



Torrance Artists' Guild

P.O. Box 1494, Torrance, CA 90505

July 2020

Next Meeting Tuesday, July 14th at 7:00pm by Zoom



Demonstrator

**David
Wolfram**

David was born in Buffalo, NY; and moved to California in 1975. He graduated With Distinction from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena in 1985 with a BA in Illustration. He was employed for almost 22 years as a Toy Designer, and Design Manager at Mattel Inc. After leaving corporate life, inspired by the California Impressionists, David began expressing himself as a fine artist.



Wind Rippled Madrona Marsh

"I am greatly inspired by the changing qualities of light during the day, and how different conditions affect color. My favorite times of day are sunup and the 'magic moment' of intense color just before sunset; and I try to capture these times in many of my paintings. I find that I am drawn to situations that contrast bold areas of light and shadow, as well as colors and reflections in water.

Currently I divide my painting time between working in oils and pastels, and I like to paint,

[See **David** pg.2]

www.torranceartistsguild.org

Webmaster: Jeannine Madden

torranceartistsguild@gmail.com

Statement of Purpose

The Torrance Artist's Guild is a non-profit corporation organized to cultivate art skills, promote awareness and encourage appreciation of art in our community. It is chartered by the City of Torrance in cooperation with the Cultural Services Division of the Community Services Department. Meetings are held regularly on the second Tuesday of the month.

General TAG Meeting: Online via Zoom until further notice. Board Meeting: TBA
Newsletter Deadline: Mon. 8-28-20
Editor: Alvin Takamori
(310) 941-1866 alvintaka@att.net

TAG Officers

President: Sylvia Smullen
(310) 970-0381 thesmullens@sbcglobal.net

Vice-President: Lynn Attig
(310) 713-6773 lynnattig@gmail.com

Treasurer: Richard Whitehorse
(310) 542-9428 rwhitehorse@earthlink.net

Recording Secretary: Robin Johns
(310) 488-6864 rbroudyjohns@gmail.com

Publicity Chair: OPEN

Membership Chair: Tricia Alexander
(310) 749-0881 triciaalexander@verizon.net

Program Chair: David Wolfram
(310) 376-0898 david.wolfram@yahoo.com

Corresponding Secretary: OPEN

[David, from pg.1]

David Wolfram

whenever possible, 'en plein air'. I feel that painting outdoors is an essential activity for me, because it attunes my eye to the ever changing light and atmospheric conditions that influence color. I can then take this acquired knowledge into the studio to give that work more veracity"



Lunada Canyon Morning

David is a founding Board Member and Studio Artist at Destination: Art, an art Co-op in Old Torrance. Please stop by to visit his studio, and to see the work of a number of excellent South Bay artists. He also teaches, does workshops, demos and judges shows for Southern California Art groups. For more info, check out <http://destinationartsouthbay.blogspot.com/p/front.html> .



**Golden
Hills 4**

**Jean & Jen
in the
Lupine**



President's Message

This is certainly a different world for us as we try to stay in communication with those in our lives. At this point many of us are 'Zooming' several times a week with family, friends and with the organizations in our lives.

Going with this changing world, June 23rd TAG held its first Zoom general meeting. We may have had a few small hiccups, but are happy with the success of the meeting and we look forward to having our second Zoom general meeting July 14th at 7:00, our regularly scheduled meeting night. We hope you will be able to join us. I know we are all looking forward to David Wolfram being our demonstrator for the meeting.

With the cancellation of the Annual Fine Arts Show this September at Malaga Cove, we are planning instead to do a Virtual Fine Arts Show later this year. Details are in the works and will be announced as soon as possible.

Our TAG website still has our Isolation Showcase and we are still looking for the artwork created by you during our continued stay-at-home existence. Please send a jpeg copy of your work to torranceartistsguild@gmail.com. Also send your artwork to our Facebook page at: TAG

We still don't know when we will be able to schedule a regular members' general meeting for TAG. The City of Torrance is following the state's guidelines for large group gatherings, and with the recent uptick in virus cases, it looks like it may be several months away. We will certainly keep you posted.

Please continue to be safe and well.

Sylvia Smullen

Featured Artist

**Esperanza
Deese**



[See Deese, pg.3]

[Deese, from pg.2]



I was born in the Philippines during the great flood of 1972. My father had to take mother to the hospital by boat. All around them was devastation, rice fields just days from harvest all destroyed. When the nurse asked mom what to name me, she said Esperanza, because we have hope. Esperanza is hope in Spanish.

As a young child, I liked to draw and paint with watercolor. But with house chores, school work, and outdoor adventures vying for attention, that childhood interest was left untended, then forgotten. I left home to get an Accounting degree, then a CPA license and then started a lifelong career as an accountant in 1994. In 2003, I migrated to the US with my two children to work at a local CPA firm in Chicago, IL. We lived there until we moved to Southern California in 2007.

When my youngest child graduated from university, and I was finally able to breathe a sigh of relief, a spark of interest in painting was kindled in me. Because I worked full time, I couldn't go to art classes offered on weekdays. I signed up for an online art class in 2017 and following along with the videos during my free time, I learned the technique of alla prima oil painting. I continued to study on my own, seeking out books and other online resources to further my art education.

As with any skill, one has to keep practicing. To force myself to paint daily, I joined a 30 paintings in 30 days challenge in February 2018. A few days into it, I was prompted to add a scripture to each painting I finished and shared on social media. I donated most of my earlier works to my church, Hope Chapel, as raffle prizes during women's events and to raise funds for missions.

In November 2018, Chris asked me to marry him in front of our whole church family at the 9:00 a.m. service. Three months later, February 2019, we exchanged wedding vows. Then 2020 happened. Along with many people, I was laid off in the middle of March because of the pandemic lockdown. I took that time as an opportunity to focus full-time on art. I set up my studio space in the second bedroom and dove back into painting. When the beach was closed, I was inspired to create a collection of paintings focused on beach life. I started putting out one painting daily in our front yard so that neighbors will have something to look forward to. I shared the paintings with stories and scripture on social media to spread joy and hope to people in other places. I also took an online class to learn the business side of art and worked on my website.

Just as soon as I finished painting my beach life collection and updating the website, I was called back to work. God always has perfect timing, doesn't he? He gave me two months to get my art business in place, all the while sustaining me with provision and good health. Now, I'm part-time accountant, part-time artist, full-time prayer warrior.

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." ~ Ephesians 2:10

Thank you for reading my story.

Esperanza Deese

website: esperanzadeese.com

email: esperanza@esperanzadeese.com



Why I Paint What I Paint

I have been watching some realistic painting demonstrations on YouTube. In one of them, Cesar Santos recommended trying to answer three questions for artists about their paintings: “What is my situation in the world? Why do I paint what I paint? What can I do that is powerful?” These seem like great questions for any artist to consider. In what follows, the first section is my interpretation of what Santos meant by the artist’s situation in life. The second and third sections are my attempt to clarify for myself what is my intention at the heart of what I am doing with my choice of subject matter. I sometimes feel slightly vapid in selecting subject matter unconsciously, rather than with a clear intention. For this reason, I was attracted to Santos’ questions. The third question, what makes a painting powerful, is the most challenging for me.

Your situation in life: Painting is a culmination of your life experiences. All of the things, people, and places you have known contribute to it. Whether you are young or old, financially comfortable or struggling to make ends meet, these things shape your perspective on the world, and influence your choice of subject matter. Your painting’s content reflects what is important to you and what concerns you. To some extent, you cannot help but paint about contemporary life, because you are immersed in it. A figure painter may set his or her subject and background in a past period of time, but may unconsciously choose a body type that reflects contemporary ideals. Even a landscape painter is documenting that the sun shines at a certain time of year or that the fog rolls in on June mornings and that trees and streams exist—that humans haven’t yet “paved paradise and put up a parking lot,” as the song goes. Non-objective art could be an exception, yet even shape and color choices seem to have fashions anchored to a period in time.

You can find your inspiration in the patterns of daily life going on around you. As you observe the day-to-day background of your life, you might find subject matter that peaks your interest and invigorates your imagination. You become aware of, and sensitive to, the things around you.

Why I paint what I paint: I want people to respond to my paintings with “awwwwe...,” but without the paintings being trite. I like my paintings to help people feel good by contemplating the majestic and

beautiful in life. Such paintings are a reminder of the finer elements of human experience. In contrast, one of my former life drawing professors likes to paint the faces of men on skid row. Some of his paintings are eight feet tall, consisting of a huge unkempt, weathered, and sad face staring out at the viewer. My teacher would go to Los Angeles and ask men on the street to let him sketch them, making several sketches and offering to give each man his pick of the sketches to keep. My professor ruefully reported that these men invariably seemed to select his best sketch. How did they develop such good taste? I didn’t ask my teacher why he painted these sad sack men, because it seemed likely to me that he was making a social statement, reminding viewers that this aspect of life exists along with the impressive achievements of humanity. In reality, those struggling to survive are vastly more common than are outstanding achievers.

Why I paint what I do is a different question from why do I paint at all. I would probably answer by saying that I want to leave some worthwhile products behind after I am gone. In the meantime, I enjoy my paintings and others do too. I also like challenging myself to find out how skilled I can become. I routinely get myself into predicaments as I paint and seek ways to resolve them. It’s deeply satisfying to finally break through the impasse.

What I can do that is powerful: My former professor’s paintings were certainly powerful. I was even tempted to buy one of his small paintings, because there was something so soulful and, well, beautiful in the eyes gazing out from a mass of wrinkles and a mane of wild, filthy hair. Ultimately, I decided that it would be too much of a downer to have that piece in my home, both for me and for my house guests. I’m not sure such paintings are meant for a home so much as an office space, college, or museum. I first saw my professor’s paintings in the library of the college where he and I worked as faculty members. An entire wall was filled with half a dozen of the eight-foot tall versions of his paintings. The experience of seeing them was unforgettable. I freely acknowledge that my paintings are less powerful.

My painting, “African Mother in a Yellow Dress,” has received a more positive response than

[Why I Paint, from pg.4]

any other of my paintings, followed closely by “Almost Shirtsleeve Weather”. Since one of these paintings was completed at the beginning of my art instruction and the latter represents the current state of my painting skills, I have to conclude that it is the content that is gripping more so than my skill in portraying the scene. Both are mother-daughter paintings, in which one of the two people in each painting is looking directly out at the viewer,



unsmiling. Both paintings provide a background that provides context. These similarities also hold true for my paintings “African Mother in a Blue Dress” and “Green-Eyed Madonna”. These two paintings were the most popular at my solo show in 2016. “Blue Dress” came in first as the popular choice and I had a buyer for “Green-Eyed Madonna,” although he backed out later. My painting of “Jane Goodall with an Infant Chimp” also has a similar format, with Jane looking away and the chimp gazing out at the viewer. This painting has an indistinct background that provides a minimal context. Even my painting of my Siamese cats, “Tai Lounging on Tae” has a similar format, with Tai “unsmilingly” gazing at the viewer while Tae looks out a window.

Another of my mother-child paintings, “Double Devotion” packs a punch because the mother in that one has a large tattoo on her arm. Neither mother nor child is gazing at the viewer, which reduces the impact of the painting. This isn’t one of my popular paintings, although I like it. I was inspired to paint it, after seeing a mother lovingly cradling her toddler, while sporting a full tattoo sleeve. Mike and I were attending an outdoor summer concert, and I responded to the tableau by feeling slightly repelled but also attracted to the sight. I thought this would make an edgy painting. I didn’t photograph



the scene, out of respect for the mother’s privacy, so I essentially had to make up my own composition.

“Dancer at Rest” features a woman gazing unsmilingly at the viewer. This painting isn’t particularly well-received either,

although I like it. I kept working on it until I was satisfied with it. I probably like it in part because for the initial drawing, I used myself as a model. I sometimes think that the subject in this painting may have too intense a gaze. This painting also lacks any contextual clues in the background, which I’m beginning to think tends to detract from the impact of a painting.

I painted some of my portraits, because they were family members (including two paintings of my cats). I painted Jane Goodall, Dalaram Kamareh, and Joshua Bell, because I admire them. They are also attractive, although I intend to paint Gustavo Dudamel, who isn’t traditionally handsome, but sometimes has lovely facial expressions while he is conducting. I hope to capture one of those expressions. He’ll be part of my series “Capture the Rapture,” depicting the intensity of musicians in the throes of a performance.

In each case, there was something that attracted me to the person and scene. Many of my portraits depict a relationship between mother and child that suggests tenderness. The painting “Sweet Dreams” also depicts a tender moment, with a small boy taking a nap with his cat. This is a double portrait, like so many of my paintings are. A trio of figures is supposed to be a magical combination in the art world, but I seem to go for a pair of subjects every time.

Landscapes are a different matter. I usually paint with others, and typically am not the one selecting the scene. The San Luis Obispo landscapes I painted with my artist friend Harvey, and he selected the settings, because he and his wife Kathy live in the

[See Why I Paint, pg.6

[Why I Paint, from pg.5]

area. Of course, I chose what to paint within the setting. I painted our family cabin, because it was a second home for my family as I was growing up and has a romantic look to it. Yosemite's Half Dome and the Redondo Beach Esplanade were plain air locations selected for me. The same is true for the two paintings I did of Chantal's garden, although within the garden, I was able to select the scene I would paint. If there is anything that makes these landscapes powerful, I would say that there is evidence of human presence, usually a dwelling, in the midst of nature.

Can still life paintings be powerful? Last December, I chose to create a still life of persimmons and two other fruits, as a thank you to the woman who had given us a bag of persimmons from her garden. The persimmons were so lovely that I had an urge to paint them! I wanted to try a Cezanne-style composition of fruit on a white linen cloth, with some interesting folds of course. I was pleased with the way the painting turned out. My paintings, "Party Guest Flowers" and "Mother's Day Flowers," I chose to do because of their loveliness and the uplifting occasions on which I received them. Painting a bouquet also allows me to defeat nature to some extent, by preserving the memory of the flowers long after they have perished. These paintings aren't so much powerful as they are colorful and representative of nature's bounty, and the current tradition of giving bouquets on special occasions.

In summary, I was attracted to Cesar Santos' questions because I haven't had a conscious purpose directing my selection of subject matter. I was somewhat chagrined to discover while answering these questions, that I often don't choose my own subject matter. It seems that my situation in life is likely to seep into my paintings even if unintentionally, so perhaps I should think of myself as representing the current era and have a good look around me to see what is worth capturing and commemorating. I like to create paintings that inspire and remind people of the most delightful aspects of human life. Finding what makes a painting powerful still eludes me to some extent. I have tried to work backwards in my thinking from the responses my paintings have had to learn what sorts of compositions resonate with people.

Tricia Alexander

Art Event News

Destination Art Online Show

An exhibit of the Associate Artists is online now - The Studios and Gallery are open for viewing by appointment only. Reserve a time for a party of 5 or less by email at: LocalArtists@destination-art.net providing your name, phone number, email address and preferred time by the half hour Tu-Sat 10am-3pm.

South Bay Watercolor Society

The Annual Member Show will be the weekends of Sept. 5-6, 12-13, & 19-20 from 12 noon- 6:00pm, at Crafted in San Pedro.

Palos Verdes Art Center

The Summer Show will take place from July 18 - Aug. 22, 2020. If necessary, it will be a virtual exhibition.

National Watercolor Society

NWS Gallery will be temporarily closed until future notice.

We plan to hold all the NWS 100th International Open Exhibition Celebration events at the NWS Gallery in October 2020.

Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute

Due to concerns about Covid19, we will have a virtual art exhibit from Sept. 19-30, 2020. The theme is "Social Isolation Art". Show whatever you've been inspired to create during this pandemic. the exhibit will be posted at www.jci-gardena.org
Contact: Stephanie Mayeda (310) 324-6611
smayeda@jci-gardena.org or
Alvin Takamori alvintaka@att.net

Destination: Art – Classes and Workshops

Color Mixing in Watercolor – Louisa McHugh – watercolor, July 15-Aug 12, \$145

Frank Minuto Mentoring On-Line – Frank Minuto – all
Fri, July 31, \$35

www.destination-art.net

Sign up on line.

Destination: Art
(310) 742-3192

LocalArtists@destination-art.net
www.destination-art.net

1815 W. 213th Street, #135
Torrance, CA 90501