

# 'Incredible' watercolor

## Watercolor Wisconsin exhibit showcases diversity

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In choosing pieces to submit to the Watercolor Wisconsin 2012 juried exhibition, Harry Wirth wasn't sure how far out on a limb he wanted to go.

The Salem-based artist seriously considered entering one of his more traditional watercolors, along with a more recent — and more radical — “window frame” painting, in order to balance the scales a bit.

In the end, though, he took a leap by entering two of his newest, fragmented landscapes, in which he “plays” with the concept of a view being obstructed by something such as a window frame. And that decision served Wirth well.

His painting, titled “Point of View,” was not only chosen for the show's First Award by the jurors, but as one of three pieces purchased by the Racine Art Museum through the show's Memorial Purchase Awards program.

Wirth, who is also an architect and a professor of design at Northern Illinois University, said he was shocked and pleasantly surprised by how well his minimalist work fared in the show, which opened on Sunday, Dec. 9, at the Wustum Museum of Fine Arts, 2519 Northwestern Ave. When artists take off in a new direction, as he did while on sabbatical in 2011, they can't be certain how their latest work will be received, he said.

“It seems the show's jurors were open-minded,” said Wirth ([www.harrywirth.com](http://www.harrywirth.com)).

Keeping an open mind, in fact, was something that the show's two jurors — Jessica Caddell and Richard Born — agreed they wanted to do in looking at the 287 pieces submitted for Watercolor

Wisconsin 2012, according to Caddell. Rather than having pre-conceived notions or looking for specific criteria, she and Born wanted to be able to base their impressions on what they were seeing, said Caddell, who is the executive director of the Freeport Art Museum, in Freeport, Ill. And what they saw was an impressive range of high-quality work, she said.

### If You Go

**WHAT:** Watercolor Wisconsin 2012

**WHEN:** Through April 27. Museum hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

**WHERE:** Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts, 2519 Northwestern Ave.

**COST:** Admission and parking are free.

**INFO:** Go to [www.ramart.org](http://www.ramart.org) or call (262) 636-9177.

“Artists are doing incredible things with watercolor in the last 20 years, and you definitely see that in the works submitted for this show,” Caddell said. Born, too, said he was pleased with the great diversity of approaches to the medium, and that he hopes the final selection reflects the varied uses of watercolor across artists active in Wisconsin.

“While some artists continue to work along traditional watercolor techniques, others clearly are pushing the boundaries of the medium through rich opacities, impacted surfaces and other approaches that belie the transparency of the water-based pigments,” said Born, who is the senior curator of the Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago.

Such range is evident even among the work of the top three award winners which, in addition to Wirth, includes Alice Rossman's “Eastlake” (Second Award) and Patrick Doughman's “The Game of Life” (Third Award). In contrast to Wirth's minimalist approach, Rossman's realistic depiction of a well-worn city street corner, is a very complex, narrative painting, Caddell said. “She's told an entire story in this work,” she said. “It's incredible how much is going on in this piece.”

Doughman, on the other hand, distorts

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### Watercolor Wisconsin 2012 Award Winners

◆ **First Award:** “Point of View,” by Harry Wirth of Salem

◆ **Second Award:** “Eastlake,” by Alice Rossman of Nashotah (formerly of Racine)

◆ **Third Award:** “The Game of Life,” by Patrick Doughman of Cedarburg

◆ **Awards of Merit** were given to Jean Crane of Grafton for “Transition”; Maxine Nobbe of Oshkosh for “NYC Tour Goddess”; and Amy Misurelli Sorensen of Kenosha for “Warrior Cock Fighter.”

◆ **Memorial Purchase Awards** were given as follows: The George Frederiksen Award went to Harold E. Hansen of Hartford for “Beekeeper Jardin du Luxembourg”; the Carolyn Hays Harvey Award went to Patrick Doughman of Cedarburg for “The Game of Life”; and the Barry Nielsen Award went to Harry Wirth of Salem for “Point of View.”

◆ **Merchandise Awards** were also given out to 10 participating artists. For a list, go to [www.ramart.org](http://www.ramart.org).

### Racine County artists featured in exhibit

The following Racine County artists have work in Watercolor Wisconsin 2012: David Jewell of Burlington; Nancy Neider of Caledonia; Sue Horton of Franksville; Robert W. Andersen of Mount Pleasant; and Jerrold D. Belland, Rick Berns, Russell Bohn, Karen Brittain, Rosemary Curtin, Doug DeVinny, Deedee Dumont, Mary Dwyer, Lisa Englander, Nancy Grenebaum, Ann Henkes, Glenn Hickson, Suzanne Kadamian, Edwin C. Kalke, Paula Kalke, Barbara Kukla, Ann R. Shaffer, Connie Sharp, Lin Somogyi, Maggie Venn and Sue Wolff, all of Racine.

### About the cover

**Designed by:** Dan Talsky, [daniel.talsky@journaltimes.com](mailto:daniel.talsky@journaltimes.com) **Artwork:** Clockwise from top left: “The Fortune Teller,” 2012, watercolor and gouache, by Janet Roberts of Brookfield; “Eastlake,” 2012, watercolor, by Alice Rossman of Nashotah; and “The Shore at Last,” 2012, watercolor and ink, by Margaret Schumann of North Prairie. Artwork images courtesy of Racine Art Museum.

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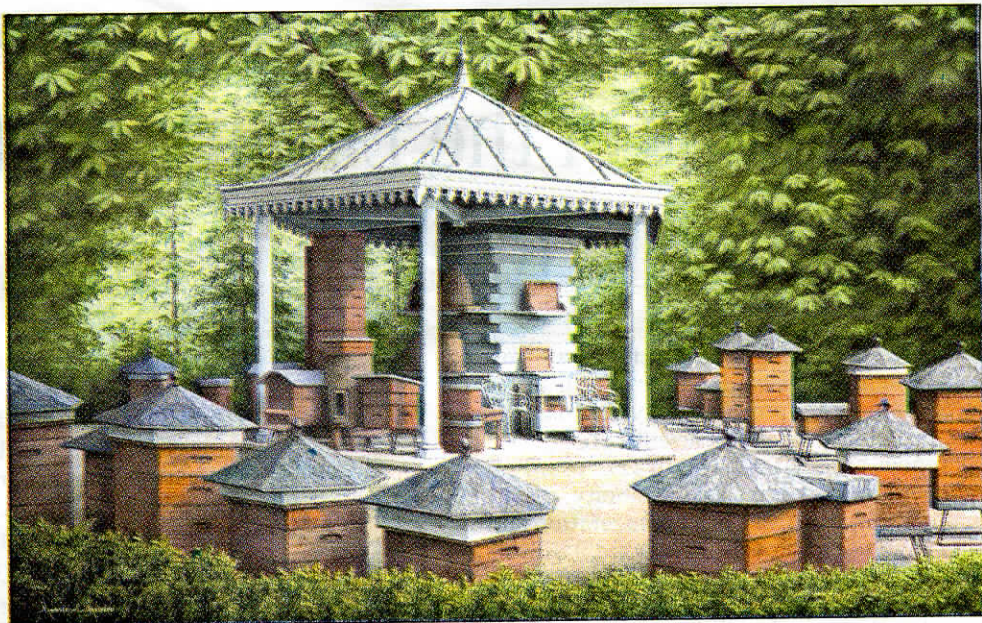


Image courtesy of Racine Art Museum

**"Beekeeper, Jardin du Luxembourg,"** 2012, transparent watercolor, by Harold E. Hansen of Hartford, is one of 119 pieces in this year's Watercolor Wisconsin exhibit at Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts, 2519 Northwestern Ave. through April 27.

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the scale of the figures and uses garish colors to create his own vision of men playing cards in "The Game of Life." Exaggerated expressions, along with arms and hands that are out of proportion to the rest of the body, create a distinct mood in this contemporary work.

"Everything in this piece is very skewed, and that messes with our perspective,"

Caddell said.

These are just three of the 119 pieces, by 86 artists, that make up Watercolor Wisconsin 2012. The show, which runs through April 27, also includes more traditional subject matter, ranging from still lifes to scenic scapes, as well as plenty of interesting characters and abstract visions of artists from throughout the state.

### ART

## Mitchell Wagon Factory Lofts artists open galleries this weekend

**RACINE** — The artists of the historic Mitchell Wagon Factory Lofts, 815 Eighth St., will open their galleries for gift shopping when "Home for the Holidays" is held Friday through Sunday, Dec. 14-16.

More than 15 artists will contribute to the festivities. Art, jewelry, scarves, note cards,

ornaments and baked goods are among items for sale.

People may park in the public lot at Eighth and Center streets. The lofts are one-half block away.

Hours are 3 to 6 p.m. Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. Free coffee will be served. Free doughnuts will be available until 11 a.m. on Saturday.



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