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EYE ON ART

### Mansion's Winter Show Features Baltimore Watercolor Society Watermedia

by [Marylou Bono](#) • January 15, 2020 • [0 Comments](#)



The winter show at the Kentlands Mansion features (L to R, top) "Harmony" by Pritha Srinivasan, "Arboretum" by Deb Cohan, "Duomo di Siena" by Antonia F. Tiu and (L to R, bottom) "Low Tide" by Robert Ferguson, "Fiddle Away" by April Rimpo and "Intuitive Spirit" by

Kay Fuller.  
Images | Submitted

The Kentlands Mansion decked out for the holidays is the perfect venue for the Baltimore Watercolor Society signature members to bask in the glow of their recent watermedia—a general term to describe media that is diluted with water when used. BWS' current show, on exhibit through Jan. 13, showcases work in all aqueous media, including watercolor, gouache (an opaque form of the same paint) and thinned acrylic paint.

BWS is one of America's oldest watercolor organizations. About two years ago, the society expanded to include other water-based media, David Drown, BWS co-chair of exhibits explained.

Traditionally a transparent medium, watercolors are finely ground pigment mixed with water-soluble, gum-based binder for body and glycerin for viscosity. They come in a tube or pan and vary in their transparency and opacity. Unpigmented filler is added to gouache to lend opacity. Acrylic is thinned with water. Interestingly, whites seen in watercolor are actually whites of the paper. Colors appear approximately three times lighter dry than wet and dry quickly in hot or arid conditions and slowly in humid conditions.

BWS President Sherry Morell presided over the award ceremony at a reception on Dec. 11 for the 50 works juried into the show by Glen Kessler, internationally known artist, instructor and founder of the Compass Atelier studio in Rockville. Morell provided history of the organization, which was founded by eight Baltimore women in 1885 and is the third oldest watercolor society in the U.S. with 750 members. She noted that the show features signature members for whom "art is their life."

Kessler said, "The artists made my work very easy and very difficult—it was a joyful experience." He looked at technical mastery, an appreciation of marks, color, how the picture coalesces and when the story takes over the image. The six works chosen exhibited a "superior level of technique—a highest understanding of how concept and technique can come together."

Stacy Lund Levy's "Bliss" earned first place for its impressive variety of texture which, Kessler said, "keeps the eye dancing throughout the entire composition." It is a study of her 18-year-old daughter swimming in an Arizona pool that she captured from reference photographs.

The contemplative second place "Breakfast for One" by Lois Wolford invites pause. Kessler praised it for its "wonderful dichotomies" with a sense of being "alone in the moment, thought-provoking." Wolford painted the subject from reference photos of a man dining in a San Francisco restaurant.

"Skyrider" by Deborah Mance is a fascinating portrait of a blue bicycle that was chosen for third place. Kessler saw similarities to Winslow Homer's techniques of knifing and sanding, and described Mance's work as "a simple subject composed and executed magnificently."

Honorable mentions were awarded to New York artist Robert Ferguson for "Low Tide" and Tracey Gage for "Tipping the Scale." A third went to Stephen Crooks for "Trail Blazer," which conjures emotion the minute it catches the eye. Kessler called it the "tightest and darkest piece in the show ... a somber tone, an aging cowboy, verging on elegiac, perhaps a remembrance of time gone by."

Gaithersburg artist Deb Cohan's "Arboretum" grew out of a California inspiration. "I had been thinking about how trees interact with each other," the artist said. They are constantly adjusting in relationship to their neighbors, whether it be jockeying to catch light or working to find water, each with its own personality. With this in mind, I painted this group of trees I saw in Mendocino, California."

Kay Fuller's stunning abstract "Intuitive Spirit" radiates earthy color and geometric placement. It "expresses my attempt to keep my ducks in a row; my life all lined up and neatly organized," Fuller explained. "The reality and creativity creep in and make my life disorganized and far more, far more interesting. I was a medical practice administrator before retiring, using my left brain to keep things organized. My right brain demanded attention when I was in my mid-sixties and has been expressing itself with my art and music. I have been painting 15 years and playing the flute for 10."

A large abstract done in thinned acrylic and varnished, "Static Electricity" by Elaine Weiner-Reed features figures in sharp repose creating angles and nuances. Barbara Brower's "Fall Hydrangeas" popped off the paper with their color transitions from green to aqua to rust and on to orange and violet. Olney artist Antonia Tiu's stately and shimmering "Duomo di Siena" reflects her illustration of images culled from extensive travels.

Local artist Pritha Srinivasan described her "Harmony" as "meant to convey the importance of openness to infinite possibilities in one's life journey, thus the outstretched arms of the woman. The empowering force of the feminine is in synchronicity with the transcendence of nature and blooms when 'harmony' is achieved."

April Rimpo's "Fiddle Away" uses watercolor with acrylic varnish on paper guided over stretcher bars like a canvas to produce a hard surface. "I had a lot of music in my family growing up. I watched an interview of a musician at Strathmore and was very drawn to the instruments displayed," she said.

The show is a treat and the holiday break a perfect time to browse and perhaps inspire your own creativity to bloom in the new year. On view through Jan. 13, 2020. Please call the Mansion at 301.258.6425 to verify hours.

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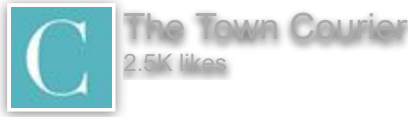
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