

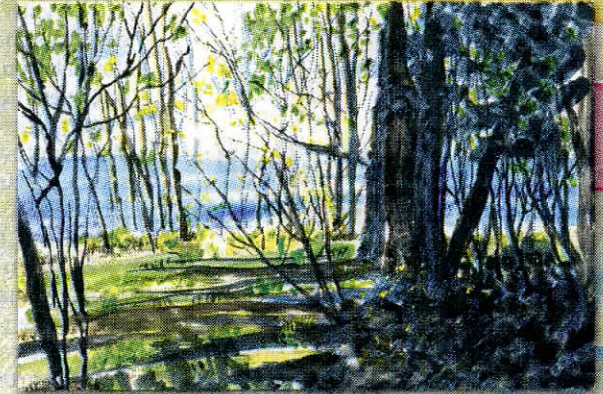
Out & About

The Journal Times
Week of Thursday, January 12, 2017
journaltimes.com/lifestyles/leisure



'WATERCOLOR WISCONSIN'

CELEBRATES 50 YEARS



Celebrating 50 years

'Watercolor Wisconsin 2016' marks exhibit's anniversary

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One of Steve Horvath's favorite pastimes — when he's not teaching at the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design — is walking along Lake Michigan's shoreline. Others include painting and printmaking.

And when the Milwaukee-based artist brought them all together in his piece "Light and Shade," it earned him the jurors' First Award in the "Watercolor Wisconsin 2016" competitive exhibition, currently on display at RAM's Wustum Museum of Fine Arts, 2519 Northwestern Ave.

Horvath's watercolor monoprint captures the feeling of sunlight, filtering down through a grove of trees, looking out over the lake. It was inspired by a scene the artist said he saw in Port Washington — one in which the shadows seemed to crawl across the ground. But for Horvath, its main attraction is the trees — something he said he loves to paint.

He often works "plein air" (outside, on site) and much of his art depicts outdoor scenes, he said. "I just enjoy the way nature has sort of 'arranged' things, with random growths of different size trees, filling in to create a pathway through the trees."

Such natural pathways seem to invite people to walk among the trees, Horvath said, and he tries to create that same feeling in his pieces. "I want people to feel like they could walk right into the painting."

Unexpected pleasures

Horvath used a monoprinting process to create his winning piece — first painting the scene on a sheet of treated acetate and then transferring the image to wet paper by rolling it through a press. While it isn't a difficult process, it can be tricky.

"Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't," he said. "You can't have the paper too wet, or too dry, and you need a good amount of pressure."

If You Go

WHAT: "Watercolor Wisconsin 2016"

WHEN: Now through April 22. Museum hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday (closed Sunday and Monday).

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

COST: Admission is free

INFO: Go to www.ramart.org or call 262-636-9177.

HONORING 50 YEARS

The Racine Art Museum is celebrating both Watercolor Wisconsin's 50th anniversary and Wustum Museum's 75th anniversary with a special exhibition called "Honoring Fifty Years of Watercolor Wisconsin," now on display at its Downtown campus, 441 Main St.

It features works by more than 50 artists which were purchased from past "Watercolor Wisconsin" shows and have become part of RAM's permanent collection. This show will continue at RAM through Feb. 5.

For museum hours and other information, go to www.ramart.org or call 262-638-8300.

The artist — who has also worked with pastels and oil paints — said he enjoys the spontaneity of working with watercolors: "the unexpectedness of what might happen." Sometimes the surprises that occur with water-based mediums lead him to new ideas in painting, he said.

"I like the way it loosens you up a bit as an artist and keeps your mind open," said Horvath, who has taught at MIAD since 1989 and worked as an advertising art director before that.

Celebrating watercolors

His "Light and Shade" — which also earned one of RAM's three Memorial Purchase Awards — is one of 98 works of art, by 71 artists from throughout the state, featured in "Watercolor Wisconsin 2016," which runs through April 22 at

'WATERCOLOR WISCONSIN 2016' AWARDS

In addition to the First through Third place awards, the following awards were issued to artists exhibiting in "Watercolor Wisconsin 2016":

Memorial Purchase Awards

■ Edwin C. Kalke received the Larry Beebe and Robert S. Toivonen Award for "The Last Picture Show I"

■ Steve Horvath received the RuthAnn Pettibone Award for "Light and Shade"

■ Randal Feig received the Vera Roeschen Award for "Vineyard, Casablanca Chile"

Awards of Merit

■ Virgilyn Driscoll, "Acts of War Series #10"

■ Susan Leopold, "Pair and a Spare"

■ Robert Marcella, "Winter's Prelude"

Merchandise Awards

■ Dennis Bayuzick, "Exercise"

■ James Block, "Autumn Ranch"

■ Bruce Boeck, "Waterfall"

■ Michael Kratochwill, "Liquid Lace"

■ Edith Kubicek, "Watering Cans"

■ Carlotta Miller, "Buckets of Blooms"

■ Alice Rossman, "Lyric"

■ Chris Sommerfelt, "Morning Stroll Abstracted"

Wustum, and marks a milestone for the popular show, as it celebrates its 50th year in Racine.

The 2016 artwork was chosen from 272 pieces, submitted by 155 artists, with jurors Peter Power and Doug Stapleton making the selections. Power is associate professor and chair of the Department of Print Media at the School of the Art Institute in Chicago; and Stapleton is associate curator of art with the Illinois State Museum Chicago Gallery, an adjunct faculty member at Columbia College Chicago and a visual artist.

They issued the competition's Second Award to Harry Wirth, of Salem, for his watercolor "Frontier," and the Third Award to Christine Miller, of Whitewater,

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for her piece "A Space-Cowboy Adventure ...Rocket Rodeo Round-up!" done in ink, acrylic marker, graphite and collage. Together with the rest of the artists, they offer work created in various aqueous media, featuring subjects ranging from landscapes and portraits to abstract designs and social commentary.

Also currently on view, in celebration of this exhibition's 50th anniversary, is a show titled "Honoring Fifty Years of Watercolor Wisconsin," which can be seen at the Racine Art Museum's Downtown location, 441 Main St., through Feb. 5. It features works that were acquired from past juried shows for RAM's permanent collection.

Both "Watercolor Wisconsin 2016" and the 50th anniversary show celebrate

RAM's longstanding commitment to the watercolor medium and its Wisconsin artists — a focus which began in 1943 when nearly 50 paintings on paper by contemporary artists working in the Wisconsin Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) were collected, and was solidified in 1966 when the Watercolor Wisconsin competition was launched by the museum, working with the Junior League of Racine.

Since then, RAM has continued to build its watercolor collection through purchase awards and gifts from donors, while also documenting how state artists have approached the medium for more than 50 years.

Broader vision

One thing that has kept "Watercolor Wisconsin" going for so long is that the museum has tweaked the competition through the years, making changes such

as broadening the media that is accepted, said Bruce Pepich, RAM executive director. While a lot of organizations will allow only purely, transparent watercolors in their shows, RAM believes in featuring a broader range of water-based media, Pepich said. And doing so encourages experimentation and growth among artists.

In looking at the 50th anniversary show, one thing that is very apparent among the different artists and their chosen style, is the high quality of craftsmanship, Pepich said.

"You can see the level of time and concentrated effort these artists have applied in creating these paintings," he said. "No matter what style they are working in, that level of expertise comes through."

"Watercolor Wisconsin" is an important exhibit for artists both for the recognition it gives them, and for the opportunity it provides to see how other artists are working," Pepich said.

"It is a great way for our community to be able to celebrate itself."

Local talent

"Watercolor Wisconsin 2016" includes work by more than 20 Racine County artists, as well as those from as far away as Appleton and Wausau. Those from Racine County are: Jimmy Yanny of Burlington; Sue Horton of Franksville; Robert W. Andersen of Mount Pleasant; Jerry Belland, Mary Burant, Ellen Cardwell, Lisa Englander, Maureen Fritchen, Christopher Johns, Edwin Kalke, Jeff Kosmala, John Krewal, Karen Mathis, Sharon Mellberg, Lance Raichert, Linda Somogyi, Susan M. Sorenson, Dina Walker and Sue Wolff, all of Racine; and Norman Abplanalp, Linda Gerard Dzik and Edith Kubicek, all of Waterford.

Wustum Museum is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and admission is free. For more information, go to www.ramart.org.