

MAY ART SHOW PREVIEW

Oil Painters of America 18th annual National Juried Exhibition of Traditional Oils

Oil Painters of America's highly anticipated 18th annual National Juried Exhibition of Traditional Oils will take place May 1-31, 2009, at Sage Creek Gallery, in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Artists throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico are vying for a number of valuable awards, including this year's top prize, the American National Award of Excellence, valued at \$22,000.

Considered one of the most competitive competitions in the country, OPA traditionally receives over 2,500 entries for its national exhibition of which only 200 artists are chosen to display their work. The public is invited to view and purchase the artwork throughout the exhibition period.

OPA will host a series of educational events for artists and collectors that coincide with the opening of the exhibition, May 1-3, 2009. Master Signature painter and this year's Juror of Awards will be Kevin Macpherson. And as tradition dictates, Friday night marks the opening of the exhibition at Sage Creek Gallery and culminates with the awards ceremony at Santa Fe's historic La Fonda Hotel.

For OPA artist **Debra Joyce Dawson**, traveling to paint and painting to travel has become a way of life.

"I've painted across America and around the world, and my life and work are enriched by visual imagery such as the quiet majesty of sunrise through pollution haze, the excitement of splashes of brilliant color swirling against the dusty backdrop of India, and the drama of the red cloaked monks of Bhutan walking amidst wind-whipped prayer flags," says Dawson.

Carol Lee Thompson's accepted painting, *In the Eyes of the Watermen*, was



Debra Joyce Dawson, *Ebb Tide*, oil on primed panel, 24 x 30"



Ellen Buselli,

Pueblo Magic, oil on linen, 20 x 24"



Carol Lee Thompson, *In the Eyes of the Watermen*, oil, 11½ x 20"



influenced by the time she spent as a child crabbing with her late father in the Chesapeake Bay.

"This simple waterman's piercing blue eyes were as captivating as his life stories," says Thompson. "Despite enormous personal loss, his eyes still sparkled. I wanted to combine his portrait with a composition that abstracted his life of labor."

Ellen Buselli has visited New Mexico many times to paint and collect pueblo pottery, and the region is one of her favorite places in the world.

"In the painting *Pueblo Magic*, the still life is set in front of a warm adobe backdrop creating a rich earth feeling," says Buselli. "The light and color of the setup was magical, like New Mexico. Composition, color, values, light, and shadow created a concept about these particular objects and their origins."

Tom Nachreiner, gravitates to the urban environment and architecture for much of his inspiration, but being a country boy, says he is also "humbled by God's sheer beauty in nature and the human form." His juried-in painting, *Homestead Memories*, is of a rusted old tractor with falling down buildings and tall weeds, and was painted on location in the country near Algoma, Wisconsin.

When **Leah Lopez** paints, she begins as an observer, noting form described by light, the atmosphere, and the subtleties of color.

Leah Lopez, *Daisies in Blue and White Vase*, oil on panel, 12 x 9"



Bill Davidson, *Cascade Canyon Creek*, oil, 15½ x 40½"



Suchitra Bhosle, *Baskina in Sunlight*, oil on linen, 18 x 24"



Tom Nachreiner, *Homestead Memories*, oil on canvas, 18 x 24"



Stacy Barter, *Pear and Lilies on My Parisian Shawl*, oil on linen, 24 x 18"

"Soon thereafter is the natural shift to participant as my responses guide how I apply the paint while drawing attention to what I found most beautiful in my model," says Lopez. "I find inspiration in visually exciting moments, which are often fleeting and therefore more precious and exhilarating to pursue."

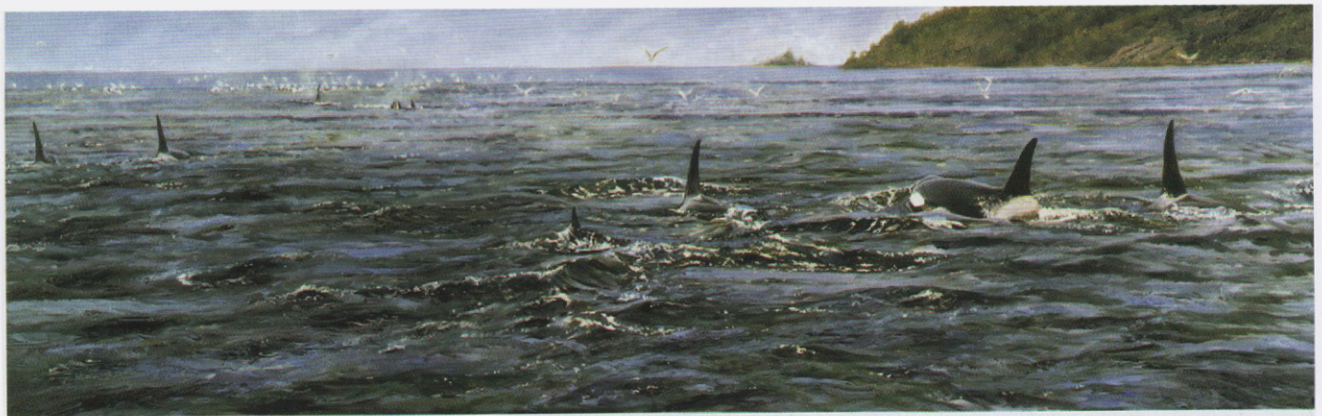
Formal study of the oil painting medium has deepened **Richard Laurent's** knowledge of art history.

"Using this traditional approach to painting, I often explore contemporary themes, however," says Laurent. "My goal with each painting is twofold: to create a compelling structural entity and to communicate my personal vision of the subject."

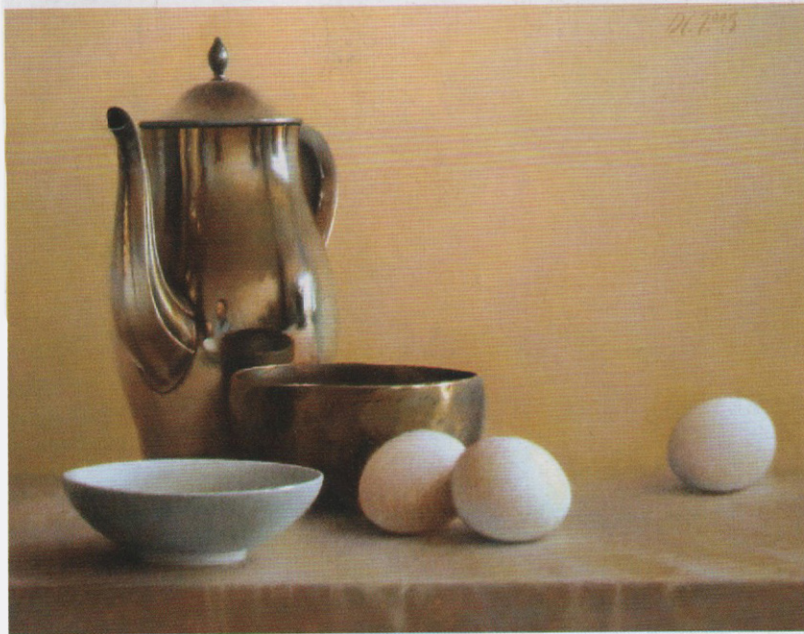
David Gray's work is influenced by both his intellectual and spiritual points of view, as he appreciates the composition and draftsmanship of a piece, as well as the poignant, indefinable appeal of convincingly and reverently translating 3-D objects onto canvas.

"I feel that *Common Things* is a strong representation of who I am as an artist at this moment on my journey, and I am gratified to have it included in such a great exhibit," Gray says.

All of **Stacy Barter's** paintings are done on the spot, from life.



Linda Besse, *Ocean Feast*, oil, 14½ x 47"



David Gray, *Common Things*, oil on panel, 11 x 14"



"I find it so exhilarating and challenging watching the light change throughout the day and feeling the pressure as flowers begin to wilt or the session is coming to an end with the model," says Barter. "I adhere to the wet-in-wet, alla prima technique of painting. I love the juicy, fluid, painterly feeling that it gives to my work."

Mark H. Brown paints the essence of light as it reveals the subtle nuances of color and form in a still life or landscape. He wants his viewers to experience joy, peace, and a sense of elegance in his paintings.

"I'm inspired by the artistic genius of God, evident all around us. I seek to explore and reveal the beauty of His creation," says Brown.

In painting *Basking in Sunlight*, **Suchitra Bhosle's** interest was in capturing the sunlight's effects on the subject.

"As plein air painting demands a quick response to blocking in colors due to the changing light conditions, this particular piece pushed me to be more impressionistic in my painting style than I normally would do and the result was surprising and fresh," says Bhosle.

Edward Aldrich's juried-in painting, *Winter Warmth*, is a piece about the colors of winter.

"Greys, oranges, greens, reds, blues all can be seen in a simple winter setting, and I was fascinated by the interplay of these diverse hues," says Aldrich. "Adding the fox was a given as it provides life and focus to the piece while complementing the colors of its surroundings."

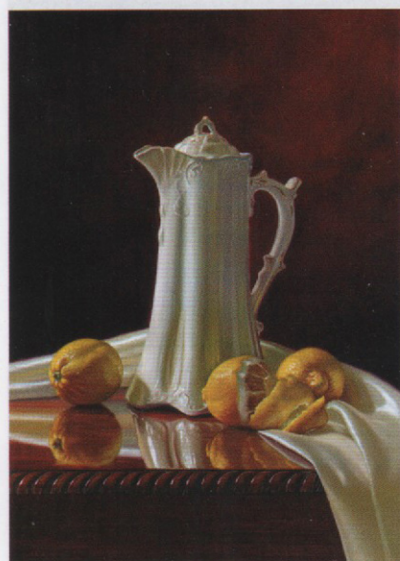
Bill Davidson's palette is filled with color, and as subtle and defined as in nature.

"Wherever I am in the world, I set free my reasoning, break open my thoughts, and

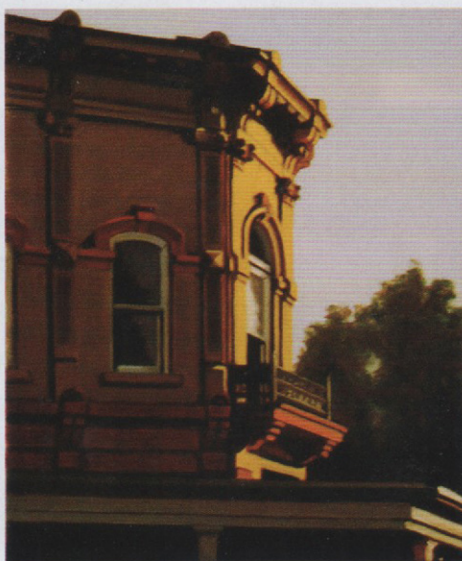
Stephanie Birdsall, *Mary's Garden*, oil on linen panel, 9 x 12"



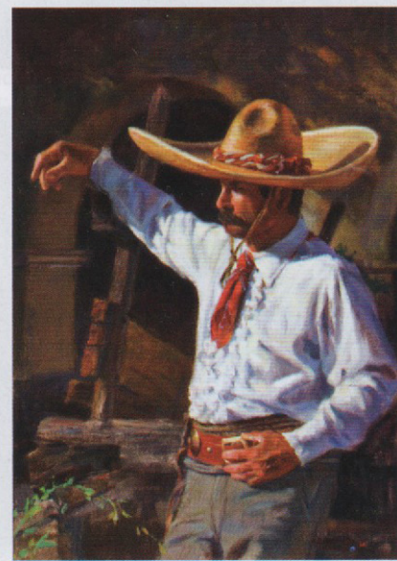
Edward Aldrich, *Winter Warmth*, oil on linen, 16 x 30"



Mark H. Brown, *The Chocolate Pot*, oil on canvas, 22½ x 16"



Susan Romaine, *Plaza Corner*, oil, 16 x 12"



Sherry Blanchard Stuart, *Un Dia del Sol (A Day in the Sun)*, oil on linen, 20 x 14"

I achieve connection with the awe and essence of a place," says Davidson. "Its characteristics release illumination, imagination, and my oil pigment and I come to the unmistakable 'sense of place.'"

Fred Doloresco's subjects include figures in an interior setting and in a landscape both in the rural Midwest as well as on trips to Italy, France and Cornwall.

"Plein air studies are used to capture the emotion and sensitivity of the moment and then transposed to larger studio work that is more complex in color and brushwork," says Doloresco. "Asymmetry in design, harmony in color and the quality of light are goals of the work, and like many painters I am drawn to the palette of the early morning and evening."

As an impressionist painter, **Dan Beck** is more interested in playing with the visual elements of line, shape value, edge, texture and color than in aiming for some kind of exactness.

"I like the potential for mystery and the room for intuition to play a big part in the painting process," says Beck.



Richard Laurent, *Utrecht*, oil on board, 16 x 20"



Judith Carbine, *Late Summer, Sebasco*, oil on panel, 12 x 16"



Wes Hyde, *High Strung*, oil on linen, 10 x 12"

"To have been accepted into the OPA shows and to have won awards in them, along with sticking to my guns about what and how I paint, are what I'm most proud of in my career so far."

Mary Maxam frequently uses fly-fishers as part of a story or scene, as evidenced in her piece *Ed on the Lochsa*.

"Ed is a good friend and one of my husband's fishing partners," says Maxam. "Often, my inspiration for painting is in the beautiful scenery and gardens of the Northwest."

Karen Lawrence has always been intrigued by how people live.

"I see in people's spaces not just architecture and furnishings, but a story of the history of their life," says Lawrence. "I want to transport the viewer to a time and place that is warm and inviting, therefore familiar."

Judith Carbine searches for textural contrasts to use in her paintings. Her juried-in piece, *Late Summer, Sebasco*, is a prime example of what she finds.

"The hard, roughness of the rocky ledge in the foreground plays against the softness of the grasses and foliage above it," says Carbine. "I am truly honored that this painting was chosen for inclusion in this OPA national exhibit."

Sherry Blanchard Stuart is inspired by the people, animals and landscape of the American West.

"The quality of light, the vastness and uniqueness of the landscape are all contributing factors to this inspiration," says Stuart. "I seek interesting light qualities that come from a direct observation of nature and a reverence for its truth and beauty."

Whether traveling to explore a different culture or just walking around his home city of Chicago, **Wesley James Drake** constantly observes the effects of light and atmosphere around him.

"I'm waiting and watching for that moment when the rhythms of nature come together to create a mood that I can't wait to capture on canvas," says Drake. "Painting from life affords me the ability of translating those moods into a painting when working back in the studio."

Wes Hyde has always had a fascination with music, and as a painter, two of his favorite subjects are still life and wildlife.

"Bringing these elements together in *High Strung* was a true joy," says Hyde. "I hope this composition will resonate with the viewer as strongly as it has with me."

Joyce Hall tries not to paint formal portraits of people or animals, but rather moments in their lives.

"The creative challenge is to produce a painting that reflects my world in an uncontrived manner, an instant in time that the viewer can personally relate to," says Hall. "My son Dan having a cup of coffee before heading out in *Morning Coffee* is a perfect example."

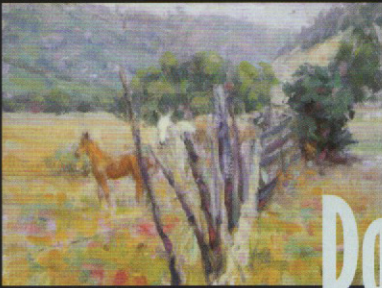
Exploring the use of color and light captivates **Bonnie Conrad**.

"There is power in being able to breathe life into a two-dimensional image through the use of value and temperature, and strategically placed unexpected color notes can make a piece sing," says Conrad. "There is something about a masterfully executed painting that deeply touches the inner soul. I am constantly challenged to create such a painting and in it somehow lift the human spirit."

Kenn Backhaus is a signature member of OPA. His interest in subjects is varied and diversified. The painting *Dragon Flies* was inspired by a visit to a local lily pond.



Room To Roam, oil, 6"x8"



Fresh, oil, 9"x12"

Dan Beck

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Fred Doloresco, *Pond Boats*, oil on linen, 24 x 28"



"I have always loved water, and I have in the past explored many subjects around water. My focus is beginning to narrow more closely to some of the unobvious and less likely painted subjects," says Backhaus. "My hope is always through the language of paint, to open the eyes of the viewer to the beauty that surrounds us."

Steven Jordan is a professional artist living across the river from Charleston, South Carolina, who has operated his own gallery for 22 years in Mount Pleasant.

"I consider myself a realist and for most of my career, I have been a watercolorist," says Jordan. "For the last five years, I have been painting in oils. As one of only three artists from South Carolina, I am thrilled to be in this, my first, OPA national exhibition. My new goal is to become a signature member of OPA."

Kenn Backhaus, *Dragon Flies*, oil on line, 18 x 24"



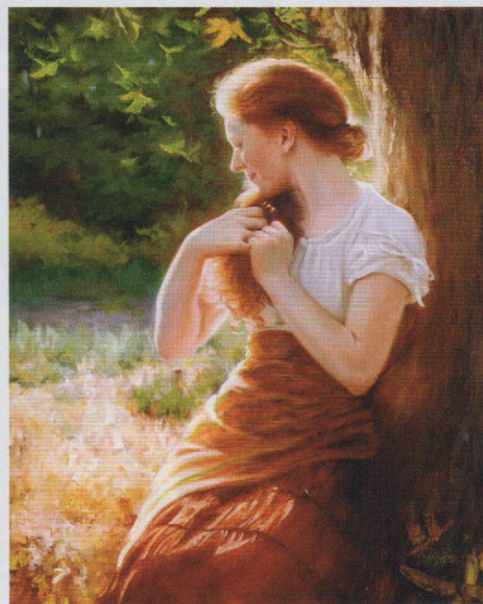
Jeanette Le Grue, *Sonoma Coast*, oil on board, 16 x 20"



Steven Jordan, *Thai One on the Mekong River*, oil, 18 x 12"



Joyce Hall, *Morning Coffee*, oil on canvas, 18 x 24"



Sheri Dinardi, *Quiet Warmth*, oil on linen, 20 x 16"

Susan Romaine believes that painting is an artist's way of practicing alchemy.

"Oil, mineral spirits, brushes, medium and canvas mixed together produce matter of an entirely different nature," says Romaine. "With each painting, I have an idea of what the image will be, but as I go about the process of laying

down paint, each seems to take on a life of its own. Each, as it emerges, acquires a distinct voice."

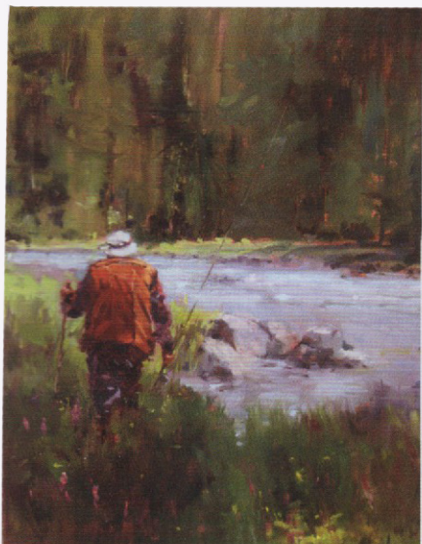
In the past few years, **Sheri Dinardi** has been inspired by the beauty of outdoor light with the hope of creating a sense of that light in her work.

"With *Quiet Warmth*, I sought to

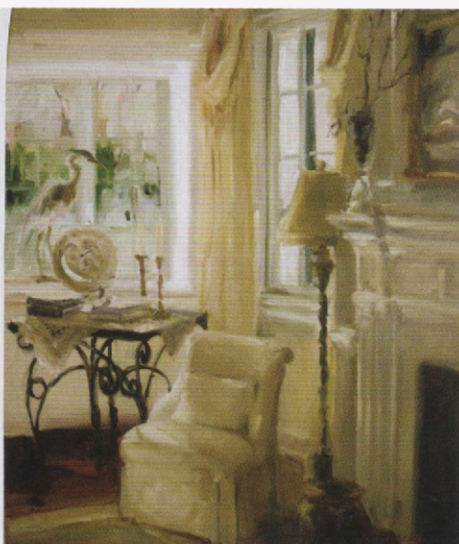
capture the comfort of the sun warming her arms, a breeze in her hair and the stillness of the moment," says Dinardi.

Stephanie Birdsall says she always falls in love with her subject.

"I seldom paint from anything but life. I want to recreate the sensory experiences that I have while I am in front of my subject,"



Mary Maxam, *Ed on the Lochsa*, oil on linen panel, 16 x 12"



Karen Lawrence, *Bird Watching*, oil, 24 x 20"



Dan Beck, *Here and Now*, oil, 24 x 18"

says Birdsall. "I find that I am attracted to the natural beauty of things and that is often the inspiration for my paintings."

Jeanette Le Grue's juried-in piece, *Sonoma Coast*, was painted on location about 30 minutes from her home.

"I love the combination of the rock formations and the power of the Northern California coast," says Le Grue. "There's nothing quite like being alone out there, responding with brush in hand and an open heart."

Oils were an easy choice for artist **Linda Besse**.

"There is something about the luminosity and depth of color one can achieve in oil paintings that I think is unmatched in any other medium," says Besse. ●

For a direct link to the exhibiting gallery go to



www.americanartcollector.com

Oil Painters of America 18th National Juried Exhibition

When: May 1-31, 2009. Opening weekend events will be May 1-3. Gallery viewing hours are from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Sunday through Saturday.

Where: Sage Creek Gallery, 200 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87501.

For more information, call (815) 356-5987 or visit www.oilpaintersofamerica.com.



Wesley James Drake, *Morning Commute*, oil on linen, 16 x 32"



Bonnie Conrad, *Skinny Dippin'*, oil, 20 x 30"