



Ridgefield
Guild
of Artists INC.

NEWSLETTER

S P R I N G  2 0 0 6

P.O. Box 552 Ridgefield, CT 06877 | 203.438.8863 | www.rgoa.org

— EXHIBITS —

RGA Exhibitions Calendar through June

SAT. 3/11 – THURS 3/30: RGA STUDENT AND FACULTY SHOW. RGA student and faculty show their work at Ridgefield Public Library, Dayton Room. Opening Reception, Sun. 3/11, 2-4p.m.

SUN. 3/19 – SUN. 4/30: ART IN THE GARDEN – MEMBERS SHOW. Second Annual celebration of growing things, including paintings, photographs, drawings, prints and sculptures, plus fabulous live floral arrangements from the area's garden clubs and installations by Ridgefield's own Garden of Ideas. Receiving: Sun. 3/12 4-6pm; Mon. 3/13 10-4pm; Tues. 3/14 10-2pm. Preview Party (Fundraiser): Sat. 3/18, 5 – 7 p.m., \$25 suggested donation. Opening Reception: Sun. 3/19, 3-5 p.m.

SUN. 5/6 – SUN. 6/4: GARY LICHTENSTEIN: ARTFUL RE-CREATION. Master silkscreen artist Gary Lichtenstein exhibits a selection of silkscreen works, with a display of the materials, presses and process he uses to create both his own pieces and print editions for other known artists. Opening Reception: Sat. 5/6, 3-6 p.m.

SUN. 6/11 – SUN. 7/2: CAMERA WORKS. All works using photographic materials, images and techniques. Includes video, multimedia, short films. Receiving: Sun. 6/4, 4 – 6 p.m., Mon. 6/5, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., Tues. 6/6, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Opening Reception: Sun. 6/11, 2 – 4 p.m.

Plant Your Work In *Art In the Garden*

RGA'S 2ND ANNUAL ART IN THE GARDEN SHOW will offer six whole weeks of hanging, standing and growing artworks from March 19 through April 30. In addition to the floral arrangements created by area garden clubs and designers, this year's exhibition will feature actual garden installations by Ridgefield's Garden of Ideas, plus indoor and outdoor works in metal, wood and natural components.



A glimpse into the magical landscape at Garden of Ideas in Ridgefield. Photo by Margarita Vatis.

Specifics for RGA members who want to exhibit:

- Bring 1 or 2 pieces, any medium(s). No floral still-lives: this is a show about Gardens and landscapes. We will try to accommodate all submitted work and can guarantee to show at least one piece per exhibitor.

- RGA will begin collecting a \$5.00 per piece exhibition fee as of this show.

Receiving: Sunday, March 12, 4 – 6 p.m., Monday, March 13, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., Tuesday, March 14, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

A schedule of events for 'Art in the Garden': Saturday, March 18, 5 – 7 p.m.: Preview Party fundraiser, at the Guild. All are welcome to attend! \$25.00 per person donation.

Celebrate Spring!

Help raise money for the Guild while previewing Art in the Garden at the Wine & Cheese party on March 18 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. Creative floral arrangements and fine art will transform the galleries into a fabulous garden. Bring a friend and support the arts and the Guild. Suggested Donation \$25.

Sunday, March 19, 1:30 – 3 p.m.: ARTalk at Ridgefield Library, Program Room: "Artful Garden" free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served.

Sunday, March 19, 3 – 5 p.m.: Opening reception at the Guild. View the art and vote for your favorite piece. People's Choice awards will be given on the last day of the show.

RGA Regular Gallery Hours:
Wednesday – Sunday 12 noon to 4:00 pm

President's Message

Dear Fellow Members:

The month of March brings the promise of spring and with it our member show—Art in the Garden. This year we are excited to be working with the talented husband and wife team—Ilsa Svendsen and Joseph Keller of Garden of Ideas. For those of you not familiar with this extraordinary stroll garden located on Rt. 116 in Ridgefield, I highly recommend a visit. Inspiration abounds with poetry on chalkboards, rock grottos, and metal sculpture living amongst beautiful and unusual native plants. Ilsa and Joseph will be installing several themed gardens amongst our artwork. In addition, our friends from Caudatowa, Ridgefield Garden Club and Redding Garden Club will once again join us by designing floral arrangements inspired by selected artwork. Viewers will be encouraged to vote for their favorite piece and cash awards will go to the top three choices. This should be a very beautiful and well-attended show.

March also sees the Guild continuing to grow. We are proud to announce that Mary Jones has joined our board as Strategic and Organizational Planner. Mary has served on many boards in Ridgefield and brings her MBA to the table as a valuable asset to the current board. Although she would claim she is not artistic, I am always amazed at the creative way she approaches and solves problems. Creative ability runs in the family as her son Gabriel Jones is a long-time student at the Guild and is determined to own his own gallery one day.

Margarita Vatis with her trademark tireless energy and pas-

sionate enthusiasm has been hauling away years of debris out of the basement to fashion an EARTHscapes working studio/laboratory. Her mission is highlighted on the following pages.

Artists John Cairnwright and Kim Hanna have joined Margarita to help spearhead this initiative.

As we look back at some of the goals set over the summer we are gratified to see a lot of our hopes and dreams being realized in these few short months. From selling more art during our exhibitions to the revamping of the gift gallery into a combined office space for Joan Isaac, our coordinator, the Guild has become an exciting place to be and work. Laurie McGavin Bachmann reports back on our progress.

I'd also like to thank everyone who answered our first year-end appeal. Special thanks goes out to Adam Salvo whose more than generous response contributed in a large part to our ability to proceed forward on this transformation of the front gallery.

On a final note, I would encourage all our members to come out to our preview fundraising party on March 18 from 5-7pm. Floral arrangements will all be in place and the Guild will be transformed into a floral oasis—a wonderful way to usher in my favorite season—SPRING!! I hope to see you there.

Here's to positive energy, contagious enthusiasm and artistic growth!

Cheers,

Rachel Volpone

Member News

Guild member and Faux finisher Victor DeMasi will exhibit his work and demonstrate his skills in Utrecht Holland at the end of March. DeMasi will attend the International Salon of Decorative Painters. In May of 2002 DeMasi was honored with a lifetime membership in the International Salon of decorative artists, entry is by rigorous review and invitation only. Salon is descended from the ancient Schilderers Guild of Europe, which is more than 1000 years old.

Ancient Schilderers worked in paint and gold leaf and are known to have decorated the shields of Viking warriors.

Modern Salon members meet every year to demonstrate and lecture for each others benefit. DeMasi has participated in recent gatherings in San Antonio, Brugge, and Oslo. At the June 2004 meeting the Norwegian painting museum purchased part of DeMasi's display for its collection. Present Salon members include some working on Versailles Palace and Westminster Palace.

New quilting and fabric store to open in downtown Ridgefield! All are welcome

to the grand opening celebration on Sat. March 11 of the Quilter's Alley. The Quilter's Alley will feature unique fabric and notions for the fiber artist as well as the traditional quilter. They will also stock a selection of quilted gifts for the non-quilter. The shop is owned by Roxanne and Stuart Lasky, local Ridgefield residents. Roxanne is an award-winning artist and teacher. Classes will be forming for all levels. Located at 424 R Main Street (the alley between Cappiello Bros. Jewelry and Wm. Raveis Real Estate) 203-431-0023.

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TAKING STOCK RGA Branding Update



By Laurie McGavin Bachmann

In the Fall 2005 newsletter, we informed the RGA membership about several branding initiatives under way at The Guild. With this branding update, we aim to provide a progress report—and fill you in on some of RGA's new goals. Taking stock is an important part of any goal-oriented process. By keeping tabs on incremental progress, not only can you keep up a head of steam—you can also pat yourself on the back. Perhaps one of the most significant branding steps RGA has taken this year is to set a tone—an appealing tone that is lining up with RGA's mission, exhibition and education goals and desired personality.

Desired Brand Attributes

Last summer when our RGA brand conversation got going, several of us met to articulate and list desired brand attributes. These attributes (or personality traits) included phrases like: vital and visible; creative and community-oriented; educational; growth-oriented; fresh; innovative; and arts-minded in an encouraging, approachable and collaborative way. In the short time I have been on the RGA Board, I have seen The Guild take on many of these qualities.

As The Guild's tone and personality have been developing, I have also seen a growing, appreciative arts audience that includes not only our 200-plus member

artists, but also new artists and designers in our region, art students of all ages, art lovers, art collectors, curators and critics. Lively collaborations with The Aldrich, The Ridgefield Public Library, Town Hall, Ballard Park, local garden clubs, and others are all becoming part of The Guild's secret sauce.

Brand Focus

During the 2005-2006 exhibition calendar year, the focus of The Guild's branding efforts has been on a cohesive, lively and friendly presentation of its mission: As a regional and community-based organization, The Ridgefield Guild of Artists seeks to promote the visual arts and arts education by providing: 1) high quality gallery space for exhibitions; 2) art classes for children and adults; 3) opportunities for artist-in-residency programs; and 4) art lecture series on site and in collaboration with other cultural organizations.

The high quality of the exhibitions this year (along with the beautiful invitations and delicious receptions) has not only attracted new members, but has also expanded The Guild's overall audiences. Special events surrounding the exhibitions are also enabling The Guild to grow both its mailing list and network of artists, teachers, supporters, and potential partners.

Branding Direction

Now that The Guild has been successfully nurturing the tone it wants to convey (that intangible, *je ne sais quoi* at the heart of any branding campaign), there are several trickle-down areas that are simultaneously being addressed. The galleries' reception area is being reconsid-

ered to provide a more unified receiving space and gift gallery display. The Guild's collateral is also in the process of being redesigned with a look and feel that will inform both print and web components.

In addition, an attractive exhibition/event calendar at-a-glance has been developed. We are also keeping track in a press portfolio of the coverage The Guild and some its artists have received in the New York Times, New York Magazine, Ridgefield Press, Wilton Bulletin, and Danbury News-Times. There are also new and emerging education programs and community projects being developed that will enhance The Guild's place within both our own community and the larger arts community in our region. That's a lot of progress in a short period of time!

Consider Renting the Gallery Space for your Next Event!

RATES FOR PARTY RENTAL

*\$300 non-member \$250 member
for any evening Friday-Sunday

*\$150 non-member

\$100 member for any evening
Monday-Thursday

**Liability Insurance Required*

RATES FOR LECTURES/ MEETING RENTAL

\$40/hour non-member

\$25/hour member –

2 hour minimum required

STUDIO SPACE AVAILABLE TO RENT (depending on availability)

\$15/hour to members only.

Call RGA Office for details,
438-8863

Q & A

With Kim Hanna



RGA Member and Artist Kim Hanna—photo by Margarita Vatis

In an effort to offer insight with one of our working artists, we posed these questions to Kim Hanna. Kim's work is currently represented by Bryant Street Gallery in Palo Alto, California. Her work has been exhibited and collected on both sides of the United States. Her abstract and representational paintings are characterized by beautiful color, whimsical drawings and an overall lyrical quality.

When did you first become interested in art?

My mother painted before she had kids. Growing up her paintings were always hung in a prominent place in our house. They still are. I remember she gave me a box of 64 crayons—brand new—the one with a sharpener—to keep me busy as she tended to five other children. I have been drawing for as long as I can remember.

What mediums do you work in—special techniques?

Now I work in oil and acrylic on wood panels. But I like to use what is at hand and immediate—it keeps me honest. I want to explore using more natural materials in my work.

What inspires you?

I work from the inside out. People inspire me—my connection with them; what they tell me about themselves; and what they teach me about myself. Color inspires me, and other working artists inspire me. Films inspire me. There is beauty everywhere—even on a side of a dumpster—the rust, peeling paint, graffiti, and a cracked sidewalk. Everything in nature inspires me. How can it not? I try and avoid applying paint too consciously or having a preconceived idea. I like accidents. I like going with things that just happen. I have enjoyed a mono-print class I've taken here at the Guild recently because there are a lot of unexpected "gifts" that happen during the process. Being able to "see" them is the trick now

Are there particular artists that you admire most of all?

Particular artists I admire are the Abstract Expressionists. I read somewhere that true artists seek to express inner essential feelings to express the spirit or soul. I have always admired Paul Klee and the Blue Rider artists. Lately I have been looking at Gorky and Hans Hofmann. I see how my painting is evolving and then look up the artists the work is reminding of—I get guidance that way.

How long have you been a Guild member and what do you take away from your experience here?

I became involved in The Guild 3 years ago, soon after I moved from the West Coast. The Guild has offered me a place

to interact with other artists and get feedback on my work. I found that the more I put in to the organization, the more I get out of it. It offers me a place to try new concepts, new mediums, mostly though it has become a place where I can continue to evolve as an artist.

Your work seems to be moving in another direction, can you tell us about it?

Too often if an artist as attained some level of success, they tend to stay with what is comfortable. I like to be pushed into places that make me find new solutions, new ways of seeing. When I can vacillate between the conscious and the unconscious and express it through my work then the work is a success. Order within the chaos, finding a place in the world...

What is your involvement in the Earthscapes project?

I was invited to the first earthworks meeting where our Program Director (Margarita Vatis) introduced artist JM Carnright and laid the groundwork for our earthscapes initiative. Carnright's work incorporates natural elements symbolizing nature's primal force and was a great starting point for our discussions. As we explored the aesthetics and ephemeral quality of earth art, I found myself remembering a small sweet drawing I saw once, maybe 20 years ago, of blueberries made simply with the juice of the blueberries themselves. There was something so realistic, true and minimal about the image. I was reminded of how I once used to paint the ocean with the water from the ocean. I imagined drawing a tree with charcoal from the fallen burnt limbs of that very tree. Still, I don't call myself an environmental artist but I do have a core sensibility that resonates with the same essential truths that are a product of earth art and which I would like to convey to others.

eARThsapes

Anyone reading Kim Hanna's profile in this newsletter will not be surprised to learn of her key role as a creative force in RGA's exciting new initiative, eARThsapes: Caring for the Earth Through the Arts, which will be put forward with the opening of the Art in the Garden show on March 19th 2006. Several free earth art workshops will be offered and the public will be introduced to the "PrimitiveFuturisms" artworks of JM Carnright (an eARThsapes creative partner). Carnright's wood sculptures present a compelling abstract exploration of time, offering objects and imagery indicative of Nature's primal force. By putting the public in contact with the combined qualities of artistic expression and the forces of nature we hope to educate, create meaning and deepen personal experience of our shared eco space. Margarita Vatis, RGA Program Director, is responsible for facilitating the creative development and defining scope of the project. In basic terms, eARThscape artworks will be made of natural materials (such as rocks, sticks, soil,

handmade paper, natural pigments and so on) that are left to change and eventually revert back to nature through natural conditions. In a broader sense, it will also refer to any type of art that helps improve our relationship with the natural world and will include artwork that is a public intervention, is participatory or is based in new media or sound art. Emphasis will also be placed on nurturing new collaborations between artists and the larger community of scientists, educators and special interest groups. Altogether, there are four phases (educational programs, an on-site Environmental Studio, outdoor eARThscape gallery spaces/ installations and a connection to the hiking trail behind the RGA gallery) which are estimated will take the course of an entire year to implement. Artists with an expressed dedication to the environment in their existing body of work or private individuals with environmental concerns who are interested in supporting our efforts are encouraged to contact Margarita Vatis at (203.438.8863).

MEMBER NEWS

(continued from page 2)

"Landscape - New York/New England" Beginning March 26th, Will Kefauver's work will be appearing at "The Heights Bistro & Bar" in Yorktown Heights, NY. Will's landscapes in oil celebrate the beauty of the Westchester countryside. The show runs through June. The restaurant recently received a "Very Good" from The New York Times, so a visit will satisfy your sophisticated taste in art and food! Call 914-962-3777 for information.

Connie Freid had two paintings, Veil of Tears and Fragile Beauty, juried into "Re-Flowering the Garden: Women and Nature." The exhibit runs from March 4 through March 25 at the Mills Pond House Gallery in St. James, NY.

Paula Renee will be having a solo exhibition at Rockwell Art & Framing, 379 Danbury Rd. (Rt. 7, just past the high

school) in Wilton, opening April 5 through May 9, with a reception on Sunday, April 9 from 3-5 pm. She will be exhibiting her tapestries, woven paintings, dimensional paper constructions and mixed media collage.

Paula Renee's and new member Art Anderson's photographs are in the 26th Annual Juried Photo Show of the New Canaan Society for the Arts at the Carriage Barn Arts Center, Waveny Park, New Canaan February 5 through March 5.

Mary E. Whitehill has been invited to hold an exhibition "Orange County Vistas" at SUNY at Orange, Middletown NY from March 1 - April 2, 2006. M. E. Whitehill wtrclr@juno.com. My web site www.mewwhitehill.com.

The Orkney Art Adventure offers the chance to learn the

white-line woodblock technique introduced by Blanch Lazelle in Provincetown in the 1930's (and featured at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts several years ago). The adventure provides accommodations AND instruction in a fine B & B, as well as many excursions into the countryside. Contact Jeanne Rose at 516.978.2260, or see www.rose-crossing.com. Highly recommended by RGA member Louise Bachler!



"Night Weeds for Harry #1" (2005). by Nancy Lasar. Monotype, 30" x 44".

In the Studio with Betsy Goodenough *by Ray Bigelis*



Heavens To Betsy! Blend a Studio Art degree from Skidmore College with corporate advertising and graphic design experience, mix with sales promotional work and publishing with a dash of trade exhibit design, throw in some packaging design skills, and then combine all of that with inspiration, and what do you get? Betsy Goodenough's brainstorm: to create a unique stationery business in Ridgefield, Connecticut and sell her own line of original and artistic work. Betsy's inspiration, Heavens To Betsy! is now a successful establishment in Ridgefield and the virtual world (www.heavensto-betsy.com) offering an expanded line of stationery products. Betsy's products include not only notecards and notepads, but also bound journals, pocket journals, gift enclosures, and much more.

Betsy's enterprise evolved from her graphic design business, Goodenough Design. It developed into a passion that draws on her creativity and her interest in

old images, antique engravings, and woodcuts, and offers a wide range of artistic creations that she has incorporated into original and appealing stationery. Her premium stationery products, all printed on high-quality recycled paper and often hand-tied with raffia, have eye-appeal. They bring to mind a special gift for a special person—for any occasion.

Betsy has exhibited to acclaim at the National Stationery Show in New York City and her work was selected for a "Best New Products" display in 1999. Her Nature and Garden collection will be featured at Art in the Garden opening March 18, 2006. Other stationery designs include Nautical, Animal, Holiday, and Special Occasion collections. Betsy sells to stores throughout the country, and is a member of the Ridgefield Chamber of Commerce.

All designs can be viewed on her website, along with a convenient mail/fax order form. Betsy's stationery product line has been featured in numerous magazines, among them *Victoria*, *Country Home*, *Country Living Gardener*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Greetings* etc., *Gifts & Decorative Accessories*, and *Giftware News*.

Betsy's home environment, her cozy lakeside cottage with art studio, and the sights and sounds of nature nourish her artistic inspiration. Hiking, tennis, canoeing, and kayaking provide distraction after work, as does Bailey, her calico cat.

To learn more about Heavens To Betsy! and Betsy Goodenough's unique talents in this art form, visit her website, or contact her at 203-431-6363. You just may exclaim "Heavens To Betsy!" when you do. Those receiving that special gift from Betsy's selection of premium stationery products will most certainly do the same.

Live Model Drawing with Victor DeMasi

Every Thursday evening from 7 to 9:30 join Redding artist Victor DeMasi at the Ridgefield Guild of Artists for figure drawing. Live male and female models on alternating weeks provide two, five, ten, and twenty minute poses. DeMasi monitors the sessions, which are open to the public. The fee is twelve dollars for non-members, ten for guild members, and eight dollars for students. Modeling is in the classical tradition and there is no formal instruction. Call Victor DeMasi at 938-9016 for information.



CALL FOR ART

NEW YORK, NY: Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Art Club, Inc.
110th Annual Open Juried Exhibition at the National Arts Club,
Oct. 5-27, 2006. Open to women artists. Media: oil, acrylic,
watercolor, pastel, graphics and sculpture. Juried by slides.
Over \$8000 in awards. Entry fee: \$30/members & associates,
\$35/non-members. Slide entry postmarked by July 3, 2006.
For prospectus send SASE to Sheila Lavovitch, 33 East 35th
Street, Patterson, NJ 07514. You may download a prospectus
at www.clwac.org.

Mark Your Calendars ARTalk Lecture Series



Garden of Ideas owners Joseph Keller, Ilsa Svendsen and Emma the Garden dog.

SUNDAY, MARCH 19TH

The Artful Garden

With Ilsa Svendsen & Joe Keller

Ridgefield Public Library, Dayton Room at 1:30pm

SUNDAY, MAY 21ST

Pastel Demonstration

With Tom Brenner

Ridgefield Public Library, Dayton Room at 1:30pm

For your information, submit news to:
rvolpone22@comcast.net or mail to RGA, PO Box 552,
Ridgefield, CT 06877.

A Month for Individual Shows at RGA

The Guild's board of directors recently voted to set aside the month of January each year for private art shows. "Private" refers to exhibition usage of the Guild gallery space by persons or groups, other than for members' or juried exhibitions; or artists specially invited to exhibit by the Guild board. All artists are eligible to apply for a January show either alone or in collaboration with others for the same time slot or for different, shorter periods within the month. The Guild will continue to charge a gallery fee of \$500 for use of the venue. Exhibitors will be selected on the basis of their applications. Applications for January 2007 are due on July 1, 2006. For a copy of our Private Exhibition Policy and Application, call the Guild office at 203-438-8863 or stop in during office hours, Wed. through Friday, noon – 4 p.m.

Come Join the RGA Team—Seeking 2 Key Board Members

We currently have two Board positions open for Publicity and Special Events. These members would work very closely with other board members. If you like to work on projects with a team of creative and positive people, we'd love to talk to you. Call the office at 438-8863.



Watercolor by Gabe Jones, a student of Carol Miller.

C A L E N D A R

RG STUDENT/FACULTY SHOW

Saturday, March 11-March 30, Ridgefield Public Library, Dayton Room,
Reception: March 11 from 2-4pm

ART IN THE GARDEN

Receiving: March 12 from 4-6pm; March 13 from 10-2pm; and March 14 from 10-12noon
Pickup: April 30 from 4:00pm-5:00pm; May 1 from 10-2; May 2 from 10-2pm
Preview Party: March 18 from 5-7, Public Reception: March 19 from 3-5pm

ARTALK –THE ARTFUL GARDEN WITH ILSA SVENDSEN AND JOSEPH KELLER

Sunday, March 19 at 1:30pm, Dayton Room, Ridgefield Public Library, Main Street

ARTALK—PASTEL DEMONSTRATION AND TALK BY ARTIST TOM BRENNER

Sunday, May 21 at 1:30, Dayton Room, Ridgefield Public Library

GARY LICHTENSTEIN: ARTFUL RECREATION

Reception: Saturday, May 6 from 3-6pm

SERENDIPITY

Sunday, May 7 from 10am-4pm, Ballard Park, rain or shine

Ridgefield Guild of Artists
PO Box 552
Ridgefield, CT 06877

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH 18 & 19

PREVIEW FUNDRAISER PARTY
OPENING FOR ART IN THE GARDEN

MARCH 19

ARTALK—ARTFUL GARDEN
WITH ILSA SVENDSEN &
JOSEPH KELLER

MAY 6

GARY LICHTENSTEIN:
ARTFUL RE-CREATION

INSIDE—In the Studio with Betsy Goodenough by Ray Bigelis • Q&A with Kim Hanna