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Sunlit (detail; oil, 15x18)
by Ellen Buselli.

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Front & Center

Cover Competition winner
Ellen Buselli knows how make
a simple subject shine.

BY TOM ZEIT

Our first Cover Competition this past year was something new for us at *The Artist's Magazine*. Separate from our Annual Art Competition (featured in last month's issue), we wanted a new opportunity to showcase an artist's work that's open to any artist, anywhere. There's no better way than a competition to get artists to put their work in the public eye, and there's nothing like the excitement of discovering a great talent among the entries.

The cover of the magazine seemed like a great prize to offer, though it has certain special requirements. A great cover painting is not only a high-quality piece but one that truly sings. It must be arresting—able to grab your attention right away and be immediately recognizable as a terrific painting. Yet subtlety is required, too; the painting must have enough complexity to keep you looking and reward your attention. It must also be relatively simple in its composition, for the cover of a magazine is no place to be navigating your way through several subjects and focal points.

It seemed like a tall order for a painting to fill. But we were delighted with what we saw among the entries: plenty of beautiful works with a wide variety of subjects in a wide variety of styles. Just what we'd been hoping for. And from this impressive group, Ellen Buselli's *Sunlit*



In the light

A glowing light captures our attention in the Hopi clay pots of Ellen Buselli's *Southwest Travels* (at left; oil, 15x18) and the bold sunflowers of *Sunlit* (at right; oil, 18x15), our Cover Competition winner.





A delicate touch

The subtle value and temperature shifts among the lights and shadows of the many whites in Buselli's *Study in Yellow and White* (oil, 15x16) give the painting a dramatic presence.

(on the previous page) came forward and took the prize. It's a gorgeous piece—well rendered and high impact, with rich, warm colors and an artful looseness to the brushstrokes upon close inspection.

A little daring

Buselli is a New Yorker who earned a bachelor of fine arts from Cornell University, studied at the Tyler School of Art in Rome, and has trained at New York's Art Students League. She's won recognition from many prominent art groups, including signature membership in Oil Painters of America. She's an accomplished floral painter (among other subjects), but *Sunlit* was her first shot at sunflowers.

"I wasn't sure I'd be able to capture their intense beauty," Buselli says. "Each sunflower in the group had its own personality. I gave the main character of the painting more detail and made other parts less defined, as secondary players. Certain areas were opaque; others had translucence. In the end, I think the simplicity of the subject ended up having a life of its own and transcended the idea of just flowers in a glass. The sunflowers had their own strength of character, and that came through."

Buselli usually paints in oils, but she also enjoys watercolors and charcoal drawing. In addition to still lifes, she paints portraits, nudes and *plein air* landscapes. "One of my favorite *plein air* locations is the Brooklyn Bridge," she says. "I love old New York. Someone once said that my Brooklyn Bridge paintings are really giant still life paintings." A *New York Newsday* review of her paintings stated that they share something with the work of Italian still-life painter Giorgio Morandi (1890-1964) "in the way they take familiar objects and impart a sort of metaphysical presence." She admires Morandi, along with Emil Carlsen (1853-1932), Henri Fantin-Latour (see page 88) and John Singer Sargent (1856-1925).

The big picture

Buselli's painting method is very traditional ("nothing unusual," she says), and she paints in natural north light in her Upper West Side studio. "My painting became what it is today after setting up my first art studio," Buselli says. "Having a place solely devoted to painting allowed me to focus on my work in a serious way. It was then that I had some breakthroughs in approaching the art of painting."

“The breakthroughs for me were in ‘seeing,’ and the rest follows naturally. There’s beauty in everything when you really ‘see’ it.”

—Ellen Buselli

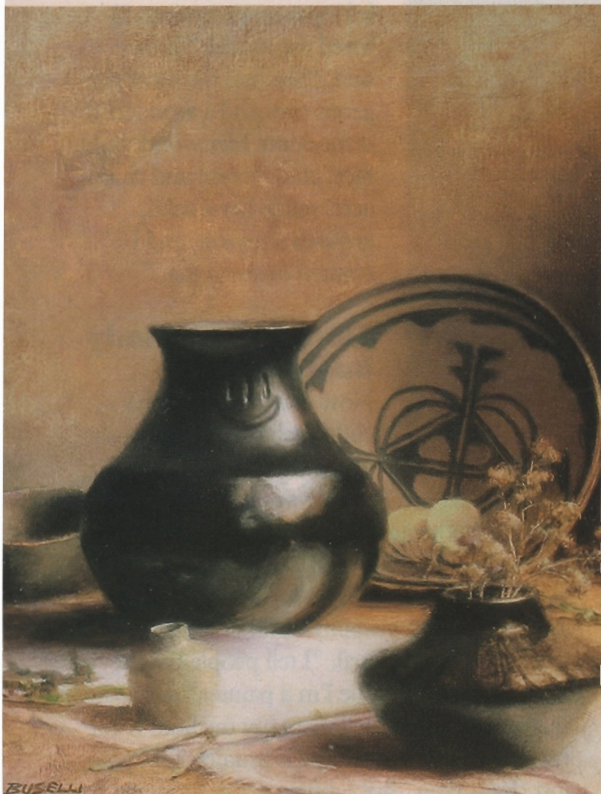
The breakthroughs for me were in ‘seeing,’ and the rest follows naturally. There’s beauty in everything when you really ‘see’ it.”

When Buselli was a college student the focus of study was on abstract painting rather than traditional art, so she worked on her own, without role models. “It wasn’t until I walked into the Art Students League years later that I finally found the instruction I’d been searching for,” she says, which introduces an eloquent explanation of her work. “The study and understanding of color is paramount in achieving the look I want. Instead of blending and rendering, my goal is to place brushstrokes in the appropriate value, temperature and thickness in relationship to one another to achieve the look of an object turning, receding or coming forward, or to capture the quality of each object. I think I see in an abstract way when painting.

“It’s always a challenge,” she concludes, “and I never get tired of trying. I try to make each brushstroke count.”

Congratulations to Buselli for a beautiful painting, a great cover and a memorable accomplishment. To see more of the artist’s work, visit www.ellenbuselli.com. Thanks to all those who entered the competition, and good luck next year. ♦

TOM ZEIT is editor of *The Artist’s Magazine*.



A sense of balance

Whether it’s the one lovely rose commanding careful observation in *Study of a Rose* (above; oil, 18x15) or the dark Santa Clara pottery against the expanse of wall in *Blackware* (at left; oil, 18x15), Buselli’s paintings are studies in contrast.