Choice #2 - "Wild West" Szulc, Lilly

Once cannot pass by this work without spending time enjoying the dynamics of the clouds painted so powerfully (plein air?). It is only after a moment that one looks at the nuance and contrast

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Honorable Mention - "Urban Catacombs" Eckstein, Jo-Lind

My imagination is engaged with this piece, due to the design, harmonious color palette and story—or potential story—of primitive people, structure and conflict/blood.

Honorable Mention - "Ready" Titus, Pat

I totally fell for the diagonals in this painting. Rather than a peaceful horizontal composition as found in most ocean/yacht type works, this artist tests the waters by showing us a new perspective and tension in using diagonals. The spot of red on "Ready" is icing on the cake and makes for an excellent focal point.

Honorable Mention - "IGGY" Kruck, Michelle

Well drawn, well executed and well presented (framed with the black second mat). I love reptiles, so it was easy to be pulled in by the yellow eye area and then enjoy the myriad of turquoise variations and purple subtlety of the skin—no two scales alike! And to capture the personality in that eye.

Judge's Merit - "Farm Market" Szulc, Lilly

Design caught my eye on this one, and the buoyant use of color in a complex subject. The strong use of perspective in an otherwise complex subject is enjoyable to view. I feel included in this scene, and that's not often an easy accomplishment!

Judge's Merit - "Reflections" Ford, Sharon

I kept coming back to this painting for the excellent use of color and the complete feeling of universal serenity I felt while looking at it. Sometimes a simple design conveys the most effective message.

Judge's Merit - "Glow" Bertch, Doris

I walked by this very simple pastel, not once, but twice. But then I kept coming back to it because of the simplicity of the design and the really effective use of color. It reminded me of some of Edward Hopper's designs, using triads in shapes and triads in color.

Judge's Merit - "Mystic" Kruck, Michelle

The Alaskan coast is harsh and cold, and one wouldn't think that watercolor could convey the chill effectively with all those lighter values inherent in the medium. Yet this artist brought the dark, repetitive shapes under the dock and used the chilling white of the paper making me feel as though I was off shore on a ferry looking at this scene. I also enjoyed finding the repetition of the tribal fish shape in another place in the composition, which also balanced the entire layout. Nice touch!