

# museletter

ART ON MAIN

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## Realism to Abstraction: A Short Primer

by Patricia Cherry

A few decades ago it was fashionable to have all the art in your home fit within a certain confined motif or genre. Since a home art collection reflects the taste of the owner, there is still a natural inclination to have wooded landscapes in a mountain home and ocean scenes in a coastal home. Yet in today's more complicated world the contemporary collector more often than not reflects the much more eclectic and diverse world in which we live, regardless of the location of one's home.

Paintings and other art works are more than a great way to dress up your living room, bedroom, business or any space. Many people value contemporary paintings according to how well they can spark a conversation with house guests or office clients. Paintings can open your mind to a new perspective of the world, while others stir the emotions. Other paintings and works of art simply set a tone for the room or space.

Not only can art be appreciated for its beauty, shock or just fascination, it can also be a sound investment, retaining its value for generations to come. To help buyers of contemporary paintings, here is a simplified guide to a few of the most popular painting styles and how to distinguish one from the other. This is by no means a comprehensive list. Space is much too limited for that. This list is to art, what a cook tasting a spice is to a king's banquet. It is by no means complete, but rather a simple beginning, to identify styles and characteristics of paintings.

Taking poetic license, let's cover just a few styles, using huge sweeping generalizations. Please feel free to pick these apart and add your own comments and experiences to our website.

**Photo-Realism, Super Realism, Sharp-Focus Realism, Hyper-Realism:** We can argue for days about the details, but this is a style where the illusion of reality is created through paint, so the result looks more like a large, sharply focused photo. Cameras and projectors are sometimes employed to achieve this look, but the artist must bring a high level of technical expertise to pull it off well.

*"... let's cover just a few styles, using huge sweeping generalizations."*

**Realism:** This is the art style most folks regard as "real art," where the subject of the painting looks very much like it appears in real life. It is created by a skillful use of paint, color and tone. The artist uses perspective to create an illusion of reality, using composition and lighting to make the most of the subject.

**Painterly (a subset of Realism):** This style is close to realism but celebrates thicker use of paint through evident brushwork and texture. Unlike realism, there is less use of blending techniques.

**Impressionism:** Americans love this style. In its earliest stages in Europe in the late 1800s it was hated and considered rebellious. It was regarded as unfinished and rough. It celebrated light and color, with an emphasis on nature filtered through the artist's eye.

**Expressionism/Fauvism:** With these styles the artist does not feel compelled to use realistic colors or perspective to recreate a sense of reality. The emotional impact is of utmost importance. The artist wants to convey a mood or evoke an emotional response.

**Abstraction:** This is about painting the essence of a subject, rather than the detail, while still retaining an echo of the subject. The subject is reduced or "abstracted" from reality. A keen development of composition is required to paint this way.

**Abstract or Non-Objective:** This art does not try to look like anything from the "real world." It is

intentionally non-representational. The subject or point of the painting will be the colors, the textures and the materials. The uninitiated may think it an accidental mess, but at its best, this kind of art has an impact that strikes you from the start.

The artists at Art on Main encompass a full range of styles. In addition, we feature artists working in wood, glass, photography, jewelry, sculpting, weaving, sketching and more. Gallery works are changed at least every three months, so please visit regularly to see our current showing.

All artists involved in the gallery are consumed by a love of art. We hope we will inspire a love of art in you as well. ♦

### **Charlotte Mahood**

Charlotte makes her home in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains with her husband and their three pups, El Greco, Leonardo and George. Her studio is located on their property next to their home, providing her the opportunity to work on projects any time of the day or night. Printmaking and oil painting are her passions. Her printmaking work includes etching, Chine-colle, monotypes and mixed media. Charlotte observes and records her impressions of the world around her in colorful passages. Her figurative work records humanity at work and at play, evoking strong emotion on the part of the viewer. She imparts a sense of design that is uniquely her own.

After earning her Associate of Arts Degree in Liberal Arts & Sciences with high honors at Cabrillo College, Charlotte pursued further studies at Scottsdale Art School, Kala Art Institute in Berkeley, and Monterey Peninsula College. A longtime resident of Santa Cruz County before relocating to the foothills, Charlotte was a member of Santa Cruz Art League and the Pajaro Valley Art Council. Presently she is a member of Calaveras Arts Council, Arts of Bear Valley, Golden Palette Art Association, Oil Painters Alliance and Monterey Peninsula College Printmakers.

Her work has been selected for a number of juried shows and is in private collections throughout the United States. ♦



### **Bambi Papais**

Bambi was born in Utah. She lived a couple of years in Montana, moved back to Utah, and eventually moved to California in her early twenties. Falling in love with Northern California, home is now in the historic Gold Rush community of Murphys.



Basically a self-taught artist with a handful of workshops over the years, Bambi's style of watercolor painting can be recognized by her fine sense of detail mixed with her funny-side-of-life humor. She has been sketching as far back as she can remember, always thinking that coloring books were a very important key to childhood.

"When people can get a good feeling from looking at my work—when the painting can touch their heart or make them laugh out loud—I feel that I've contributed to life in some helpful way."

After raising four kids (now grown with kids of their own), Bambi shares her life with husband Duane, her bearded collie, "Duster" and two kitties, "Cowboy & Indian."

Bambi's original paintings are in private collections across the country and her prints appear in many galleries nationwide. Her artwork is currently licensed by Montage Licensing and she publishes her own line of note cards as well.

Bambi's work can also be found at the Fine Eye Gallery in Sutter Creek, California, and in the summer months at the Pinecrest Gallery in Pinecrest, California. ♦

## Karen O'Neill

Karen's journey is to keep exploring new ways of expressing traditional subjects. She paints in watercolors and acrylics and often likes her paintings to have a touch of abstraction.



She looks to nature for inspiration, but then departs to her studio to concentrate on what she feels she needs to emphasize in each painting. Many of her paintings are painted in acrylics, but most of her life she has been a watercolor painter. Some of the techniques she uses in painting watercolors have transferred to her acrylic painting style—in other words, she often paints very wet, rather than thick.

Her first love in painting was florals. This love goes back to when she was allergic to most of the flowers she loved, but couldn't bring inside her home. She has a particular love for painting roses and calla lilies. Lately fish have entered many of her paintings—fish living in the kelp forest and colorful koi fish. One of her koi paintings was pictured on the cover of KVIE's "OnSix" program guide, another on the cover of the *Harbinger* magazine. In 2006 she was a featured artist in *Koi USA* magazine. In 2005, 2007, and again this year her Sierra landscapes have been selected by the Bear Valley Music Festival for their poster painting. Of course these paintings for the music festival also needed a black bear or two. ♦

## Judy Morgan

Judy is an accomplished watercolorist and has paintings in collections throughout the United States. Born in Indiana, she grew up in Southern California where she was able to attend workshops taught by many nationally known watercolorists such as Edgar Whitney, Robert E. Wood and Rex Brandt.



Now living in Calaveras County, she has received first, second and third place awards in the Professional Arts Division of the Calaveras County

Fair and a Family Merit Award in the Theme Division of the 2011 "Spring Obsession" Art Show at Ironstone Vineyards in Murphys, California.

She was a longtime resident of San Diego County where she was an active member of the San Diego Watercolor Society for many years. She is now a member of the Calaveras County Arts Council Gallery Group and Arts of Bear Valley.

She finds watercolor fascinating and enjoys putting what she sees in nature onto paper. She is equally adept painting on location and in her studio, where she paints from her own photos and sketches. ♦

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*"Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life." PICASSO*

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## Helen Scofield

Helen's artwork depicts her love of, and involvement with, color. Subject matter that makes a definite statement in terms of color or emotion is what stirs her creativity. She primarily paints in oils because of the richness and texture of the medium.



Helen is a resident of Vallecito, California, having moved to the Sierra Foothills from Santa Rosa, in 1992. Her art education was obtained through community college courses, workshops and private lessons. She has been accepted into, and won awards at, the prestigious Central California Art League Exhibit at the Gallo Winery, the Haggin Museum, the Carriage Show, the Mother Lode Art Association Annual Exhibit, Ironstone Vineyard's Spring Symphony Exhibit and the Professional Fine Arts Divisions of the Sonoma, Calaveras and Tuolumne County Fairs. In 2007, she won Ironstone Vineyard's "Spring Obsession" poster award for her oil painting, "Spring."

Helen's work may also be seen at other local businesses such as the Aloft Gallery in Sonora, California, and through local seasonal shows with Arts of Bear Valley, The Gallery Group, and Golden Palette Art Association. ♦

## Murphys Gold Rush Street Faire

Please visit our booth in front of the gallery on **Saturday, October 4th**, between 9:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. We will have a second booth dedicated solely to jewelry, located further down Main Street. ♦♦

## New Artists Working with Copper

The gallery has been enriched by the addition of a most accomplished "couple" of artisans, Ron and Carole Kamerlink. They each hone in on their area of expertise—Ron with his unique and captivating painting on copper and Carole with her one-of-a-kind silver and copper necklaces and earrings. We welcome them with sincere enthusiasm.

**Gallery Artists Include:** Jan Alcalde, Marianna Bologna, Diana Boyd, Dick Bradford, Marlene Bradford, Kathy Canning, Patricia Cherry, Sarah Evans, Annie Fountain, Carol Goff, Carole Kamerlink, Ron Kamerlink, James Kelly, Susan King, Jane Lucas, Marta Magistrali, Charlotte Mahood, Therese & Steve May, Judy Morgan, Ruth Morrow, Karen O'Neill, Bambi Papais, Duane Papais, Marilyn Richards, Helen Scofield, Christine Spracklin, Lori Sturdivant, Joani Taylor, Martha Wallace, Larry D. White, Shirley Wilson-Rose, and Vienna Watkins. ♦♦

## Students Visit Art on Main

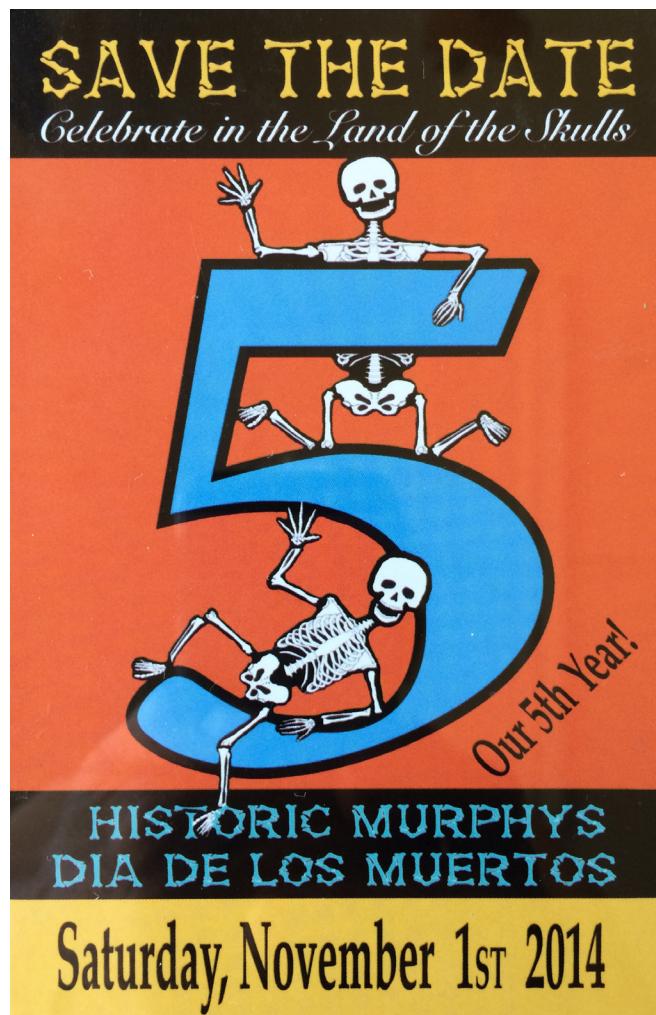
Art on Main has become a destination for budding artists from our local elementary schools. On September 22nd Ms. Berry's fifth graders toured the gallery with specific tasks in mind. They determined the range of art mediums used by the artists, the subject focus of each piece and sketched four of their favorite pieces. The students took their task seriously and ultimately became more accomplished at determining their personal preferences in art. ♦♦

## Congratulations

Paul Judd of Sonora, California, is the winner of our 2nd quarter drawing. Paul won a \$50 Art on Main gift certificate. ♦♦

## Day of the Dead

The Fifth Annual Day of the Dead celebration will be held in Murphys on **Saturday, November 1st**. The event runs from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and celebrates the deaths of our ancestors whose spirits live on in our hearts. The gallery will be displaying a decorated altar dedicated to the deceased parents of our artists. We will also be selling "Day of the Dead" jewelry, as well as other pieces of art, in honor of this occasion. Be sure to stop in for complimentary cookies, punch and other treats. ♦♦



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a community of artists  
466-B Main Street • Murphys, CA • 209-728-1888  
[www.artonmainmurphys.com](http://www.artonmainmurphys.com)

The *Museletter* is produced by the following members of Art on Main gallery.

Copy Editor: Marian Swanson • Copy Editor: Annie Fountain • Contributing Writer: Patricia Cherry • Graphics: Karen O'Neill

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