

November Demo Artist: Jon Arfstrom

Jon Arfstrom's career was commercial art and illustration; his passion is painting, and while he works in several mediums, his first love was—and is, watercolor. His favorite subject: people.

In the commercial world he got his start illustrating pulp magazines before their demise in the early 1950's. From there he went to drawing stoves, refrigerators, men's fashions, and so on, for a large retail store chain, and art for a religious publisher. He's painted bookjackets for fantasy volumes and was a staff artist for a calendar company. For many years he created fantasy and surreal subjects that, as an invited guest, he displayed at World Fantasy Conventions.

His art training has largely evolved from



▲ November Demo Artist Jon Arfstrom

books, but he also studied with the Famous Artist Schools, and had instruction with Birney Quick at the Minneapolis School of Art. He's attended workshop with Zoltan Szabo, Phil Austin, Milford Zornes, Richard Yip, Don Andrews and Robert E. Wood.

In his retirement, now in a studio on the banks of the Rum River, he's as busy as ever with the brush—sometimes oils, more often watercolor—painting landscapes and figurative subjects. His landscape work is often inspired by scenes involving boats and water.

His painting demos have been mostly watercolor portraits, as well as a couple of “off the cuff” fantasy subjects in acrylics. His demo on November 10 will be about portraits and figures with an emphasis on drawing—the sketchbook habit and the use of photographic references in this age of digital cameras. He also plans to bring about 12 paintings to display. ■

[Article drawn from biographical information supplied by the artist.]

Hosmer Workshop Participants Try “Backwards” Values

photos and story by John O'Leary

Nationally recognized watercolorist Ken Hosmer, from North Platte, Nebraska, presented an outstanding workshop for twenty students on October 13, 14, and 15 at the Bloomington Armory.

An early Colorado blizzard, which kept him airport bound, and the Columbus Day holiday dictated that Hosmer present his usual five day course in three, which kept the instruction lively and focused.

Mr. Hosmer's approach to watercolor painting is unique. Contrary to usual practice the artist initially paints the darkest shapes, and their linking pathways. He then articulates the middle value passages and finally the lighter and white elements. Careful consideration was given to maintaining the center of

—story continues with photos on p. 3

Unsung Heroes: The Mailing Team

Every month, it's just there one day in your mailbox, as if by magic, but the newsletter doesn't get there by itself. A lot of stamps and labels have to get stuck on the four to five hundred copies of the newsletter mailed each month. It all happens because of the tireless efforts of Beverly Peterson and Joanne Bauch, our newsletter mailing team.

For last month's issue, their job was particularly tough. Usually, the printer gets the job around the 21st-23rd of the month. The plan is for the mailing crew to get the printed copies around the 28th-30th, so they have at least a few days to work the mailing task into their busy schedules and still have the newsletters arrive sometime in the first week of the month.

But, in October, we delayed sending the files to the printer to include the Fall Show Award Winners. Then, due to a miscommunication, the completed copies were not delivered to Beverly and Joanne until October 17. With the October issue now way behind schedule, Beverly and

Different Strokes
Minnesota Watercolor Society Fall Open Exhibition

**Fall 2005 Exhibition
PEOPLE'S CHOICE
Award Winner—
“Horizon #39”
by
Nanci Yermakoff
(Turn to page 3 for a photo,
plus info on another opportunity to
see Nanci's work.)**

Joanne dropped whatever else they had going on and jumped into action. The newsletter went into the mail the very next day so members would at least have it in time to remind them to pick up paintings from the fall show.

So, the next time the newsletter brightens your mailbox, remember that it's not the editor or the board that makes it happen—it's our dedicated mailing volunteers, Joanne and Beverly.

Thanks, team! ■

MESSAGE *from the President*



Artists are caught in a Catch-22 at times. We want to continue to experiment and grow, yet as soon as we develop anything resembling a “style”, our viewers want to label us. My particular style, I suppose, could be considered impressionistic realism. I’m also essentially a value painter. I’ve always felt that values were the trump card; if they were correct, the rest of the painting would fall into place. One thing

I’ve never been mistaken for is a colorist.

Ed Whitney said “the color facet of our activity is the most personal, an ‘eye for color’ being comparable to an ‘ear for music’.” Indeed, nothing influences an artist’s work more than their personality, which is created through their life experiences. An interesting comparison of two of my favorites, John Yardley and Alvaro Castagnet, supports this. If you’ve seen Yardley’s video, he comes off as a typically reserved English gentleman. Complete with bow tie and spectacles. A quick glance at his paintings reveals an incredible facility with grays and neutrals. Splashes of color are reserved for impact. He relays an instance where “one chap remarked, on seeing a collection of my work, ‘I bet you’ve never owned a red waistcoat’.” Alvaro, on the other hand, is as flamboyant and energetic a character as I’ve had the pleasure to meet, and it’s obvious when you see his vibrant, warm paintings. Of course, John Yardley is from the typically dreary English landscape and Alvaro was born and raised in Central America, so this isn’t surprising.

Although I like the direction my paintings are heading in general, I’ve been trying to inject more energy into them, mostly through an attempt at stronger, more descriptive brushwork. Color ‘flair’, for lack of a better term, was not a consideration for me. I’ve never been comfortable just grabbing a color off my palette that I didn’t see in front of me. That’s why I was excited to take Ken Hosmer’s workshop. I need to include some more personal color choices into my paintings, what Skip Lawrence refers to as ‘what if’ colors. Ken’s approach is to create a value study, concentrating on a ‘dark pathway’ through the painting. He then begins by painting all his darks first, which is sacrilege in the world of watercolor. Yet it makes sense, because as he says the only way to get beautiful, colorful darks is to get them down in one wash versus laying them in on top of your light and middle value washes. (If you thought the white paper was intimidating when you were getting ready to lay down an initial weak wash, you should try this sometime.)

It was a struggle, to be sure, but very fun. If you feel your paintings are lacking a certain ‘punch’, I encourage you to try it. I also experimented with a couple new hues, Quinacridone Gold and Thalo Green, which I’d avoided because I didn’t ‘see’ them when painting outdoors or in my reference photos. And yet, if I can train my mind’s eye to see these colors in the world around me, it might become an even more exciting place.

I recently re-watched the movie *Pleasantville* with my family. If you haven’t seen it, your friendly neighborhood movie reviewer is here to help (Five stars). In the film, a young man gets transported into a 1950’s era television show, where everything is black and white, pleasant, predictable, and sterile. Gradually, through his influence, this world becomes a little more chaotic and things begin popping up in color. In one moving scene, he shows a book of art to a man who is overcome with emotion upon seeing the works of Cezanne, Picasso, Van Gogh, etc. He tells the boy, “I’ll never be able to paint like that. Where am I going to see color like that? I bet they don’t know how lucky they are to see colors like that.” Ken Hosmer is lucky, as are many of you. Hopefully, someday, I’ll be that lucky too.

Bring a painting to share at our meetings. . .

Theme for November—

Still Life

(You don’t have to use the theme if you don’t want to;
we want to see whatever you would like to share.)



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BrushStrokes Newsletter

BrushStrokes is published monthly, September through June. Deadlines are the 15th of the month. Send letters to the editor and art related stories that help inform or educate members to:

MnWS BrushStrokes Editor

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[There are many informal painting groups in

the MnWS—tell us about yours!—ed.]

We're Still "Untitled"

by Sandra Muzzy, Nick Brubaker, Nanci Yermakoff, and Peter Herzog

"Untitled" is a group of four Minnesota Watercolor Society members who have been painting together for over a decade, and yet been unable to agree on a name. The name "Untitled", of course, is often used by artists to enter an exhibition before actually doing the painting—a practice well known to the members of "Untitled."

We met ten years ago in watercolor classes at the Como Conservatory. After exhausting the available classes, we decided to keep meeting on our own, and we value these opportunities to paint, discuss art, exchange ideas and learn from each other.

We typically paint every Wednesday evening from a still life set up by one of the group, and then compare our variations on the common theme. These are typically small paintings, completed in an hour or two. These Variations on a Theme will be on display for the month of November at Thrivent Financial for Lutherans (see the Member Happenings section of this issue for details).

Sandra Muzzy paints and teaches watercolor

classes at her home studio in Bloomington. For the past year she has been exploring musical themes in her work. Her work has been featured by the Minnesota Orchestra, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and in several music related publications. She is the immediate past President of the Minnesota Watercolor Society.

Nick Brubaker is a physicist by training and paints watercolors to try to restore some balance between his overdeveloped scientific side and his underdeveloped artistic side. He often takes his paints rather than a camera on vacation. Favorite subjects include "found compositions" —interesting arrangements of shapes and colors from everyday life.

Nanci Yermakoff is a vocational counselor who would spend most of her time painting if she could. She loves the fluidity and transparency of watercolor and her current work utilizes these qualities to explore color and light in the natural environment. Her inspiration comes from countless hours spent sitting—and painting—on a dock on a lake in northern Minnesota. She will have a show of her recent work at the Phipps Center for the Arts in Hudson, Wisconsin in February–March 2006.

People's Choice!
"Horizon #39"
by Nanci Yermakoff



▲2005 Fall Show People's Choice Award Winner Nanci Yermakoff is a member of "Untitled".

Peter Herzog's employment in engineering and architecture is reflected in his frequent choice of man-made objects and constructions as subject matter. He enjoys the challenges of the watercolor medium which allows artistic expression yet requires the application of thoughtful planning and technique. He has a particular interest in the atmosphere (light quality) depicted in his work. ■

Hosmer Workshop

—cont. from p. 1

interest and the visual flow connecting the painting's elements. His use of color was vibrant and spontaneous, with a minimum of over glazing.

Having been trained as a teacher, Ken Hosmer was an effective communicator. His instructions and critiques were informative on a group and individual level. Grateful workshoppees left the sessions inspired and informed; ready to do battle with rag paper, color and brush. ■



▲Workshop instructor Ken Hosmer enlightens the group.

◀Wendy Westlake and Ken Hosmer discuss her excellent painting of a stern wheeler river boat.

▼Happiness is a watercolor workshop—Liz Holt and Kay Bloom enjoy the photo op.



No Resting on their Laurels for MnWS Fall Show Co-Chairs

Apparently, we didn't work them hard enough. Fall Show Co-Chairs CeCeile Hartleib and Terry Kayser served as hosts during the Grand Opening Gala and Marathon for the Traces Center for History and Culture, a new museum in the Landmark Center. The museum deals with an important part of World War II history—the Midwest's housing of refugees, POW camps in the Midwest, and the internment of foreign-born citizens here in the Midwest. The executive director, Michael Luick-Thrams, is Ceile and Terry's neighbor. Visit the museum website at www.traces.org

Did you know?

MnWS Board Meetings are open to all members. Board meetings begin at 5:30 p.m. at Colonial Church in Edina and run until shortly before the general membership meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. All members are welcome to attend.

MEMBER happenings

Send member news to: *BrushStrokes*, 1830 Dutch Heritage Ct., Baldwin, WI 54002-5155, or email to lbaur@mac.com. Images are welcome and will be used as space permits.

The National Oil and Acrylic Painters' Society (NOAPS) recently announced eight new Signature Artists for 2005, including **David Rickert** of Staples, MN. Currently, NOAPS has a membership of over 800 oil and acrylic artists nationwide of which only 81 are signature members. David qualified by having an entry accepted three years in a row, including this year. He won awards for both previous entries. Awards this year will be announced at a special Exhibit Award Reception on November 5th in Osage Beach, Missouri.

The Reedy Gallery at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum will host "Natural Surroundings: The Spaces that Inspire", a show of the landscape art of **Carl Nelson** from Nov. 10, 2005–Jan. 10, 2006. The show features Carl's selective observations of nature in pastel, watercolor and oil, including a focus on some of the unique settings found at the Arboretum. In addition to studio work, Carl has included some of his field studies. *[A real bonus for those of us interested in plein air work!—ed.]*

Calvin deRuyter, Mary Hanson, Lynn Middleton-Koller, Virginia Olsen and **Emmy White** are pleased to announce that they will have a group art exhibition in December. The show is at the Frank Stone Gallery, 1224 2nd Street NE in Northeast Minneapolis, December 8–11. The opening reception is Thursday, December 8, 5–9 p.m. The show will feature recent work of these five artists, who collectively call

themselves "Uncharted Water." For directions, see the gallery website: www.frankstonegallery.com.



▲ "Uncharted Water" artists (left to right) Emmy White, Virginia Olsen, Lynn Middleton-Koller, Mary Hanson, Calvin deRuyter
www.frankstonegallery.com.

Gallery G in the Northrup King Building will feature the work of **several Minnesota Watercolor Society artists** in the Holiday Art Market, with an opening night reception on December 1 from 5 to 9 pm. The gallery will also be open December 3, 10 and 17 from 12 to 5pm, and by appointment or by chance. Many other studios and businesses in the building will be open for special holiday shopping hours to encourage Twin Cities shoppers to BUY ART for holiday gifts. Call **Nancy Carney** at 612-961-7075 or visit www.northrupkingbuilding.com for info and directions.

Nanci Yermakoff, Peter Herzog, Nick Brubaker and Sandy Muzzy (all Minnesota Watercolor Society Members) will have a joint show at Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, 2nd floor Gallery, 625 Fourth

Welcome!!

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Marian Alstad at

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She'll be happy to mail one to you. Or find her at a MnWS meeting—then you can have a hug, too!

Ave S, Minneapolis for the month of November. The group, which goes by the name "Untitled" has named their show **Themes and Variations**. It showcases some of the work they have done on their Wednesday night get togethers during the past year. They usually set up a still life, have a glass of wine and paint. The results show their very different approach to the same subject matter. The paintings are generally quite small and were for the most part completed in an hour or two. *[See the associated article on page 3.]*

Congratulations Everyone! ■

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MnWS Workshops

Upcoming Weekend Workshops



January 7-8, 2006—Andy Evansen
go to
www.minnesotawatercolors.com for
a registration form

March 2006—Fred Dingler

For MnWS workshop information contact
Bonnie Crouch, coordinator (952-945-0682)
Dianne Jandt, registration (952-891-2375)

Jan Fabian Wallake

u2006–Nov. 11-14. Brevard Watercolor Society, Cape Canaveral, FL. Contact: Linda Neal, 321-751-5520.

Jan has a once-a-month, three-hour class in Roseville. If you are interested in joining this fun and friendly group, call Jan at 651-351-1301 (no long term commitment—come when you can, pay only for the class you attend). ■

Watercolor Workshops at the Duluth Art Institute

Register at (218) 733-7560. A supply list and directions will be mailed to all who register.

Watercolor and Collage with Karen Knutson “Starting with Abstract—Moving to Traditional”; May 15-17, 2006, 9am-4pm; \$200 Duluth Art Institute members (\$240 non-members). A \$50 non-refundable deposit is required upon registration.

Expand your imagination and exploration of new ideas with Karen Knutson. Her unique compositions of watercolor with collage have been perfected through years of instruction and experimentation. The first day will involve abstract color studies to establish good design through color exploration and the application of collage materials. These little abbeys (small abstracts) are fun to do and teach students good painting habits. The rest of the workshop will focus on creating semi-abstract paintings that include simple subjects such as leaves, flowers, or other organic forms of high impact and originality. Problem solving skills, negative painting, and thinking in simple shapes are just a few of the things that students will learn.

Watercolor Workshop with John Salminen

“From Abstraction to Realism”; October 9-13, 2006; 9am-4pm; \$375 Duluth Art Institute members (\$425 non-members). A \$100 non-refundable deposit is required upon registration.

Northstar News

Nov 4. Northstar Fall Show Opening Reception at Century College

December 15. Konstantin Berkovski demo

For meeting info contact Judy Fawcett
(651) 731-2972

Meeting location is Centennial United Methodist Church, 1524 W. County Rd. C2 at Snelling in Roseville.

www.northstarwatercolorssociety.com



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John Salminen has been conducting workshops for many years, all around the country. Now he's bringing all of his instructional talents to his own backyard. John enjoys working with artists at all levels of experience and expertise. His workshops begin with abstraction, encouraging representational painters to experiment with a different style and challenging experienced abstract painters to explore new possibilities in expressing their creative voices. The design elements explored through abstraction are then applied to representational paintings. His workshops include demonstrations, critiques, and lots of individual help. Artists are encouraged to expand upon their current levels of understanding and become more comfortable applying the principles and elements of design to their work.

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MNWSalendar

Programs are held the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm.

November

Nov 10: Jon Arfstrom demo—figures

December

Dec 8: Potluck and sharing of member paintings; critiques offered by Karen Knutson.

January

Dec 12: Slides from the Transparent Watercolor Society of America, with commentary by Dick Green (TWSA Master Watercolorist)

February

Feb 9: Stephen Frisch demo

LOCATION: Christ Presbyterian Church, 6901 Normandale Blvd., Edina, MN (Corner of 70th St. S. and Hwy 100)

www.minnesotawatercolors.com

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— MnWS Mission Statement