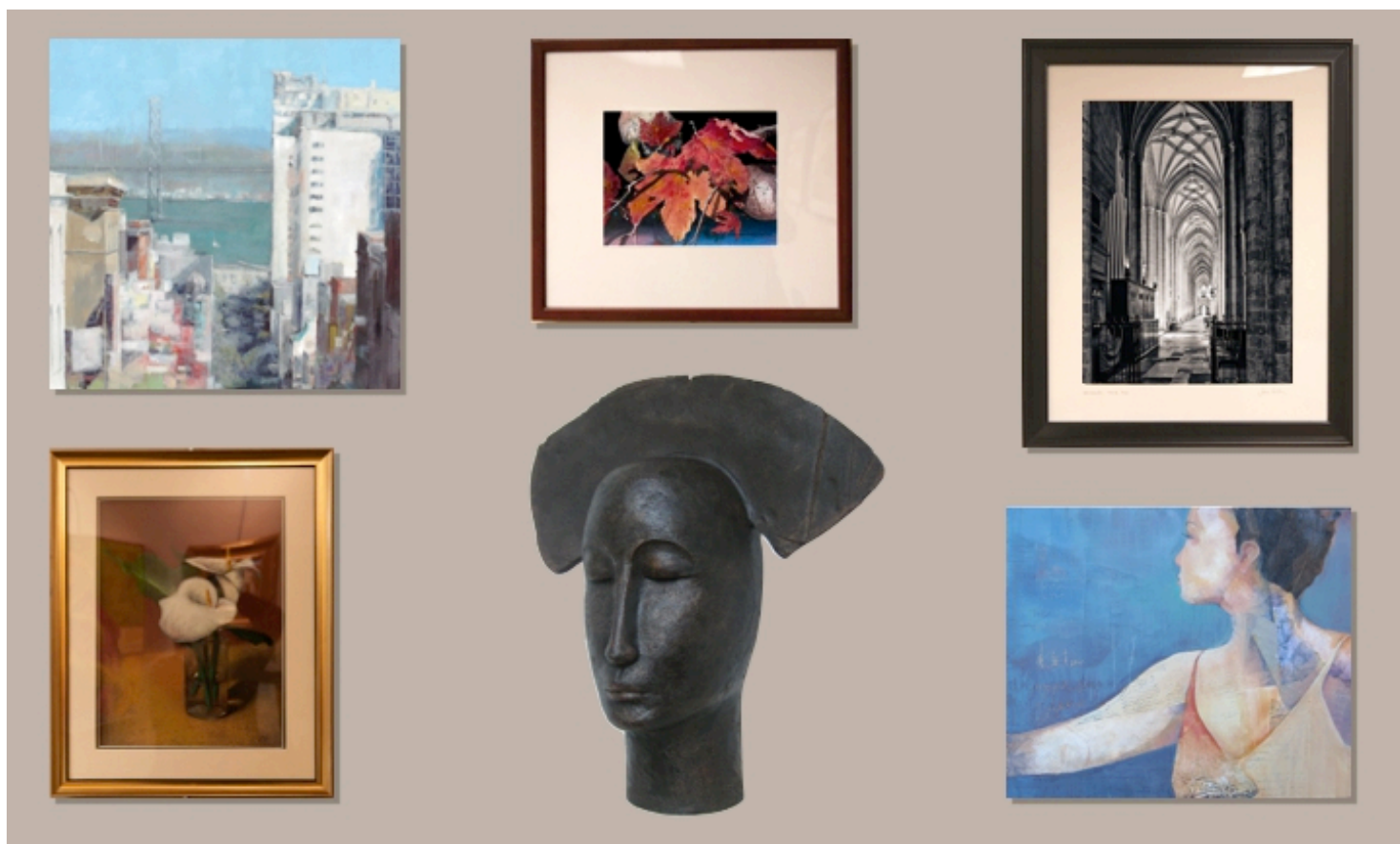


# Los Gatos Art Association Members Juried Show 2011



## 2011 First Place Winners

(clockwise from top left)

Carole Rafferty, *Bay Bridge* — Will Maller, *Steven's Creek*  
 John Eaton, *Winchester, North Aisle* — Belinda Lima, *Portrait of a Ballerina*  
 Danielle Fafchamps, *Memory #2* — Judith Smith, *Calla Lily*

## Blue Ribbon Interviews

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Kevin Kasik conducted these insightful interviews with the Blue Ribbon winners following the Awards Reception.

Carole Rafferty, *Bay Bridge - First Place*, Oil Painting



"This painting has a strong presence. The division of space on the abstract level is exciting. I enjoy the selective use of warm colors that lead your eye through the mostly cool piece. I find the quality of edges, lost and found, to be sophisticated and thoughtfully managed. The artist has created a believable environment without giving way to too much detail, and taking away from the quality of paint." – Kim Lordier, Awards Juror

Kevin: Please comment on the juror's comments – for instance, she seems to have emphasized the aesthetics of expressive abstraction and use of temperature in colors in your representational piece – in her words in creating a 'believable environment'.

Carole: First, I'm going to preface my comments by stealing a quote from Barnett Newman, the mid-20th century abstract expressionist who said, "Asking an artist about aesthetics is like asking a bird about ornithology".

In other words I just try to find my way! Half the time I'm just doing it and not analyzing anything. It's only when I stop painting and take a step back that the analysis begins. Then it becomes about solving the problems I've created because any painting is going to present a bunch of them. It's how one solves those problems that determines whether the painting will be a pleasure to look at or should be hidden away somewhere. It's a constant process of editing, refining, and nitpicking. That's why I love it!

I'm glad that Kim commented on the expressive abstraction because I worked hard to create that effect. Painting Chinatown is no picnic because it's a riot of color and shapes and has a frenetic energy. The only way I could convey all that atmosphere was through abstraction. To do anything less would have drawn the viewer's eye to that spot and made it the central focus, which was not the purpose of the painting. The focal point is the large building in the middle distance and the silvery bridge beyond which dominates all. As for the color choice, I did want it to

comprise mainly of cool tones but alternated warm colors on the sunny side to create a little tension.

*Did you follow the precepts of 'the golden section' – the classic ordering or proportioning of space within a rectangular format to achieve a superior aesthetic – in this piece?*

Not consciously but looking at the painting now it does seem to have some of those precepts about it. I fiddled around with the composition for a long time and in fact had to move the large building over a bit when I was half way through. That move changed everything and gave the painting a lot more presence and balance.

*What kind of discipline does it take to, as Lordier says 'create a believable environment without giving too much detail?' Is this natural to you, or how did you learn, or come to this?*

I find that abstraction is the most difficult form of painting. For me it is born out of frustration. I get too detailed and my painting becomes bogged down. I step back, look at it, and realize what I've done and then become quite desperate and take a large brush and start working savagely over all the parts I've spent so many hours painstakingly constructing. I usually use a large filbert and paint quickly in a series of rough vertical and horizontal strokes with thin paint so that some of the earlier layers can still be seen through. This has the effect of unifying everything and abstracting it at the same time. As I said, I learned to do this out of frustration with the tightness of my work. I constantly strive to paint in a looser and more fluid fashion.

*Do you have a special affinity for the cityscape; some of your strongest pieces are urban landscapes? Do you see the representing of a certain city's 'iconography' as a promising motif to pursue in the future?*

I do enjoy the cityscape because I'm fascinated by architectural forms and complexity of their relationships in a closely packed environment. I'm fortunate to live so close to San Francisco where the light is so special and so varied. My main love, though, is the figure and portraiture.

*What is your process for a painting, especially one in this 'presentation' scale? I'm guessing you sourced a photograph – right? Do you paint a smaller sketch to settle your direction? Please elaborate. I notice some of your initial sketch lines show through as the cables of the Bay Bridge.*

This particular painting was done from a photograph. I have to take the photograph myself, I can't just work from any photograph. I usually do a series of small graphite sketches to accompany the photograph and make notes about the quality of light and any impressions I have about how I want to convey the scene. Sometimes I'll go back several times just to get the right light. I'll do a small plein air piece in oil for some of my larger works (I didn't in this case). I tone the canvas, I believe I toned this one with a light smear of viridian because I wanted the overall tones to be cool.

And then I do the drawing in an earth tone with a small brush (earth tones dry quicker than other paints), then I block in the shadows, work the mid-tones, and finally the lights. This makes

it sound very organized and methodical but usually it isn't! And I make many corrections as I go along.

*Ms. Lordier commented on the temperature of the paint. Is this a conscious aesthetic that you decide in the prep stage, in the painting's process – or when? (the yellow ochre of the building on the left is almost too cool to call yellow ochre!)*

**Before I began the painting I decided I wanted an overall cool aesthetic. It was a cool day and I always think of San Francisco as a blue/grey city.**

*Your edges are quite sophisticated; I especially like how you form one image by painting an adjacent form –defining that and at the same time defining the former via negative space –*

Edges are incredibly important. A painting with consistently hard edges provides no relaxation for the eye and leaves me feeling quite jittery. Sometimes while the paint is still wet I'll take a long cool look at what I've done and then come back with my finger and just blur a bunch of edges to extinction. It's quite a liberating feeling but scary too because you have to take a leap of faith that you're doing the right thing by destroying what you've so carefully constructed.

*Are there some 'name' artists who you especially favor? Your work evokes Richard Diebenkorn's ? Who among contemporary painters do you value as mentors or accomplished associates?*

**My favorite painter of all time is Lucian Freud. I also like several other contemporary British painters: Brendan Kelly, James Hart Dyke. I love Randy Sexton's landscapes and I'm a big fan of Carolyn Anderson, Ken Auster, and Terry Miura.**

**Belinda Lima, Portrait of a Ballerina - First Place, Acrylic**



*“The poetic form simplified to a gesture creates a strong poster like quality to the design from afar. Upon closer inspection the subtle complimentary blue/orange color harmony creates an emotional reaction to this many-layered piece.” – Kim Lordier, Awards Juror*

*Kevin: What is your response to Ms. Lordier’s remarks? Interestingly she names the blue-orange complementary as an up-close quality, but not the collaged parts, the definitions or cursive writings you include except in the phrase ‘multi-layered’... They are just as important, aren’t they?*

**Belinda:** Yes, the collaged parts are just as important as the complimentary colors used, however I was delighted by Ms. Lordier comment that I had simplified the form to a gesture, this was exactly what I was trying to do.

*The subject is in the most severe profile position - one would be hard pressed to identify the person. Does this reinforce the universality of your statement by not lending the likeness to a unique individual?*

**My intent was to capture the grace of dance and I felt that the pose I chose depicted this. My choice of the most severe head profile position was also to reinforce this. The portrait is not about a particular person but about the grace and poetic nature of ballet.**

*The mixed media is subtle – and a delight. Was this an aesthetic that was planned from the start or did you have a moment of inspiration in-process? Do collage elements appear in most of your works? When and how does it factor in?*

**The collage elements were definitely planned from the start, and intended to be subtle in order to draw the viewer closer to the work and engage them in the piece. I like to work with mixed media, some of my work is pure collage but I prefer to combine collage with acrylics, I enjoy the textural element that mixed media brings to my work.**

*What artists of the past are your favorites– and for that matter, who among contemporary artists do you take inspiration from?*

**Matisse, Milton Avery, Van Gogh and Modigliani are some of my favorites from the past. My favorite contemporary artists include Alexander Nepote and Mike Bernard.**



*Exquisite design, color and draftsmanship! The beautiful blue background enhances the dominant red-orange and warm neutral coloration. Clean presentation.” – Kim Lordier, Awards Juror*

Kevin: What's your take on Ms. Lordier's comments?

**Will:** Kim is one of our nations premiere artists and as such I am a bit humbled with her remarks. I love the design as well as the color harmony. It's hard to get depth with watercolor sometimes especially with a smaller size painting as this one is.

*I very much 'second' her admiration of your design sense- where did you come by your design talent?*

I think any design "eye" I have come from early 1960's training in abstract expressionists programs being taught at the time, which didn't feel right, which I then struggled with to find a middle ground that was more comfortable for me.

*A high degree of drama is achieved by your dark perimeter and intimate composition, yet your subject matter is almost banal; leaves that have fallen on an ill-defined ground! I wonder if you are offering the viewer the idea that there is something dramatic or heroic in the everyday stuff of life – if only we pay attention...*

Lights Darks, Edges, Shapes and Value contrast really are the "guts" of a visual image ..... orchestrate these effectively and I'm not sure that, for the most part, subject matter isn't secondary.

*Is the title a joke? I mean, the composition is so severe it offers absolutely no evidence of specificity of place!*

The location is the creek at Steven's Creek Park in Cupertino just after an "Indian Summer" cool spell a number of years ago. The large Sycamore leaves were full of color and had fallen into one of the pools in the creek. Specificity of place is an essential ingredient in Plein Air work, I'm not sure that it is in all work, and really wasn't important to me in this one as it was one of 4 studies for larger studio works.

*By the way – the intimacy of composition is terrific; was this image cut down from a larger painting or intended in this size from the start?*

This was one of a number of smaller studies for larger 22 x28 works.

*Ms. Lordier comments on the blue note in the work. What importance does the blue play?*

The Blue is important, it is the compliment to the leafs and, added to the red-orange, provides many of the neutral tones as well as to the overall color harmony.

*In a flight of fancy, I can see the blue background as almost a sky effect – thereby transporting your work into the realm of nightscape and from there, mindscape – emphasizing the surreal... Do you rule out such interpretations by the viewer?*

**Art .... Fine Art is communication, visual communication ..... so nothing is ruled out. If you see it that way, enjoy! I have enjoyed this little painting that way at times.**

*By the same token, one could sum up this piece as a Appolinian dissertation on warm-temperature reds- via your rendering of the leaves. When painting do you sometimes narrow your focus to such an elemental and perhaps, philosophical inquiry?*

**No, that is a little deep for this painting as it was intended to be a "study".**

*Adding to the drama is a terrific tension between the flatness of your two dimensional image against the suggestion of perspective and depth –with the tree branches on the diagonal leading you into the scene. C*

**Yes, I'm guilty of that, again shape organization is always important.**

*Aside from the dynamic diagonals, your piece includes a terrific triangulation and a graduated scale of subjects, as well as an oval-eye pattern that helps the viewer 'go around' to see what there is to see. How conscious were you to these elements in this piece, and do you endeavor to include this degree of sophistication in all your work?*

**Yes I'm guilty of this as well...**

*Why..?*

**I'm always striving to engage the viewer, many times in this way, ..... not always succeeding however.**

*The separation of hues is well done. What is your discipline to achieve this and avoid mud; was frisket involved?*

**Yes a number of friskets were used.**

*How was your exemplary saturation of color achieved?*

**This was achieved through glazing transparent colors over one another**

*You're an accomplished painter in oils as well as watercolor. Compare the two. How often do you switch from one medium to the other.*

I think watercolor will help your oil work if you've been doing oils for awhile and oils will help your watercolor work if you've been doing watercolors for awhile. The two processes for myself, require opposite thinking and in the end I will see things a bit differently and generally more effectively. I'll switch as the frustration level in what I'm working in rises.....

*Aside from this LGAA award, you recently won a national award. Please elaborate (and include a picture if you have it.)*

**This started out as a Plein Air piece in Yosemite and completed in the studio. The location is on the Merced River at the stone entrance gate on highway 140. This location is deep in the canyon and generally in shadow until late afternoon, which I discovered and spent a few more minutes there rather than leave as I was intending to at the time.**

*You have yet to receive your winnings from this competition I hear. What does this tell you about the state of juried shows in today's economically challenged environment?*

**A number of Juried shows receive a great deal of their underwriting and support through corporate and/or individual sources as is the case with this show and the down economy has simply reduced their level of support. They have been in touch with me and expect to have this resolved within the next 9 months. I have noticed that a number of Juried Shows in the past have now lowered or withdrawn their financial allocations. A number of shows have ceased all together.**

*You are not only a practicing artist but a sought-after instructor. How does wearing two hats benefit you and the creation of your art? I'm guessing the sharing of your experience is in itself a reward, and learning from a noted mentor was something that was part of your past that you in turn, are passing on...*

**Shared experience is clearly a reward as well as having to work through problems I would not otherwise be exposed to. This in turn helps my own work. Instructing forces you to think through what you are doing. I was fortunate to have worked with learning programs with the American Merchandise Association (AMA) as well as a number of Corporate training programs, I'm also cBest certified in California. I have always enjoyed student success as much or more than my own .... this why I do it.**

**As for mentors I would have to mention Peter Busa (a disciple of Hans Hoffman at the University of Minnesota, 1960's), was not happy studying with him however the underlying structure of painting was important. I did enjoy very much Allan Houser, sculptor, he however was not as impressed with me as I with him ... really worked with structure while emphasizing rendering/drawing.**



*"The layering of the pastel medium creates a luminous glow. Rich harmonizing color and good observation in the drawing make this piece stand out. Beautiful presentation."* – Kim Lordier, Awards Juror

Kevin: What are your thoughts on what Ms. Lordier had to say?

**Judith:** I was pleased that she mentioned the drawing, since I've been taking a drawing class for many years from a great teacher, Robert K. Semans.

*The fact that dry media is the juror's medium of choice must make this award very gratifying to you. It is an extra feather in your cap, isn't it?*

I've admired Ms. Lordier's work for many years and was very excited to attend the demo she did for the LGAA. Yes, it was very gratifying to have her choose my painting.

*Did you use soft pastels for this piece? How did you achieve that 'luminous glow' spoken of in the juror's comments- was it based on combining complementaries or analogous hues, or something else?*

For this piece I used harder soft pastels (NuPastels) on Canson Mi-Teintes paper. I think when I use NuPastels on Canson it feels to me more like drawing than painting. I'm always trying to remember the power of values when I paint, so perhaps the 'luminous glow' is promoted by the contrast between the white flower and the darker leaves and background.

*What was the paper color or initial ground color in this piece?*

I normally work on a medium grey ground, but in this case I had a piece of warm reddish brown paper. I think it was a very happy accident.

*Do you use fixative between layers, or at all? If not how do you get such a heavy layering without lifting off the previous layer?*

I don't really like to use fixative, except perhaps if I do an underpainting in charcoal. When I use paper a ground I find I have to use a very light touch when layering pastel, otherwise the tooth of the paper fills up. I'm also trying softer pastels on sanded paper, which allows me to layer more easily for a different but more painterly effect.

*How would you characterize the key quality of this piece – the quality you were most focused on conveying to the viewer?*

I love flowers, and this one was so exotic but so simple. I worked hard at making the front flower look like it was popping out of the paper.

*There is a masterful display of 'the power of three' in your design – three large leaves, three stems and three focal areas of white (including that sublime white glint on the side of the glass.) You had to have intended this disciplined aesthetic, right?*

This started out as a drawing exercise. The bouquet was put together by someone else, but I sometimes "edit" the view of something to get a composition that is more pleasing to me... not sure it's all that disciplined.

*The morphing of background with the tabletop not only emphasizes the work's two-dimensionality, but also offers a wonderful contrast to the subject matter by heightening your voluminous treatment of the flowers. Do you orchestrate this sophisticated control of space as a rule in your other works?*

I usually put some thought into the background of a still life and sometimes even find the painting of a background kind of "therapeutic". Since I have a tendency to fuss/labor over my paintings, the fact I did this one quite quickly made me feel good.

*Your drawing was singled out by the juror. I especially like the 'corkscrew' line in the leaves you created, pointed toward an imagined, deeper space. There is a bit of audaciousness in it.*

Hmmm... I liked the way the leaves of the lily curled around, but I didn't really plan them to be anything more than leaves.

*Also, I love how the triangular shadow creates depth behind the glass—but so does a second triangle – a rose colored echo on the other side. Where did that come from?*

Serendipity, I guess.

*The Juror also lauded your 'beautiful presentation.' What do you think she meant by this? I suppose it was how 'spot-on' your matting and framing was in enhancing your work...*

Thanks. It was my first attempt at cutting mats and framing.

*Is dry media the only medium you work in? Which dry media heroes of the past do you draw inspiration from? Why? Which contemporary artists do you favor?*

I primarily work in soft pastel, and sometimes charcoal. When I go to an art museum I always search out the pastel paintings (for example, Degas), but don't seem to find that many. I also love drawings in charcoal, Conte, or graphite.

I remember liking a preliminary drawing by Andrew Wyeth more than the final painting, in the Farnsworth Art Museum in Camden, Maine. As for contemporary artists, I admire the work of local artists Robert Semans and Claire Schroeven Verbiest, among many others, and pastelist Liz Haywood-Sullivan of Massachusetts.



*“EXQUISITE design. The powerful, just off center position, and strong balance of darks is a grand stage for this light filled image.” – Kim Lordier, Awards Juror*

*Kevin: I love the dark-keyed nature to this photograph which in contrast, sharpens the dramatic sense of the focal point – the light. Within this scene there is an individuating play of light over metal, stone, plaster, fabric and wood – and yet an overriding mood, too. I find this a very rich combination you pulled off.*

**John:** I'm seeking to capture the awe, majesty and drama of the buildings, but also the human, personal scale of much of the space ~ this image captures all of these elements. I always use the available light, usually natural light from windows relatively high in the nave and choir, which accents the drama

*How did you decide to make this shot?*

I was struck by the impact of the wonderful light from the nave (to the left) and the great perspective

*Where in England is Winchester Cathedral?*

Winchester is an historic city (over 2000 years old, at one time the capital of England) in Hampshire, about an hour south-east of London.

Photography, and black and white photography in particular, for me is a real passion to explore images of what I see around me, especially architecture and landscape (the interest in architecture comes from the rest of my family ~ my father, brother and son are all architects). In architecture I'm fascinated by the drama in the interplay of form and function ~ in my photographs I'm attempting to capture this through elements of

the physical structure in the context of the function of that space.

I'm English (moved to California over 20 years ago and recently retired thus giving me more time for my photography!) and still have family in England ~ typically we have a trip to England every 18 months or so and I combine time with family with photographing the English cathedrals and landscape

*Did you need permission to set up?*

No, but I always do ask!

*What kind of camera and tripod equipment did you use?*

I use two camera systems ~ an Arca-Swiss Rm3d technical camera, Phase One P45+ digital back with 35mm & 47mm lenses; and a Canon 5d Mk II with Zeiss 21mm, 25mm and 100mm lenses ~ a carbon fibre tripod with a cube head.

*Which giants of photography in the past do you most admire – and why? Who inspires you among today's photographers?*

For cathedral photography my heroes are Frederick Evans, Edwin Smith and Martin Hurlimann ~ more generally I'm a great admirer of the work of Michael Kenna

*You cropped the picture at the apex of the arch, thus forcing the perimeter of the image to play a positive role in the composition. It works great; was this your intent?*

**Yes,** I always try to frame the image in camera and do relatively minimal cropping later

*The scene is populated by a series of pattern repeats – the arches, the fleurs-de-lys on the railing, the stone pavers, the vertical columns... All these worked wonderfully to reinforce the one-point and/or spatial – perspective...*

**In much of my work I look for points of focus, usually off-center, to draw the viewer into the image**

*The perspective leads the viewer through an initial arch, and onward to a light-infused passage under a similar but different arch.*

*The richness is reinforced through the repetition of, and gradual diminution of elements like the flying buttresses and the columns. In my mind, this is like executing an aesthetic trifecta; these classic elements helped you achieve a classic statement in a classical setting of grandeur.*

My special focus is on one of the finest achievements of English architecture ~ the great medieval cathedrals. Because of their checkered history of building and rebuilding, from foundation in the 11th century through to the Reformation, they exhibit a wide variety of architectural styles, evolution and implementation, from early Norman through to Late Gothic – both within one building as well as between them – providing great scope for innovation and excitement in the creation of space and vision.

The architecture of the medieval years that I love runs from the Norman conquest, and the great rush of major church building that the Normans initiated, through the various stages of gothic expansion and rebuilding that went on up until the Reformation and Dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII.

I'm engrossed by the imagination and skills of those medieval master-craftsmen who conceived and built them, the awe-inspiring scale and the interactions between form and function at a human level, as well as a sense of the faith and divine purpose for which they were created.

It's these elements that I'm attempting to capture in my photographs ~ structures that signal strength and purpose, beauty and majesty, elegance and grace, exuberance and awe, intimacy and reflection – demonstrating such a magnificent variety of form for common functions.

In my work in cathedrals, these elements come into play in different ways in photographing the different spaces ~ for example, images from the nave and choir often primarily illustrate strength, awe, majesty, etc., while those from aisles, cloisters, etc. more often suggest intimacy, beauty, reflection, etc. ~ the specific image from Winchester drew me by it's intimacy in the lighting and elegance in the structure.

I don't think of myself as especially charting new territory ~ after all, these buildings haven't changed much over the last 1000 years! ~ I'm trying to give a personal interpretation of the spaces and convey my emotional response to the viewer.

*... and yet in lower center there is this funky little metal folding chair!*

It is what it is ~ I don't 'stage' things!



*“Powerful design, beautiful texture and gorgeous patina! The quality of edges and subtle details in the headdress makes this piece stand out.” – Kim Lordier, Awards Juror*

*Kevin: The form with its elongated features echoes the caryatid sculptures of Amedeo Modigliani – was this intentional?*

Danielle: No not intentional at all. But we are not blank slates. What I have seen and what moved me of course influence what I do. The elongated features of the very first head I created were based on the photo of an anthropomorphic rock in Mesa Verde and set the pattern for future work.

When I travel in rock country, as I did recently on Lake Powell, I take pictures for inspiration of the faces and human shapes I see in rock formations. I selected that first rock initially because I felt a patchwork of fond memories from Modigliani’s work perhaps, Ethiopian people, medieval paintings, or maybe my Thai roommate in graduate school-

*Which past master do you most revere? Who among contemporary sculptors inspires you?*

I respond to masterful skills and creativity—I just saw the Maharaja exhibit at the Asian Museum in San Francisco the exquisite details and intricacies of many sculptures and watercolors are awe inspiring, as is the work of many classical western sculptors who reproduced codified cultural themes and stories.

But what I admire and what moves me in art and in daily life is the human touch—even more satisfying if I can relate to the artist’s values. The human touch in a sculpture may be as subtle as a head bent just so. Rodin’s Balzac is a good example. Or in

painting, look at the head of the Queen in Goya’s Charles IV of Spain and his family.

Two year ago, in Paris, the wonderful day I spent at the Musée du Quai Branly confirmed my preference for earthy forms and simplified human shapes. And at the Zadkine museum, his constructions, though modern, built my confidence in the gravity defying possibility of clay.

Recently, I also discovered the work of two sculptors who work in Belgium—Martine Bossuyt and Hanneke Beaumont. Their work has that human touch—albeit very different—and also an earthiness, a groundedness that appeals so much to me.

This year I went back to the Paul Delvaux museum on the Belgian Coast. I am so fond of the person he was that I will attempt to turn some of his female subjects into 3D.

*Ms. Lordier singles out the headdress and the details therein. The chink at the apex and the scarring on the right side of the form (ie. faulty edges) imbue an attractive sense of imperfection, age and distress-*

The basic shape of the headdress has universal appeal, it is timeless, an archetype with many patterns in cultures around the world and across time - from King Tut to medieval times and present day tiaras. People from different cultures have come to me and said that the headdress reminded them of a coif in their native country.

The perceptiveness of Ms. Lordier’s observation touches me very much because she zooms right in on the core processes of my practice: “the mark of the maker” and serendipity. The mark of the maker give the work its humanity and value. And serendipity to me is primordial which is why I do not accept specific commissions.

When I create a work I do not have a rigorous plan instead I go along with the unexpected. So, in this case I did not intend for the edges to be as they are, in fact I thought I would trim them with a knife. But I was using a rolling pin and the clay spread beyond the edge of the canvas I was working on. I found this unintended pattern pleasing and so I kept it. I rely on serendipity a lot in my work—to me that is the essence of the artistic endeavor.

*The power of this piece is in large part due to the simplicity of uncomplicated forms you have created – undiluted by needless detail. Was monumentality a goal you were striving for?*

When I start a piece I have an idea about the overall structure, and a feeling about the size I want to achieve—small, medium, large. Nothing more. My work is about basic human emotions not about the display of exquisite techniques—technique is a means to an end. For example most of my heads have no ears. Some people do not notice because it is the whole feel of the work that resonates with who they are and into which they project their own emotions.

*The eyes are closed – reinforcing a terrific solemnity. Did you ever consider making the eyes opened?*

Most of my sculptures are captured in a quiet moment of personal reflection, they are contemplative and peaceful, they

exhibit strength and resilience in an increasingly complex and precarious world. They are not sleeping nor thought free, they project the calm confidence of someone who has experienced the good and the bad, come to term with it and is very grounded. Open eyes could convey a different set of emotions.

*How specifically was the surface manipulated to create it- what substance and how many layers? Were they all applied before firing in the kiln or after – please explain the process.*

Simplicity and earthiness appeal to me as complement, or counterpoint, to our high tech, machine-perfectly-turned-objects society. And so it is in the treatment of my sculptures. I do not deal with harsh chemical soups and acids. Each piece goes through at least 3 steps: I bisque fire at 1925 F, then I apply layers of natural pigments from Provence that I mix myself in the same way that my French friends cook ... a bit of this, a bit of that. Last the work is fired a second time usually at 2167 F. Depending on the feel of the work and if it is displayed indoors I may apply a coat of bees wax to give it a satin finish

*I love the fact that you don't have a base per se. What engineering and strengthening demands did you have to overcome to do this?*

The absence of pedestal is in line with my approach to sculpture—natural, organic, grounded. I work without internal armature, and I use no props while building—even my tall totems or large heads. This ensures that the work is self contained. People who bought my sculptures have commented how peaceful and serene they are—I believe that impression is due in part because each piece has its own physical equilibrium. Each piece is stable on its own, well-grounded. So no flying ballerinas from me, it's not what my work is about.

*An interesting detail is that the form has, as mentioned above, expressively elongated features. Except for one. The mouth is peculiarly small – and frozen in an almost pursed expression. Why is that? To me, I think the overall form of the sculpture speaks much more than the mouth it has – ever could dare to. Does this point register with you in any way, whether intended or not?*

I'm glad you asked that because to me the only valid interpretation of a work is that of the individual viewer. You just described your interpretation, it is meaningful to you. The connection you make between the work and your own experience is the kind of event that matters to me.

I realized that early on when I sold a sculpture to a person who told me the pose of the sculpture was similar to her pose as an adolescent looking at the sea when she visited her grandmother in the south of France. That recollection concretized for me something I was feeling intuitively. After the joy of creating sculptures, I am most happy when people connect with a piece in a personal way.

*The ambiguity of nationality in this image defies ethnocentricity to me. Did you intend for this image to represent a universal, as opposed to a Greek woman, a Chinese woman, an African woman, etc.? Or for that matter it could, because the title is Memory #2 - represent non-gender specified humanity period.*

The anthropomorphic rock origin of Memory #2 and other sculptures (heads and totems) may explain the archetypal feel of the features. When I take pictures of rocks I look for basic human features. The question of gender is interesting because when I create a piece it goes through male/female stages.

I stopped when I am satisfied with the feel of the work regardless of the apparent gender. And here also viewers' interpretation varies. I am thinking of one piece which I saw as strongly male and yet a viewer saw it as female. That is one reason I usually do not title my work and when I do I opt for non-gender specific title. I also try to make as few comments as possible about my own interpretation—if I am successful, my comments are not needed to the experience of the viewer.