



## Report from the Wrap It Up show and sale

Once again our December Wrap It Up show was a major success. In spite of inclement weather, the show was well-attended, and sales were brisk. Over the weekend, and into the following week, 38 pieces sold. Once again we noted that sales of smaller pieces priced under \$100 were highest, though there were several works in the \$100 to \$200 range sold as well.

We think it would be a good idea to emphasize in our advertising next year that the show and sale continue past the first weekend until the Workshop closes for the holidays. And we are thinking of perhaps having some sort of party a second weekend to draw more people into the gallery. Start planning now for next year's show and sale.

## Receiving times and procedures

Please note that receiving for shows is the first Saturday of the month, from 9:30 to 1:30 and the following Monday from 9:30 to 11:30. If you are unable to bring your work during those hours, please find an Art League friend who can submit your work for you. The Workshop staff will not accept work at other times. In an emergency, you may email [ellencornett@comcast.net](mailto:ellencornett@comcast.net) to see if special arrangements for submitting can be made. Please note consideration is made for those with a solid history of volunteering to the Art League.

## Member book

There is a book kept at the front desk of CHAW that contains resumes, artists' statements and images of work by Art League members. This book is made available to people who express an interest in purchasing or commissioning art or in arranging exhibitions. All current Art League members are welcome to supply a one page written statement and a one page sheet containing one or many images to be kept in this book. This is an excellent opportunity to make your work available to potential purchasers.

## How to Buy Art: a Guide for Beginners

Stu and Judy Searles

*(This article appeared in the November Voice of the Hill.)*

The decision to buy an original work of art is a difficult one. How much to spend? Is it a good investment? Will I still like it next year? Will it work in my home? This article is designed to help the beginning collector address some of these general questions. It also shows the value of purchasing art from a juried show.

### I want the art to fit into my decor. What do you suggest?

All that really matters is that you like the piece. Sometimes my wife or I will buy a work just because we are taken with it. Finding a place for it may require rearrangement of our current collection. Sometimes you may shop for a piece of art to fit a specific location. Then you might wish to consider size and shape. Does a horizontal or vertical piece work better? Horizontal work is more common and is often easier to fit into wall spaces. Consider the idea of three-dimensional art such as sculpture or pottery. Size and price are often linked. Thus, a small sized work may be better as a first purchase. The advantage of a more affordable piece is that you can put it up and get to know it without having made a major investment. Over time you will notice if it continues to engage you - or you may find you lose interest in it. Try to figure out why you feel the way you do about the work - it will help you in making future purchases.

### Can a piece of art convey a mood?

Yes. A work of art can be calming or energizing depending on whether the shapes or lines are sharp or angular or hard-edged or soft. I like a piece with some ambiguity so that it can be seen in different ways and sustain my interest. Others prefer a subject that is well-defined and can be enjoyed without analysis. Some art buyers want a beautiful rendition of a place they have visited or

would love to visit. It is great if a piece can take you there. Artists usually simplify what they see and may even idealize the subject.

### Should color be a consideration?

Colors help to convey mood. Generally, a piece of art will have a color dominance of one kind or other. This may be warm or cool. Warm colors include reds, oranges, and yellows. Cool colors are blues or violets. Within these two categories, there are colors that are brighter (or closer to the colors of the rainbow) and those that are dull (called desaturated). Bright warm colors are exciting. The less saturated and cooler colors are often calming. The contrast of dull and bright colors or cool and warm colors in a piece can be very dramatic. In choosing your art, consider what mood you want to convey with the piece in its planned location.

### What about the colors in my home?

This is perhaps one of the most common and difficult questions to answer. If you like it, buy it and don't feel it has to match. If you want to integrate it into your decor, consider changing the frame or mat. Art pieces sold in juried shows are required to have simple frames and mats in basic colors such as white or cream. This is necessary so that works in the gallery go together even though the sizes, styles, techniques, and subjects are very different. A colored mat often overpowers a piece, but a double or triple mat showing only a thin border of color can be effective.

### Is there a "best" media?

The short answer is no. Historically, oil paintings have been most valued. This is no longer true. In today's art world, good art is conveyed through use a variety of techniques, often in combination. Oils and acrylics have a similar look and do not need to be protected by glass. Watercolors can convey a bright, airy look achieved when the

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## How to buy art

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transparent paint allows light to pass through to the white paper and reflect back. Etchings and lithographs can have a significant amount of tiny details. Other print forms such as monotypes can be lively and fun. Photographs are a wonderful way to capture a moment or mood. Digital manipulation is providing a new and exciting edge to photography. Three dimensional arts such as pottery or sculpture can provide endless fascination with the play of light and shadow on them. Pastels can transmit clarity of color and detail different from other art forms (note, they do require special handling when framed). The buyer should choose the media that pleases him or her.

### How do I know the quality of the art?

Art in a "juried show" is generally of high quality. A recognized art authority such as a university professor, museum director, or gallery owner reviews the pieces that have been submitted for a show and selects a smaller number for inclusion. Therefore, a work of art in a juried show has been reviewed by an expert and deemed of good quality.

### What does the juror look for?

Generally, the juror is looking for creativity, good composition or design, and technical ability. Overly familiar subjects are often passed over. Creativity can overcome the familiar. An unusual viewpoint, uncommon colors, or an unexpected element are appealing. Beyond that, subject and even relationship to the show's theme is secondary to composition. A good composition has a dominate element, a variety of shapes, and a sense of unity. The artist's level of expertise with his/her chosen media is also a consideration.

## What is a reasonable price for a piece of art?

To determine if the piece you are considering is priced reasonably, make some price comparisons with other art of similar sizes and media. Factors that may be considered by the artist in pricing a work are: size, cost of materials and framing, gallery fees, time involved in the creation of the art, and level of experience of the artist.

### Where can I find reasonable art on Capitol Hill?

The Capitol Hill Art League (CHAL) is an affiliate of the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop (CHAW). The Art League conducts six juried shows a year which are exhibited at the Arts Workshop gallery located at 545 Seventh St. SE. All the regular shows at the Capitol Hill Art League (CHAL) are juried. The juror attends the opening on the second Saturday of the month to talk about the selections and awards. Attending this discussion can be very educational for a new art buyer. In addition, you can review a book of artist biographies containing pictures of a sample of their works. This is available at the reception desk. An unjuried "wrap it up" show is held in December with small works of reasonably priced art on sale in time for holiday giving. All work shown is always original and current as it must have been completed within the last three years.

*(The Art League is exploring the possibility of offering a panel discussion of How to Buy Art this spring. The panel would be composed of a curator, collector, gallery owner, teacher and working artist. We would invited members of the community to join us for the discussion.)*

## Openings

If you have friends and family who might like to join us for openings, to have a glass of wine, hear from the judge and applaud your success, bring them to an opening, and add their name(s) to the Art League patron list. You may email [ellencornett@comcast.net](mailto:ellencornett@comcast.net) with names and addresses.

## Steering Committee

The Art League Steering Committee is:  
Geoff Ault ([gcault@yahoo.com](mailto:gcault@yahoo.com))

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Jason Stieber ([jstieber@nmwa.org](mailto:jstieber@nmwa.org))

Geoff is the Art League liaison to the Capitol Hill Art League Board. Publicity is handled by Geoff, Nancy and Antonia. Volunteers for receiving and judging are coordinated by Phebe. Michele contacts the judges and records judges comments. Geoff and Ellen take care of supplies and staffing of the openings. Stu is responsible for finances. Dana takes minutes at meetings and oversaw the Wrap It Up show. Jason is working on exploring the development of on-line Art League registration and an Art League website. Marilyn will work on the development of new exhibition venues. Ellen chairs the meetings.

Barbara Bodner-Johnson is taking a year off, but will rejoin us next fall.

## 2006 Calendar

### February: Wish You Were Here

Juror, Marsha Staiger

Receiving: Saturday, Feb. 4 9:30-1:30

Monday, Feb. 6 9:30-11:30

Judging: Monday, Feb. 6 1:30

Opening: Saturday, Feb. 11 5-7

### March: Sweet and Sour

Juror, Lenny Campello

Receiving: Saturday, Mar. 4 9:30-1:30

Monday, Mar. 6 9:30-11:30

Judging: Monday, Mar. 6 1:30

Opening: Saturday, Mar. 11 5-7

### April: Untitled

Juror, Sherry Trachtman

Receiving: Saturday, Apr. 1 9:30-1:30

Monday, Apr. 3 9:30-11:30

Judging: Tuesday, Apr. 4 10:00

Opening: Saturday, Apr. 8 5-7

### May: Secret Garden

Juror, Delna Dastur

Receiving: Saturday, May 6 9:30-1:30

Monday, May 8 9:30-11:30

Judging: Monday, May 8 1:30

Opening: Saturday, May 13 5-7

## Workshops in Artistic Anatomy

CHAL member Nancy Donnelly is offering two workshops, one in drawing the skeleton and the other drawing the muscles under the skin.

Next: Muscles. Sunday, January 22 at MOCA in Georgetown, 10 to 3.

Nancy says, "With the help of handouts, charts with overlays, and a model, we will describe and draw muscles both tensed and relaxed. The workshop covers 1) head/neck, 2) torso, 3) arm/shoulder, and 4) pelvis/leg. Bring newsprint and charcoal."

To register, call Dave Quammen at MOCA 202-966-0366. \$50 plus model fee.