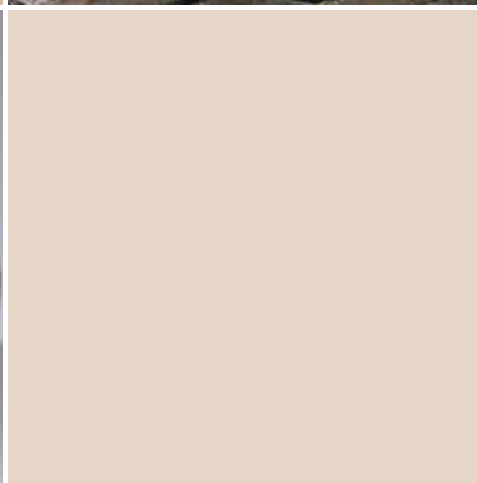
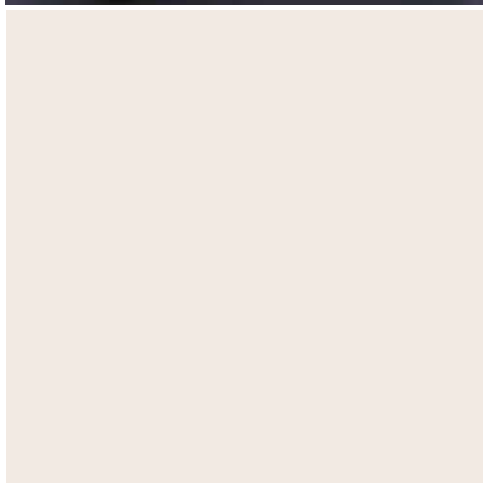


# LINES FROM THE LEAGUE



STUDENT AND ALUMNI MAGAZINE  
SUMMER 2012



## Letter from the Executive Director

*I was eight years old when my mother took me to the Frick Museum for the first time. I remember being struck by Vermeer's Officer and Laughing Girl. It had magic, a life of its own. The girl's smile was genuine. I wondered what he told her to cause her to react with such warmth. It made me feel good to see it.*

*I didn't know then that I wanted to be an artist. I thought that only extraordinary people could do anything like that and I am certainly not one of them. But I never forgot that painting or many of the other great masterpieces in that collection.*

*Sixteen years after that first visit to the Frick, and many subsequent visits there and to New York's other great museums, I decided to come to the League because I needed to find out if I could do it. I imagined the rewards of being able to "draw what I see" to be so enormous, and with the League so affordable, I had nothing to lose. That was 33 years ago.*

*Today I look at that painting by Vermeer with an even greater sense of wonder. Now my fascination is drawn to the structure of the painting; to the relationship of its forms and the echoing spaces in-between (the shape of the officer's hat is loosely repeated throughout the painting); to how cool tones respond to warm; to the complexities of the drawing and the realization that nothing is arbitrary. Every shape and line participates in its creation.*

*The artists in this issue of Lines understand that the language of art is a journey of absolute wonder that never ends. It informs us as no other language can. I often consider the League as a great resource for its multitude of dialects taught by our distinguished faculty representing a wide array of aesthetic philosophies. And while they are each very distinctive, if there is one thought that connects all those dialects; one idea that unites those philosophies, it is this:*

*The subject of art is art.*



Ira Goldberg  
Executive Director

**Editor at Large**

Denise L. Greene

**Editors**

Helen Dwork  
Julia Montepagani  
Thomas Tacik

**Copy Editor**

Erin Butler

**Design Director**

Lilian R. Engel

**Designer**

Yuko Ueda

**Director of Individual and Planned Giving**

Denise L. Greene  
denise@artstudentsleague.org

**Director of Communications**

Ken Park  
kpark@artstudentsleague.org

**Commentary Welcome**

*Lines from the League:*  
*Student and Alumni Magazine*  
welcomes letters to the editor  
as well as comments, suggestions,  
and corrections. Send correspondence  
by e-mail to friend@artstudentsleague.org.

**Executive Director**

Ira Goldberg

**Board of Control**

Salvatore Barbieri, President  
Winfield P. Jones, Vice President  
Sue Crosby  
José Feyjoo  
Howard A. Friedman  
Gillian J. Furniss  
Thomas Harvey  
Robert Laurie  
Susan Matz  
Laura H. Takasaki



Cover images: Work by Takako Araki

**Cover Story**

**Takako Araki and New York** **4**

Shoko Fujimoto

**Work-study**

**Michael Wilson: The Last Jean Gates Award** **8**

Denise L. Greene

**In Honor and Loving Memory**

**Bob Bengtsson: A 50-Year Treasure Trove** **10**

Merilee Bengtsson

**Elizabeth Stanton Blake: A Peer of Painters and their Patrons** **11**

Helen Dwork

**John Mielcarek: Through the League, An Understanding of Life** **12**

Russell Mielcarek with Helen Dwork

**The Len Rosenfeld Scholarship for Painting** **13**

Janet Hoffman

**Nathan Wasserberger** **15**

Abraham Cyzner

**Winifred Milius Lubell** **17**

Stephen Lubell

**Exhibition Outreach**

**Chung-Sun Oh: Painting for Serenity and Joy** **18**

Helen Dwork

**From Computer Graphics to Watercolor** **19**

Takashi Uesugi

**Stone, Wood, Clay, Heart** **20**

Daisuke Kiyomiya with Denise L. Greene

**Veterans Program**

**Art in Service to My Country** **21**

Angel Valentin

**What's Happening at the League**

**Scholarships & Grants Competition** **22**

*Hinman Discussion Group*

**Answering a Question, then Questioning the Answers** **26**

Helen Dwork

**Who's at the League**

**Ninety-four and Young at 'Art: Mortimer Geisler** **28**

Helen Dwork

**Everyone Has a Story** **29**

Kathleen Seidel

**Honoring a History, Fostering the Future** **29**

Sharon Sprung

**Out There**

**Pamela duLong Williams: The Creative Process** **30**

Julia Montepagani

**Bebe Traylor: Exploring Environments** **30**

Julia Montepagani





Takako Araki, *Rock Bible*, 1993–94, 61 x 41 x 21.5 cm



# Takako Araki and New York

How the League provided the turning point for her career as an artist

Shoko Fujimoto

**T**akako Araki was born in Nishinomiya in Hyogo Prefecture, Japan in 1921. When Takako was fifteen, her father passed away. He was head of the Misho-Ryu Ikebana School and Takako was duty-bound to take over his position. Normally, a male heir should have inherited this post but one brother was ill and the other was too young. Therefore, the young girl had to give up her own education in order to lead a school whose students had to follow a rigid tradition of Japanese art. She held this post for 25 years and during this time her own artistic vocation gradually grew stronger. Her interest in art had started when she was very young and she had begun to take oil painting lessons. Around 1950, while serving as the representative for her family's business she began creating glass objets d'art and oil paintings.

During her career at the Ikebana School she continued to paint and keep up her independent work. She and another artist put together an exhibition and this in turn led to discussions which inspired her to open her own gallery, even though she had no gallery business experience whatsoever. In 1956, after her interests turned toward modern art, she opened the Hakuho Gallery in Umeda, Osaka, in memory of her father who had loved art and paintings. The Gallery closed after only four years, but in that short time it had become a hub for the promotion of modern artists.

Life as head of the traditional Ikebana School came into increasing conflict with Takako's own creative ambitions and her need to express herself through art. Being expected to follow the strict ways of the school meant that she was living a life of insoluble contradictions. On top of this, she was also trying to run a contemporary art gallery. Her life did not make sense to her anymore; the inner drama of its problems and contradictions finally burnt her out. She felt that the only way to escape this situation was to simply abandon everything. Later she described this as escaping her reality.

Takako arrived in New York City in April 1961. New York was the center of modern art and all creative young people dreamed of coming here and making it

big as successful artists. While this dream was also at the back of Takako's mind, it was not artistic ambition but an urgent desire to get out of Japan which brought her to New York. Years later, she told people that she had chosen New York because she had old friends there.

While spending a year learning sculpture at the Art Students League of New York, Takako used all her free time visiting museums and galleries, absorbing the art world of New York. The period in which she studied at the League was the most significant stage in her long quest for an artistic career and she felt that she had gained total freedom and independence. Now she could focus on her passion for art. At the end of her stay in New York she concluded that art was the direction of her life and she declared herself to be a ceramic artist. This was not typical at that time and she liked the challenge. As she crossed America her eyes were opened to the world of modern art and porcelain fired in the same manner as glass objets d'art.

Takako had always had an interest in using glass as an artistic medium. Even when she was working as head of the Ikebana School, she was also experimenting in the creation of glass objects in a huge factory in Osaka. From time to time she had had the chance to exhibit this experimental glass work in Japan. In New York she hoped to continue exploring this medium, although she realized that no such field in the art world existed. Glass factories were set up only for mass production and there seemed to be no opening for an individual artist to use factory premises to create original artwork. However, she did not give up easily and kept exploring the medium of glass to create pieces in the kitchen of her New York apartment. It was almost impossible to work with glass on a kitchen stove. Later on she would laugh at the memory of her difficulties, even though she had shown her work at the Japan Society Gallery.

This was the birth of the extraordinary ceramic artist, Takako Araki. When she returned to Japan in 1962,



Takako Araki making *Sand Bible*  
PHOTOGRAPH: Kishin Shinoyama, 1988, 120 x 96 cm



Stone Bible



Wave Bible



Mountain Bible



Printed Balls

she wanted an absolutely fresh start. She left the traditional world of flower arranging, built a kiln in a tiny studio on the outskirts of Rokko Mountain and called it "My Fortress." Takako began studying at the Maruhachi in Tachikui, Tamba and the Kyoto Ceramic Research Center. She devoted her life with enthusiastic conviction to her art until her very last days. From 1965, she began to produce black ceramic pieces and her attention was drawn to the strength and sensuality of the round shape of the pieces. In the seventies, she developed a method of using silkscreen technology to transfer images to ceramics (the very first person to use this unique approach). Following her discovery, she utilized the innumerable tiny holes of the screen to pursue the colorful expression of transferring images like poems and lyrics onto ceramic pieces.

Her best-known work is her *Bible Series*, which she started in 1978 and continued until she died in 2004. Her last work, which she named Snow Bible, remains unfinished. In 1979, her Bible series (Sand Bible, Scorched Bible, and Gold Bible) won the Best Entry Prize at the 5th Japan Ceramics Exhibition. On the heels of that honor she had a solo exhibition at the Everson Museum of Art in New York, where the Bible Series received international acclaim for its originality. Just before her younger brother died he said to her, "I forgive everyone...Thank you." These words stunned her for she knew that her brother had suffered not only through his illness but also by being mistreated by people around him. He left her his

worn out Bible. She took this Bible and started to wonder "what is in this book." That was 1965. She read the Bible for thirteen years before starting to sculpt the first of her Bible series.

Of her own beliefs, Takako stated that she herself was not religious, but that she was interested in examining religion objectively. She realized that religion was a matter of the heart and sought to project her inner self into her work through a process she called "self-dissection."

[The following section is adapted from Yoshiaki Inui, *Araki Takako Retrospective*, Exhibition Catalog, The Museum of Ceramic Art, Hyogo, 2011.]

*The Bible is symbolically used to explore themes related to central issues of human experience. The Sand Bible is finished with Schamotte (twined sand finely ground heat resistant ceramic clay) and river sand from Ms. Araki's birthplace, the Mt. Rokko area, mixed with a small amount of ceramic glaze. The whiteness of the surface comes from the whiteness of the sand. She also created pieces which have a red cast caused by the high iron content in the sand of the near and mid-east. The artist herself said that making the Bible Series was a way of solving for herself the problem of who and what she really was. This vast, open statement shows how the Bible Series gives rise to varied images depending on the perspective of the admirer, which is, in turn, influenced by an era and culture, and the relationship of people to material objects. The brittle*





*Stone Bible*

*decaying Bibles are composed of layers of thin, fragile clay sheets. Their decaying fragility contains its own message: that ultimately the Word is ephemeral. These works speak not only of historical time; they echo Araki's inner, spiritual world. They gave free reign to her imagination. In the process she broke the bounds of traditional Japanese ceramic arts while expressing profound emotions.*

Two weeks before Takako died she was baptized, given a Catholic name, Maria, and received last rites from Father Koike. She was 82. 📌



*Sand Bible*



*Memorial of the Hanshin Earthquake, 1996*



## THE LAST JEAN GATES AWARD

# Michael Wilson

## A Road Less Traveled

Denise L. Greene

Jeannette Gates made a generous bequest to the League's work-study program to establish The Jean Gates Award, administered by Dr. Alan Yudell, a trustee of the estate. From 2005 to 2012, it provided 61 work-study artists with \$3,000 each in financial aid. Michael Wilson received \$1,007, the final distribution of the trust.

At the age of three months, Michael and his two older siblings were placed into the New York City foster care system. Their foster mother adopted Michael and his brother, David, but their older sister grew up in foster care. The brothers got to know their birth mother through visits; she died when Michael was seven and David was eight. Their adoptive mother moved the family to Detroit to take care of her own mother. She developed heart problems and had to have a triple bypass. After her mother died, she moved the family to Baltimore, Maryland to take care of her own health and be close to family. She died a year later when Michael was eleven, having made arrangements with her nephew to take care of Michael and his brother should anything happen to her. Michael and David moved to Houston, Texas.

At the age of five, Michael's classmates were impressed with his ability to draw and that made him want to draw more. It was his move to Texas that introduced him to Ms. Wallace. She taught him art history and to use art as a means of self-expression, which was important because of his reading disability (a form of dyslexia). He said, "My teachers, or inspiration, are Alice Neel and Frida Kahlo for portraits, Marc Chagall for fantasy, Kara Walker for history, and narrators of folk art."

Turning 18 was a pivotal moment for Michael: he had two solo shows at Eb5 International Art Gallery in Spring, Texas; he left home, and David joined the air force. Michael lost contact with his brother when he was sent to Japan and then Washington, DC. Four years later he decided to move to New York against the advice of friends and family to study art. Without any contacts or

money, Michael sought advice about men's shelters in New York and found a place to stay.

Anna Lise Jensen, an interdisciplinary artist who explores ideas of personal and social space, reached out to a Brooklyn community to involve them in an exhibition about home. Ms. Jensen posted a notice in the shelter asking for participants. Michael was the only one to respond. He created a scene from his grandmother's home that represented a fight and then a portrait of a man in his shelter that represented his current state of homelessness. His work was exhibited at the Renaissance, formerly a hospital and now a community center with an art gallery, in Brooklyn. Anna Lise and Michael bonded. When she had another idea about helping to promote a community garden in Queens she approached Michael, who volunteered to create a painting of the three people who nurtured the garden.

He made a friend at a gallery show who introduced him to the League, where he studies with Grace Knowlton and Mariano Del Rosario. His work involves quilting, and using acrylic and found material on newspaper and printed paper to give voice to the challenges he's experienced in his 24 years. He works two-and-a-half jobs to support himself and his passion for art. He is a doorman, a stock person and floor merchandiser in a clothing store, and has a work-study position at the League. It wasn't until he was chosen to receive the Jean Gates Award, a work-study scholarship, that he was able to save enough for a down payment for a shared apartment in Harlem. Michael is shy but attracts people to him because he exudes a positive outlook: he has no complaints and you would never know he has any worries. He directs his energies to art. 🌱



Paintings by Michael Wilson, from top: *Bound* (continued on next page); Michael Wilson; *The Livingroom*





Paintings by Michael Wilson, clockwise from top:  
*Bound* (continued from previous page); *Killing Hope*;  
*Witches Revenge*; *Prayer*



## A 50-Year Treasure Trove

Merilee Bengtsson

Bob Bengtsson, 75, died in 2011 in Washington State, where he had studios in Mukilteo and Whidbey Island.

Seven years of painting at the Art Students League (1958–65) shaped the creative spirit of Bob Bengtsson, and that early experience resulted in a 50-year treasure trove of abstract and impressionist paintings and pastels.

The mood of Bob's art varied as he experimented with texture and ways of working with wet acrylics; yet, his work has a signature—whether it's wall-size acrylics or notebook-size pen-and-inks. His abstracts often have strokes of white and light colors that reflect his fascination with streaks of light as it shone through clouds or created shadows. When commenting on his work, Bob said, "The forms I see in nature trigger my imagination and provide images that I use in abstract paintings." Even though Bengtsson worked with computer manipulations and other media, he said, "I find painting to be the most liberating form of expression for me, releasing innermost thoughts that don't find

expression in other graphic arts."

Bob lived in a bubble of music, so his work resonates with unique sounds: sometimes jazz, sometimes classical. Some works flow while others are sharp and irregular, but all of his art makes you pause to look, absorb, think, and look again.

Bob's attention to forms as art connects to his being raised in New York City where he photographed industrial images. Bob worked as a designer at the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, where he designed the PATH logo as well as car interiors. He later became the first Director of Design for Amtrak. After years of ground transportation, he moved to Boeing's Concept Center as an industrial design engineer where he worked on interior spaces and seats for Boeing airplanes. He retired from Boeing in 2010.

Later this year, Blue Marble Textiles will launch a new line of home décor articles such as pillows, duvet covers, table runners, placemats and shower curtains that feature Bob Bengtsson's designs. Bob's art collection will be available for licensing by Blue Marble Textiles, Mukilteo, Washington. 📍

Paintings by Bob Bengtsson, from top: Issoudun, France, 1999; Blue Abstract, 1964; Greenbank Beach Shacks, 2004





# Elizabeth Stanton Blake

## A Peer of Painters and their Patrons

Helen Dwork

*From left to right: "Betty" as president of NAWA; E.C. Stanton, *The Old Actor*, 1926, oil; E.C. Stanton, *Woman in Mantilla*, 1922, oil*



Elizabeth C. Stanton, known as “Betty,” was born in New York City in 1894. The daughter of a department store linen buyer, she came from modest but comfortable circumstances. Raised primarily in the city, it was the Knox School, a finishing school in the Hudson Valley, that provided her with the fundamentals of painting and allowed her to form friendships with such influential women to the art world as Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, Edith C. Barry, and Frances De Forest Stewart. These friendships would serve her well as she moved to a studio in Manhattan, providing her with unparalleled access to the wealthy elites who would serve as both patrons and peers. She became a portrait painter in oil, signing her works “E. C. Stanton.” Studying at the League between 1916 and 1919, under the instruction of F. Louis Mora and George Bridgman, Betty was able to combine her Knox School and League connections; a conduit between high society and the art world.

Betty’s mentor was the portraitist Cecilia Beaux, one of the most prominent women in American art at the time. A dedicated professional, Beaux passed on to her protégée the conviction that a female artist must choose between marriage and a career. Betty began exhibiting at the National Academy of Design, the Brooklyn Museum, and in galleries in New York, Paris, and

London. To support herself, she ran The Portrait Classes, painting sessions at her own atelier followed by weekly critiques by Beaux and Mora, as well as League instructor Albert Sterner. These classes drew students from both of Betty’s social circles. Frequently singled out by reviewers, she was invited to join numerous art organizations, and in 1924 was granted a desirable painting residency at Laurelton Hall, the Long Island home of Louis Comfort Tiffany.

In April 1925, Betty met William H. Blake, an educator. The two fell in love, but before committing to marriage Betty took time to consider the implications of such a decision on her career. Though she did decide to marry and declared herself “retired” after her 1927 wedding, Betty continued to exhibit her work for another decade and, despite no longer doing commissions, held firmly to her artistic persona and continued to make art on her own terms.

As a married woman, she became a “professional volunteer”—a champion of other artists, particularly women. Already a member of the American Federation of Arts, The Art Workers’ Club for Women and the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors (later to become the National Association of Women Artists, or NAWA), Betty proved herself invaluable. It was the NAWA that most relied on her resourcefulness and keen business sense.

Founded in 1889, by female artists barred from membership in the National Academy of Design, the association still works to support female artists and promote interest in their art. As a board member and later as president (1928-30), Betty navigated the organization through a period of competition and financial hardship, securing its role in the American arts scene and expanding the ability of women to be exhibited, and accepted as artists. Simultaneously, she was as generous as possible in the private sphere, doing her best to personally provide financial assistance to artists in need.

After her husband’s death in 1965, Betty continued to live in New York City, spending summers on Cape Cod, at her studio cottage in North Falmouth. She led an active life, attending board meetings of NAWA as an emeritus member and continuing to volunteer. She worked for various membership groups at the Riverside Church and used her considerable business acumen to the benefit of the Columbia University Gift Shop, which raised money for scholarships through the sale of secondhand books, furniture, and knickknacks discarded by staff and students. After Betty’s death from kidney cancer in November of 1981, an endowed annual prize, the Elizabeth Stanton Blake Memorial Award, was created in her name at the NAWA. 🌟

## Through the League, An Understanding of Life: A Tribute to John Mielcarek

Russell Mielcarek (John's son) with Helen Dwork



John Mielcarek and his paintings



“They must call me a romantic realist, but I don’t know what they mean by that,” says John Mielcarek. Now 89 years old and still painting as often as he can, John was a student at the Art Students League in New York in the late 1940s. After getting out of the army in 1946, he attended the Art Institute of Buffalo on the GI Bill for about two years. But he yearned for more, and so did a lot of the other artists he knew, “so we sold our cars, left our girlfriends and went to New York. We struggled to study at the Art Students League. If we had a bagel and a glass of orange juice, then that was it for the day.”

At the League, he studied with Edwin Dickinson and Ivan Olinsky, and often talks about just how instrumental they were in shaping his artistic ability and his style of work: “Both instructors were masters of the arts. Their classes were always full, but we would all bear with it. As a fine artist you have to perform—you have to do the art. It’s an addictive thing. Ivan Olinsky was a very humble man and very serious and he stressed a lot of drawing.”

After John left the League, he returned

to Buffalo and the Art Institute. It was there that he met his wife of 61 years, Norma, who was also an art student (later to become a teacher of remedial reading and writing, and then a school principal). “A lot of what she did with the students was very artsy,” John says. “She was very creative.” The two were married in 1950 and settled in Buffalo to raise a family.

John spent his life providing for his family, frequently working two jobs. He worked as an interior painter, painting different kinds of woods, as well as spray-painting in factories. “Anything that had to do with paints, I did it,” he says.

He spent all of his free time painting and drawing. The family traveled often and John brought his art supplies wherever they went. He worked with watercolors, oils, drawings, and pastels—whichever medium he was in the mood for. “My work is quite different from most artists,” he tells people who ask about his style. “Most artists you can recognize their work right away. I’d get bored if I had to follow one curriculum. The Art Students League was such a creative place that I could never

channel myself in one direction.”

John has suffered much heartbreak that he feels he could not have survived were it not for his art, which supplies an outlet. Appreciating beauty in life is important to him and he feels that, despite all the tragedy and ugliness in the world, there is still plenty of beauty to portray.

John has had several shows in his life and has entered many exhibits. He has enjoyed many friendships with Western New York artists, some who became famous, but almost all of whom he has outlived. His best friends were Walter Prochownik, Robert Blair, Dave Pratt and Joe Orfeo, all highly respected for their unique styles.

John feels that it took his whole life to realize how important his time at the League was, and he offers this bit of wisdom for the past and current students: “If you work hard enough, you learn. The Art Students League gave me a real, thorough foundation in drawing and painting, and that gives a student an understanding of life. Don’t let life postpone your artwork, instead let your art inspire your life. Even though life is short, art lives forever!”





Paintings by John Mielcarek

Left: *Big City Art Class*

Below, from left: *Decorating Henry*; *Model in Green Dress*; *Rhode Island Boat Dock*



## In Memory of Len Rosenfeld: The Len Rosenfeld Scholarship for Painting

Janet Hoffman

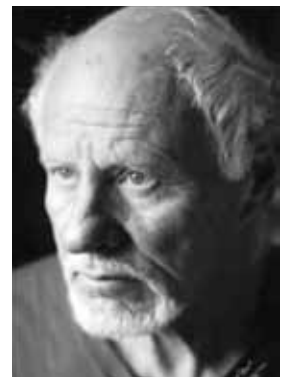
Leonard Rosenfeld was born on December 14, 1926 to immigrant parents. His father died when Len was 14, a few years before Len was drafted into World War II. In a way, Len was glad to get out of Brooklyn and “see the world.” By the time he was shipped out to the Philippines the war was nearing its end, so his time there, and then on Guam, was spent on camp duties. Len was in charge of the supply warehouse and decorated the walls with pornographic drawings. One day, during an inspection, a

general saw the drawings and asked, “Who’s responsible for these?” Len admitted, “I am, sir. Private Rosenfeld.” The general then replied, “Do you mind if I take a few of them?”

Len could have gone to Paris or Mexico on the GI bill, but instead chose the Art Students League. After all, everything art was happening in New York. He studied with John Corbino, Howard Trafton, Frank J. Reilly, Victor De Pauw, Kenneth H. Miller, Nathaniel Kaz, John Hovannes, and

Robert Beverly Hale. He hung out at San Remo in the Village and the Cedar

Tavern on University Place. He witnessed Franz Kline trading some of his paintings for a Ferrari, which Kline only used to go back and forth between his apartment and the Cedar. One night, Willem de Kooning heard art critic Clement Greenberg say that Jackson Pollock was the greatest painter of



*Continued from page 13*

the day. de Kooning slapped Greenberg in the face, and the two men fought until Len and others separated them.

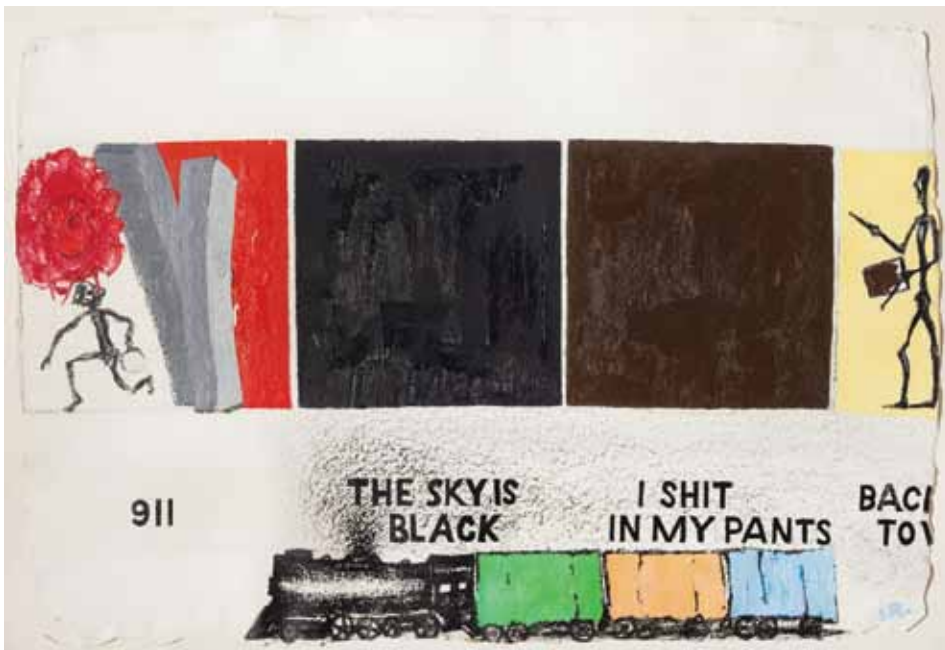
Len did not want to be an abstract expressionist: “That’s been done,” he said. His work was always topical, though what really mattered to him was the paint, the technique. He loved to tell the story of how he came to show at Ivan Karp’s OK Harris gallery. Len came to the gallery and said, “I want you to show my work.” Karp showed him files on hundreds of artists. “I know you’re good,” he said, “but I can’t even show

the artists I have.” As Len was leaving he said, “Ivan—don’t let me rot up there.” Karp pounded his fist on the table and said, “Don’t get sentimental with me.” The next day, he agreed to show him.

In the early 1980s, Len picked up a piece of telephone wire and nailed it to a wooden stretcher. Thus began the wire pieces, large sculpture-like works made of different colored wire nailed to stretcher bars. From there, Len moved on to crushed cans, then watercolors. For his last series, inspired by the war in Iraq, Len returned to his favorite medium: oil on canvas. Afterward, he did

a number of very rich pastels, some of them self-portraits. Just before his surgery in August 2009, Len commented, “I don’t know if I’m going to do anything next.” He then paused and added, “I’d like to do something very big.”

Len died in December of 2009, a truly dedicated and uncompromising artist to the end. He kept his work fresh, new and inventive, and kept the rest of his life simple. He never went backwards—only forwards. 🌟



*Work by Len Rosenfeld, clockwise from top left: The Sky is Black; Chinatown - The Year of the Fish, “wire-painting”; Tracks and Tunnel; Myrtle Avenue Station, Brooklyn*



# Nathan Wasserberger

Abraham Cyzner

1991: **“He’s alive?”** You mean he survived?” I demanded of the slender, bespectacled older man seated next to me in the synagogue. My voice rose with excitement as I turned sideways to face him.

“Yes, Nathan lived, just barely, through the camps and the marches. My brother has a loft right here in New York City, in the Village. He’s an artist.”

I could hardly wait for the Jewish Sabbath to end so that I could contact him.

Nathan and I were both born in the southwestern Polish city of Chrzanow. Our pleasant lives, prior to the German invasion, were filled with the activities typical of Polish-Jewish youth. We attended both public and Hebrew schools, but even with our very busy schedules we found time to play kids’ games or just “hang out.”

After the Nazis entered our town in 1939, circumstances changed drastically—German soldiers routinely confiscated property, food shortages began, and there were public hangings, at which attendance was compulsory. Children matured almost overnight, as we were confronted with dire, life and death decisions that never intrude into the lives of most people.



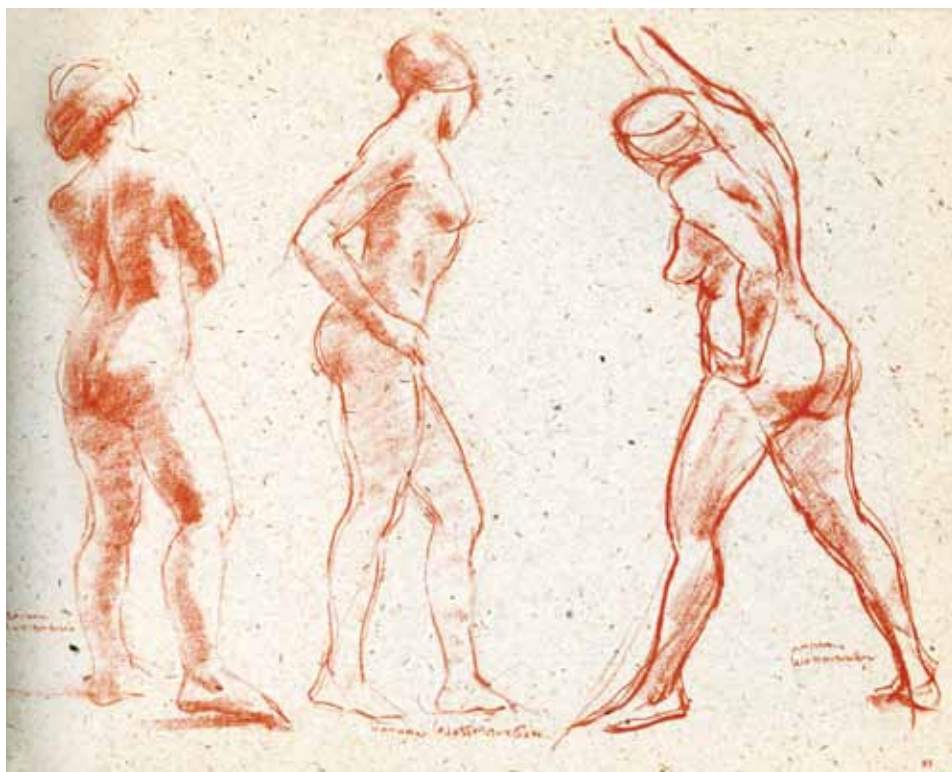
Recently, Nathan recalled a conversation that he had had with my older sister in those terrible times, soon after my father had been shot by the Germans in September of 1939. His interest in art must have already been emerging—incredibly, he had noticed and remembered how finely

*Clockwise from top left:*  
Photo of Nathan Wasserberger; Photo of Abe Cyzner (center); Abe Cyzner, *Memories*;  
Nathan Wasserberger, figure-study

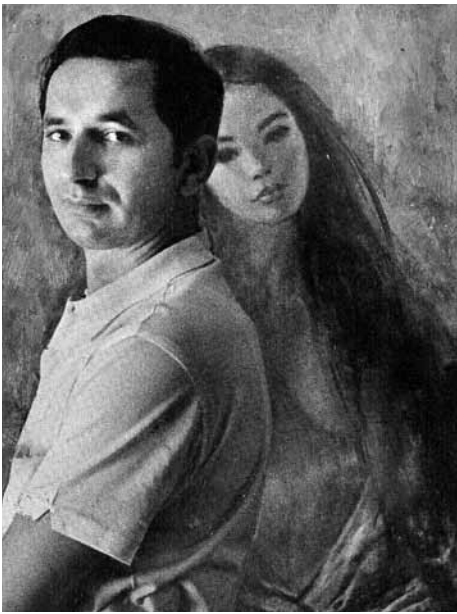


chiseled and delicate her features had been, despite the gravity of their discussion, in which they had voiced their fears for the future.

Unfortunately, their worries had been well-founded. My seventeen-year-old sister and the sweet woman who had been







Nathan's mother did not survive Hitler's "war against the Jews."

Perhaps because of his imposing stature and mature, dark good looks, and despite his young age, Nathan was selected for slave labor rather than death at Auschwitz. The future artist, accompanied by his father, endured several harrowing and life-threatening years in various concentration camps. I, also an adolescent prisoner, caught quick glimpses of him in the Markstaedt, and Funfteichen camps, as well as on a "Death March" to Gross-Rosen.

I vividly remember how his strength of character shone through the fog of horror on an occasion when his father committed a violation of a minor German rule. Nathan offered to take a severe beating in the place of the senior Wasserberger, a punishment that could well have resulted in an agonizing death for the by-then skeletal teenager. Miraculously, both were spared, and both survived.

In 1947, they arrived at a Brooklyn relative's home. Perhaps because he had come so close to having his life extinguished, Nathan chose to focus all of his efforts on his dream of a career in art.

During his early years of studies, he channeled his incomprehensible suffering into his paintings. Later, he destroyed most of these works, perhaps because they too vividly recalled his horrendous teen-age years; saturated with the blood and death of his people.

He studied in Paris, at Brooklyn's Pratt Institute, and most importantly, at The Art Students League, where he was greatly influenced by Ivan Olinsky and Byron Brown.

In the 1950s and beyond, Nathan's paintings began to express a life-affirming vitality, although many of them still also bore touches of the sadness and depression that were evident in his personality



throughout his days. His works were exhibited and sold in several upscale galleries, and scores of his color plates and paintings are in the archives of the Smithsonian Institution.

When we re-established the bonds of childhood friendship more than twenty years ago, Nathan—now also a master chess player—was particularly pleased that I was studying at the League, his alma mater.

In addition to his great artistic talent, Nathan also was endowed with the gift of linguistic ability. He always expressed himself, both verbally and in written com-

munication, with an elegance and style that were remarkable in one who was not a native-born American.

He passed away on April 23, 2012, after enduring a year of poor health. He leaves his wife Keiko, several loving nieces, nephews, and cousins, as well as many grieving friends and admirers. I can only hope that his haunted and tormented soul has finally found peace.

I shall miss my childhood companion and fellow artist greatly. 🌟

*Artwork by Nathan Wasserberger, opposite page, clockwise from top left: Nathan Wasserberger in front of drawing; Still Life, 1965, 30 x 24 in., COLLECTION OF MR. & MRS. ALLAN JACOBS, NEW YORK; Two Women By The Sea, c. 1960, COLLECTION, MR. GARY WAGNER, NEW YORK; Girl With Yellow Hat, 1966, 18 x 24 in., COLLECTION OF MR. IRVING STIMLER, NEW YORK; Mourners By The Sea, 1960, 36 x 72 in., COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST*

## IN HONOR AND LOVING MEMORY

# Winifred Milius Lubell (June 14, 1914 – January 3, 2012)

Stephen Lubell

Winifred Milius Lubell, a noted artist and children's book illustrator, died in Provincetown at the age of 97. She was born in New York City into a prosperous German-Jewish family. Her father, Lester Milius, was a silent partner in a cotton shirting business in Manhattan and her mother, Elsa Simonson, was an amateur painter with a keen eye for first editions, prints, and new directions in art and literature. Elsa was the sister of the well-known theatre stage designer and co-founder of the Theatre Guild, Lee Simonson (1888–1967).

Winnie (as she preferred to be called) was mostly brought up by governesses and attended the Fieldston School in Riverdale. She first studied art at the National Academy of Design, but soon moved on to the Art Students League in late 1933, where she studied with George Grosz and then with Harry Sternberg. It was Sternberg who introduced her to the radical milieu of the John Reed Club and the Artists' Union, and it was during that period that she probably joined and became active in the Communist Party. At the League she began a long and close friendship with Blanche Grambs, and other politically engaged artists such as Axel Horn, Mervin Jules and Will Barnett. She and Grambs began sketching the unemployed then encamped in various locations in Manhattan.

Winnie's time at the League was an

important step in her radicalization and distancing from her more conventional family background. She continued this activity when she moved to Chicago and became involved with the Meat Packers Union, in a sit-down strike at one of the steel plants, and where she also participated in the production of murals for the WPA which, unfortunately, do not survive. Many of her prints and sketchbooks from that period are now in the Archives of American Art in Washington.

Winnie recalled those years at the Art Students League in a talk she gave in 2009:

"Once out of Fieldston, I landed kerplunk at the Art Students League in NYC. I enrolled quite by chance in the print workshop in a class taught by Harry Sternberg. There surrounded by two large presses for lithography, etching and woodblocks, I fell into paradise, I and my sketchbooks. I found myself among a dozen other besotted kids, with sketchbooks just like me. Harry Sternberg was an inspiring teacher. He taught not just the mechanical skills of print making, he taught us composition and anatomy and he opened the centuries of art history of the story of imagery. He took small groups of us down to the coalmines in Pennsylvania, to Lansford, where he was known and had a commission to record the life of the miners. We stayed with the coal miners' families in their houses. He encouraged us to explore Manhattan. A fellow



Winnie Lubell, *On the Subway*, 1934

student, Blanche Mary Grambs became my friend and we met each morning outside the 14th Street subway station, and from there wandered along New York's waterfront, completely innocent of the striking longshoremen and the mayhem around us. Grambs and I discovered the world of Manhattan's Lower East Side and its Jewish, Chinese, and Italian life and markets. Foreign territory for both of us. Each morning at 9am the pair of us sat patiently on the step of the Art Students League, waiting for its doors to open and for Mr. Sternberg to come along. With the tact of a truly great teacher, he never imposed his vision, but simply left us to develop our own style. Along the way, he might introduce us to Rembrandt's etchings, William Blake's visions, to Käthe Kollwitz and George Grosz (with whom I later studied) or to the Mexican muralists then painting: José

Clemente Orozco, David Alfredo Siqueiros and Diego Riviera. With his students by his side, we studied with tremendous excitement the just completed *Guernica* of Picasso, a painting of the Spanish Civil War.”

Following a short marriage to Daniel House, in 1939, Winnie married Cecil Lubell, a Harvard-educated writer and editor. They first lived in the village of Croton-on-Hudson, north of New York, and then in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where Winnie studied one memorable summer with Josef Albers. They had two sons: David, now a retired professor of Anthropology in Waterloo, Canada, and Stephen, a typographer and printing historian in London. In 1945 they returned to Croton where they lived for over 30 years and where Winnie consolidated her reputation in the illustration of children’s books, working with her husband, Millicent Selsam, and Dorothy Sterling among others. In total she worked on over 30 children’s books, the aim of many of which was to expose children to the natural world. One book, *The Outer Lands*, is still in print.

Winnie also continued her work as a



Winnie Lubell, *Under the El*, 1936

print maker, mostly on woodcuts. In 1975 the Lubells moved to Wellfleet on Cape Cod, where they joined a community of like-minded friends and were instrumental in establishing a chapter of Amnesty International and, especially, making the Wellfleet Public Library into the award-winning institution it has since become. She began to produce prints using the technique of Provincetown white-line color woodcuts, which she used to illustrate her developing

interests in mythology and women’s studies (some of these can be viewed at [www.paramourfinearts.com](http://www.paramourfinearts.com)). She exhibited in numerous galleries, including the Kendall Gallery in Wellfleet, and in November 2009 at the Susan Teller Gallery (New York City) show of *Blanche Grambs & Her Fellow Artists*. In Wellfleet, Winnie became involved in various research projects, one of which culminated in her book *The Metamorphosis of Baubo: Myths of Woman’s Sexual Energy* (Vanderbilt University Press, 1994). In her later years she taught herself classical Greek and led a successful Greek reading group in Wellfleet for over 10 years. She remained a political radical in spirit throughout her life and was a person with great energy, enthusiasm, and compassion for the world around her. She is sadly missed by all who knew her.

She is survived by her two sons, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

For information on her earlier work, see James Wechsler, “Winifred Milius Lubell’s Depression-Era Sketchbooks,” in the *Archives of the American Art Journal*, Volume 45, Numbers 1-2, pages 33-41. 📖



Exhibition  
Outreach  
The Art Students League of New York

Though they hail from diverse backgrounds and cultures, representing all ages, students at the League possess that ineffable, unseen key ingredient in art: perseverance. Navigating through life and finding a way to hone their work, the artists profiled here prepared themselves for the next step of exhibiting their work in public.

The Art Students League’s Exhibition Outreach Program (EOP) provides emerging artists with opportunities to share their work with hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers each year. Artists are given the valuable experience of entering their work in competition, preparing their work for public display, and finally marketing their work for sale. The stories presented here provide

#### EXHIBITION OUTREACH PROGRAM

a sampling of the 500 artists who have shown work in more than 50 exhibitions since EOP was created in 2006.

This program is made possible in part through the generosity of the Arlene B. Coffey Trust, The Marilyn and Bob Laurie Foundation, The Ruth Katzman Fund and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

## Chong-Sun Oh: Painting for Serenity and Joy

Helen Dwork

Chong-Sun Oh knew at nine years old that she wanted to be a painter. She studied with a local artist in Korea and then moved on to an art school in Cologne, Germany. She stayed in Europe for twelve years, travelling around Italy and France, where she studied the great artists and painted.

A registered nurse who works night

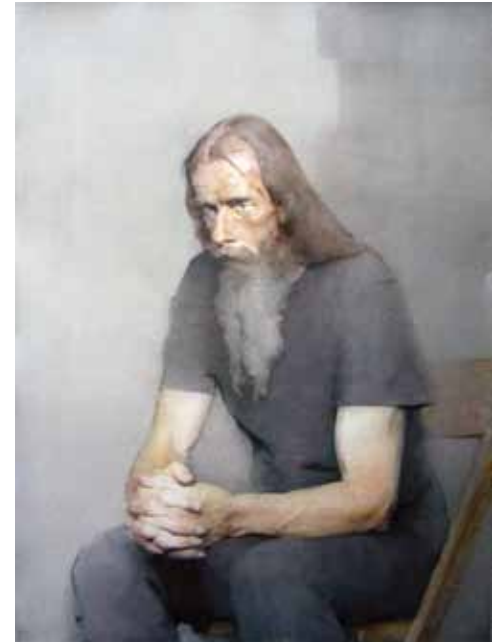
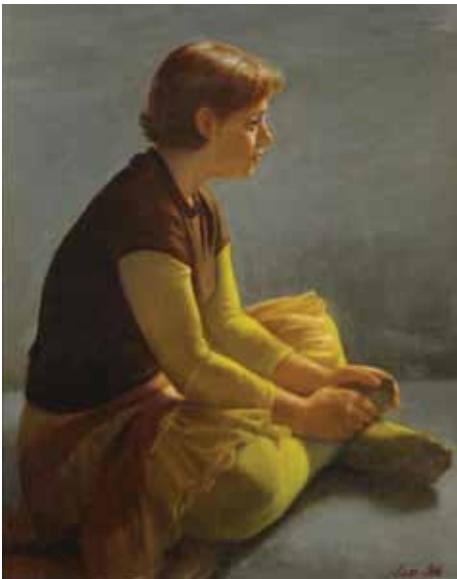
shifts to support her painting, Chong-Sun sees herself as an artist “trying to show the true and honest nature of what I am painting.” Inspired by Sargent and Rembrandt, Chong-Sun has always loved to paint. She studies with Gregg Kreutz and Harvey Dinnerstein, using one-part stand oil and five-parts Turpenoid for its natural—“not glossy”—look.

Chong-Sun’s spirituality moves her to keep making art. “God created color, light and shadow,” she says. “I love these and want to show God’s creation.” If money were not an issue, her dream project would be a long series on the life of Christ. In the meantime, she says because of her art, “I have more serenity and joy, and this in turn, helps me to be forgiving.” 📖




# From Computer Graphics to Watercolor

Takashi Uesugi



Takashi Uesugi, *Man*, 20 x 15 in.

I studied abstract oil painting at Tokyo National University of Fine Art, but I stopped painting altogether after becoming a graphic designer. I think that oil paint as a medium did not suit me. I worked as a computer graphic designer for 20 years in Japan. Due to the tremendous stress I suffered from that job, I decided to move to New York thinking that it was going to be my vacation to study English.

I learned about the Art Students League a few months after my arrival. Taking classes at the League was for me just recreation. Things changed, however, when my first instructor, Irwin Greenberg, showed me the possibilities of watercolor. I have been seriously studying this medium ever since. I find that the knowledge I acquired through computer graphics still has a great influence on my art work today. The world of computer graphics allows one to reconstruct the image to its perfection under certain theories. You are able to look around the created image from all sides, completing the three-dimensional complex. I am interested in reconstructing two-dimensional images under such perfect order. <http://takashi.deca.jp/> 

Paintings by Chong-Sun Oh, clockwise from top left: *Dancer*, 30 x 24 in.; *Guitarist*, 30 x 24 in.; *Headphones*, 36 x 24 in.; *Model—Blue Jeans*, 30 x 24 in.; *Peace*, 30 x 24 in.; *Still Life—Eggs*, 30 x 24 in.



## Stone, Wood, Clay, Heart

Daisuke Kiyomiya with Denise L. Greene

Maybe I have known since childhood that I wanted to be an artist. I didn't have dreams of being a pilot or baseball player. Art was one of my favorite classes and I remember thinking how wonderful it would be to just keep using my imagination and two hands to create something good or beautiful. My parents gave me Legos to play with and I really enjoyed it (in fact, I still love it). I think that was really good training for three-dimensional thinking. Legos taught me about planning, building, and balance. In Japan I went to technical college for two years to learn interior design. But actually, when I was a boy, I liked to dig ground to find good clay and make round balls. The next day I would make them smooth and shiny. From 1998 to 2007, I studied sculpture and printmaking at the League. Seiji Saito and Jonathan Shahn were my mentors. I also learned from watching great artists from all over the world work. I am inspired by the unknown artists from ancient times that I see in museums and in wild nature. Living in New York City provides me with many great opportunities to find inspiration. My inspiration is through experience and so could be anything, from music, dance, performance, films or books, to travel and of course museums.

I have always been drawn to organic materials such as stone, wood and clay because I like texture and color. Also, I can feel the passage of time that made them. When I start making something it is very important to feel and love the material itself. The inspiration I receive through experience turns the material into art.

I'm sometimes asked how I survive as an artist. I want to know too. It is very hard but I keep making art and looking for exhibition spaces. My motivation to continue comes very naturally from somewhere inside of me (maybe my heart, maybe my brain or hands).

Currently, I am doing restoration and repair work on the ornamental stone of landmark buildings around New York City. I cut off the decayed or crumbling part from the original building (mainly museums, libraries, post offices and churches), and replace it with a new piece of stone that I carve to match the original.

Through art I've learned: be yourself, express yourself, don't think too much, stone is hard. If money were not an issue, I would have my own huge, beautiful studio to work in everyday as a full-time artist, making small- to large-scale sculptures. My art is changing because I am always changing, too. [www.daisukekiyomiya.com](http://www.daisukekiyomiya.com)

*Artwork by Daisuke Kiyomiya, clockwise from top left: Ambiguity; Environment; Spoon; Philosophize*





# Art in Service to My Country

Angel Valentin

As a kid I was always drawing. I was in an art club in the fourth grade, but other than that I taught myself. My Veterans Counselor introduced the League to me in 2007, when I applied for vocational rehabilitation. I didn't think I was good enough to even think of being an artist—it just happened!

From 1990-91, I did six months of active duty in Desert Storm. Then in 1993, I was assigned to the S2/3 Intelligence, which needed a qualified graphics specialist. Since they knew that I drew, the National Guard sent me to a school of visual arts at Lowry Air Force base in Denver, Colorado. That was the first time in my life I felt free to draw anything I wanted and was able to develop my drawing skills. The name of that particular Military Occupation in Service (MOS) was “25Q20 Multimedia Illustrator,” and the job was to brief the brass in everything that was going on in the war. In 2003, I received orders to report to Albany, NY. They were sending me to Iraq with an upstate unit that needed someone with the MOS 25Q20.

After I got to Iraq, I found out there were three other guys with the same MOS; I was excess. I did everything but my job. Since it was an aviation unit, I began doing fly missions. I flew in helicopters for a couple of months before I was pulled into convoy escort missions. That's where the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) set in; I began having nightmares and night-sweats. I couldn't sleep, so I began going to a psychologist, who diagnosed me.

My inspiration is life itself—the everyday Joe. I come from a family of amateur musicians, and I guess that inspired me to draw since I can't play much of anything (again due to shyness). My turning point has to have been when I did my first oil painting. I said, “I could do this for the rest of my life.” Even if the person next to me paints better than I do, there's something spiritual in my painting that that person doesn't have. So it's not about looks; it's about feelings.

My life lesson as an artist is just to do it, no matter what anybody says. Someone told me, “There are too many starving art-

ists out there;” but don't let that or anyone discourage you. You're in charge of you and that's all that matters.

I would like people to know me as a humble person, who came to the League to learn and express myself through drawing and painting, who took a little bit of everyone's knowledge and mixed it with my own knowledge, spirituality and skills for the world to enjoy. In fact, my dream is to one day have my paintings displayed at El Museo del Barrio or in my native Puerto Rico—that would be better than all the money in the world. 🌍



Angel Valentin (pictured above) and his painting, *Fatimah*



## Scholarships & Grants 2012

The scholarships and grants competition takes place each May, at the end of the Regular Session. Concours exhibitions are over, summer is around the corner, and there is a palpable sense of a long school year coming to an end. The gallery is empty but will soon fill with hundreds of pieces of artwork, a curious series of ad hoc exhibitions lasting only a few hours, viewed solely by two individuals each day for one week.

The five days of judging are the culmination of a three-month-long process of application distribution, submission, processing and organization. For many the process begins much sooner, in September, as students begin to focus on eligibility requirements and actually plan which work to submit in hopes of winning one of the larger grants or merit scholarships. Applications are available starting in March and are due by mid-April. Each application is then reviewed for eligibility. Judges are volunteers unaffiliated with the League, from the greater New York art world—artists, gallerists, critics and academics. They work in pairs to determine the winners of the competition, a different team for each day.

Two types of awards are decided in May. Grants are cash prizes that usually include a full-time tuition scholarship. The largest of these awards are travel grants, which stipulate a period of study abroad. Merit scholarships are tuition awards for one full-time class from September to May. Eligibility for the grants competition is based on League membership, a cumulative number of hours of attendance equivalent to sixteen months of full-time study, of which at least six months must be completed within the school year preceding the competition. Each grant has requirements specific to it based on the wishes of the individual donors. Eligibility for the merit scholarship is more open. League membership is not required and a student must have attended the League a minimum number of hours equivalent to three months of full-time study, or about six months of part-time study.

This year saw 751 candidates for 12 grants and 33 merit scholarships (11 merit awards in each category for realism, abstract, and semi-abstract/semi-realism).

## 2012 Grant & Scholarship Winners

**XAVIER GONZALEZ AND ETHEL EDWARDS TRAVEL GRANT**  
(\$15,000 and full-time tuition each)

Elle Maldonado

Kenneth Wong

**EDWARD G. McDOWELL TRAVEL GRANT**  
(\$9,000 and full-time tuition each)

Satoshi Okada

Matthew White

**LLOYD SHERWOOD GRANT**  
(\$6,000 and full-time tuition)

Carin Dangot

**NESSA COHEN GRANT**  
(\$6,000 and full-time tuition each)

Sequoyah Aono

Benat Iglesias Lopez

Nicolai Nickson

**PHYLLIS H. MASON GRANT**  
(\$6,000 and full-time tuition)

Shiho Sato

**KUNIYOSHI AWARD**  
(\$5,000 and full-time tuition)

Kazuya Morimoto

**FRANK JUSTICH GRANT**  
(\$3,000 and full-time tuition)

Neil Kaplan

**DAVID NEWTON GRANT**  
(\$3,500 cash award)

Hyunsun Shim

## Judges for the 2012 Competition

**XAVIER GONZALEZ AND ETHEL EDWARDS TRAVEL GRANT**

**KUNIYOSHI AWARD**

John Jacobsmeyer, Artist

Alicia Rothman, Artist

**EDWARD G. McDOWELL TRAVEL GRANT**

**FRANK JUSTICH GRANT**

**DAVID NEWTON GRANT**

**MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS: SEMI-ABSTRACT/SEMI-OBJECTIVE CATEGORY**

Judy Rifka, Artist

Elena Sisto, Artist

**PHYLLIS H. MASON GRANT**

**MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS – REALISM CATEGORY**

George Billis, Gallerist

Anthony Panzera, Artist

**LLOYD SHERWOOD GRANT**

**MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS – ABSTRACT CATEGORY**

Lauren Bakoian, Gallerist

Elisa Jensen, Artist

**NESSA COHEN GRANT**

Lee Tribe, Artist

April Vollmer, Artist





Kenneth Wong



Elle Maldonado



Satoshi Okada



Carin Dangot



Matthew White



Nicolai Nickson



Beñat Iglesias Lopez



Shiho Sato



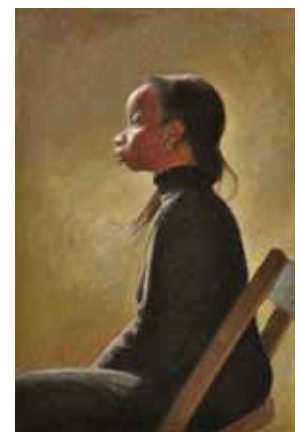
Hyunsun Shim



Sequoyah Aono



Kazuya Morimoto



Neil Kaplan

# Merit Scholarships (Full-time tuition for one class in the Regular Session)

**ADOLF H. AND ADA ALDRICH SCHOLARSHIP**  
Yolande Heijnen



Yolande Heijnen

**WILL BARNET PRINTMAKING SCHOLARSHIP**  
Atsuko Kawai



Atsuko Kawai

**JOSEPH BARTNIKOWSKI SCHOLARSHIP**  
Sonomi Kobayashi



Sonomi Kobayashi

**JACK BILANDER SCHOLARSHIP**  
Natsuko Hattori



Natsuko Hattori

**JANET AND RUSSELL DOUBLEDAY SCHOLARSHIP**  
Anna Schlesinger



Anna Schlesinger

**JOE EULA SCHOLARSHIP**  
Blaise McDaris



Blaise McDaris

**VIVIAN A. FRANKEL SCHOLARSHIP**  
Michael Cloud Hirschfeld



Michael Cloud Hirschfeld

**NABEELA GEORGE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**  
Phyllis Sanfiorenzo



Phyllis Sanfiorenzo

**TRUDY & HENRY GILLETTE PAINTING SCHOLARSHIP**  
Mira Ahn



Mira Ahn

**TRUDY & HENRY GILLETTE SCULPTURE SCHOLARSHIP**  
Donat King



Donat King

**SIDNEY GLUSMAN SCHOLARSHIP**  
Konstantin Prokofyev



Konstantin Prokofyev

**STELLA STEMBER GOLDSMITH MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**  
Sassoon Kosian



Sassoon Kosian

**ROBERTA GOODE SCHOLARSHIP**  
Ayumi Nakao



Yinet Maldonado

**MARGO L. H. HAMMERSCHLAG SCHOLARSHIP**  
Lucas Melo



Lucas Melo

**JAMES C. JOHNSON SCHOLARSHIP**  
Yinet Maldonado



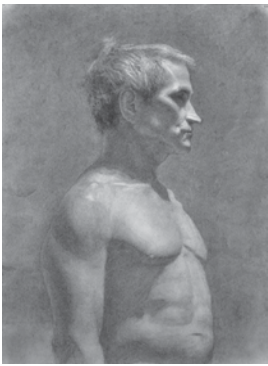
Thalia Chantziara

**THE ZENA KAPLAN SCHOLARSHIP**  
Thalia Chantziara



Ayumi Nakao





Seiji Gailey



Flora Scrymgeour



M D Tokon



Adam Litwin



Michael Miller



Yasuaki Okamoto



Mary Ann Moy



Beth Roberts



Stephanie Young



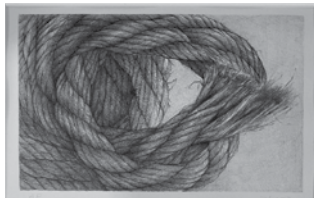
Akiko Asanuma



Kathleen Huggard



Kinuko Imai Hoffman



So Yeon Kim



Reina Kubota



Sandra Michelle Melo Figueroa



Ciara Stack



Kikuko Morimoto

**RUTH KATZMAN SCHOLARSHIP**

Seiji Gailey

**RICHARD AND CARLOTTA LAHEY GONZALES SCHOLARSHIP**

Flora Scrymgeour

**RICHARD LILLIS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

M D Tokon

**LAWRENCE LITTMAN SCHOLARSHIP**

Yasuaki Okamoto

**REGINALD MARSH AND FELICIA MEYERS SCHOLARSHIP**

Adam Litwin

**THE HENRY MATISSE ESTATE SCHOLARSHIP**

Michael Miller

**ANTHONY PALUMBO SCHOLARSHIP**

Stephanie Young

**CHARLOTTE HOWARD PORTER SCHOLARSHIP**

Mary Ann Moy

**GEORGE A. RADA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

Beth Roberts

**MARTHA T. ROSEN SCHOLARSHIP**

Kinuko Imai Hoffman  
So Yeon Kim

**LEONARD ROSENFELD SCHOLARSHIP**

Kathleen Huggard

**HYMAN STENZEL SCHOLARSHIP**

Akiko Asanuma

**VENTURA FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP**

Sandra Michelle Melo Figueroa

**VACLAV VYTLACIL MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

Kikuko Morimoto

**AI WEI WEI SCHOLARSHIP**

Ciara Stack

**CATHARINE LORILLARD WOLFE SCHOLARSHIP**

Reina Kubota

## Answering a Question, then Questioning the Answers

Helen Dwork

### Answering a Question in the Mountains

I am asked why I live in the green mountains:  
I smile but reply not, for my heart is at rest.  
The flowing waters carry the image of the peach blossoms  
far, far away:  
There is an earth, there is a heaven, unknown to men.  
Unknown, 700/800 C.E.

A bhijit Goswami had the idea for a painting and discussion group. One person would provide a point of inspiration, and using that work of art as a starting point, each group member would produce a piece incorporating his or her own interests and techniques—creating new works of art that could then be discussed.

On May 16th, Hanna Sieman, Lucia Heredia-Malamud, Basia Goldsmith, Mary Ryan, Gloria Pearl, Anthony Kirov, Robert Scott, and Robert Schultheis got together in the League's boardroom to discuss paintings based on a poem (above), which Basia had chosen. For the first time, they also invited their teacher and 2012 Guggenheim Fellow, Charles Hinman, to join the discussion.

They go around the room, explaining their pieces. Hanna starts: "I took those words literally," she explains. "A flowing line is ribbons, the canvas is the green mountains, and the nebulous white swirl is the unknown."

Lucia, on the other hand, finds a symbolic connection and tries to make a landscape with symbolic language. There are no lines, but there is movement: "The sky is something that is there, but is not there... a kind of phantasmagoric image."

Robert Schultheis notes that the poet-speaker is asked a question, and though we don't know who's asking, Lucia has put in an audience. Mr. Hinman remarks that making a painting relates it to the world and creates a relationship in general.

Basia chose the poem to try to get away from the green landscapes that she usually paints. "I didn't want to paint the blossoms; I wanted to convey the blossoms and the mountains," she explains. "I did it very quickly, it was spontaneous."



Painting by Hanna Sieman



Painting by Lucia Heredia-Malamud



Painting by Robert Schultheis



Mary's painting is modeled as a scroll. "It's very literal," she asserts. "There's water running and the mist coming up and enveloping it." She used peach for the light coming through, and her classmates affirm that they see this, and point out symbols which were not deliberate (a tree, for life), but which Mary accepts.

Gloria painted an abstraction, working with shapes and colors. Looking at everyone else's, she says that she is disappointed that her painting has nothing to do with the spiritual. Robert Schultheis doesn't think this is an issue: "The outside influence doesn't matter now," he insists. Gloria is uncomfortable that someone can look at her work and see things she did not intend. Basia points out that this is the viewer's interpretation and not the painter's, which leads Robert Schultheis to say that he often hears the descriptions and disagrees. Robert Scott says that the difference is being comfortable with the interpretations of others. Robert Schultheis sees this as a challenge of the entire exercise: "We all



know the poem," he explains, "so just as you are saying, 'I didn't think about it,' we are looking at it and saying 'She did.'"

The discussion moves more quickly after this, they've already shared ideas for an hour. Anthony talks of following some of the poem but not all of it, and the group talks about the dichotomy he chose to present, how not everything is beautiful and that transformation can go in either direction. For Robert Scott, "the green mountains" referred to "a place that is really a season—something organic to transport the idea of order." He used tape to impose angles on his canvas before adding more organic shapes. Robert Schultheis lives with man-made mountains—the buildings of Manhattan. "I thought of being suspended, floating there in the middle of mountains," he says. "The heart is at rest." 🌱

Left: Painting by Mary Ryan



Above: Painting by Anthony Kirov

Left: Painting by Gloria Pearl



Painting by Robert Scott



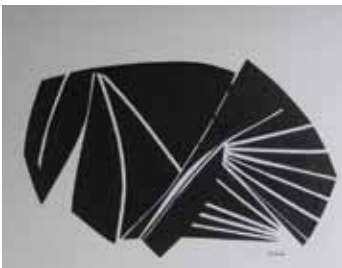
Painting by Basia Goldsmith

Artwork by Mortimer Geisler



## Ninety-Four and Young at 'Art

Helen Dwork



The morning paper was three cents, the subway five, and lunch fifteen. Mortimer Geisler remembers these details as though it was yesterday. He was born on May 17, 1918 during the first wave of a deadly influenza epidemic that claimed 30 million people worldwide, including his father. His mother was pregnant with his brother at the time, and Mortimer himself was a year-and-a-half old. He believes his long life is a gift from his father.

In 1933, the depth of the depression, Mortimer graduated from high school at the age of 15. He started working in the garment industry at \$10 a week, five and a half days from 8am to 5pm. He gave his mother \$5 a week and still managed to save \$3.50 out of his paycheck. He stayed in the garment industry, founding a hosiery business that he ran with a partner until his retirement, at the age of 85. In 2008, at age 90, Mortimer took a boat trip around the world. Every two weeks an art instructor came aboard; Mortimer decided to try to paint. "After 8 weeks I found out I liked it and was pretty good," he explains.

Later that year he enrolled in Ronnie Landfield's class at the League. "Over two years I learned all about colors—their combina-

tions, and the fine points of taping, which sealed the paints and allowed me to expand my patterns. It took quite a while but I became excellent at it." His second mentor was Mariano Del Rosario: "He put me on the right path with many ideas and thoughts... I learned that a painting is never finished. Also, he made me concentrate on the black and white geometric patterns. He taught me motion and design," says Mortimer of his time in the class. "I came to school in 2008 never having taken an art lesson. These people showed me ways to use my natural talents."

Mortimer paints in acrylic and tapes all of his work. He mostly uses eight colors – red, yellow, blue, green, violet, black, grey and white. He says he came naturally to Graphic style painting: "Straight lines always interested me, as well as angles...When I was in the hosiery business I used to design patterns for the high socks. I also made the combinations and stripes for the football socks, which we sold nationally."

"I do mostly geometric patterns that come to my mind very frequently," he says. "My whole life I've visited art museums all over the world. I guess I learned many things that remained in my mind and came out when I started to paint. I believe once I tried painting all these ideas came to me easily. Three painters really made the most impression on me—Kandinsky, Malevich, and Mondrian."

For the artist profiles in *Lines From the League*, the featured artists answered a series of questions from the editors. Mortimer described his experience finding art after retirement:

"I never had a hobby. Being retired, I found painting relaxing and I really had to keep my mind open for ideas. It gives me the time to paint whenever I want, sometimes two in the morning. Learning to paint really makes me happy and enjoying it makes my life wonderful. It really is, outside of my family, my true love. I look forward to the future; to learn more of colors and to develop other ideas for paintings. I have sold many paintings to friends and neighbors and I would like to have a show at a large gallery—that would be the ultimate. I do not consider myself old. I love young people. The teachers at the Art Students League have my respect for what they have accomplished. In 2013 I will be 95 years young." 🎨





Artwork by Kathleen Seidel

## Everyone Has a Story

Kathleen Seidel

In 2005, a friend sent me a script for a play slated to move from Boston to off-Broadway in New York City. I had recently lost my husband, the children had moved on, and the dog had died. So, sitting in my home in rural Wisconsin, I read the script and thought, “why not?” I called the playwright and the author extended an invitation to be a part of the production. I corralled my sister and we went to New York to meet with the general manager—and joined the producing team of the show: *Bill W. and Dr. Bob*. This effort led to partnering with Broadway lead producers and new friends, Jeffrey Richards and Jerry Frankel. I became

that most curious type of investors, a Broadway producer. I don't think anyone really knows what makes a Broadway show a hit, but the producer can look at the script and know the body of work of the director and the actors. The producer also reads the financials in the proposed budget and knows the theater and potential box office for the show, which allows the investor to make a somewhat informed decision about the potential commercial viability of the venture.

Another world that opened up that wonderful life-changing year of 2006 was the world of the Art Students League of New York. At this point I realized that if one didn't ask, one didn't get; so I signed up for a course at the League, which was just down the street from the apartment we had rented. I was strictly amateur-level, never having taken an art class. My resume consisted of painting once a week with a group of lovely ladies during the summer months—and that for only two years. The first class I took at the League was rather overwhelming but I very much liked what I saw: the marvelous eclectic student body, the energy, the art.

In the fall of 2007, I looked through the course book and liked the painting by Thomas Torak. Luckily there was space in the class and I joined the group in Studio 7. This was the beginning of a very painful, joyful, discouraging and exuberant journey. I love the hard work and the stimulating breakthroughs, the generosity and kindness of my fellow students, and the great instruction of the teachers who have been endlessly patient and encouraging. My life in New York City would not be nearly as rich without the League and all who study here. 🎨

## Honoring a History, Fostering the Future

Sharon Sprung

*Sharon Sprung has experienced the League doubly, as student and as instructor. Here she explores the complexities of that relationship for Lines From the League. We hope our Friends of the League Sponsors can join us this September at Sharon's studio/home, details to be announced.*

I love teaching at the Art Students League; a love that began with Robert Beverly Hale and which is refreshed every time I see the Fine Arts Society building's beauty. I remember the history and see its central place within the energy of New York City; the big windows displaying our Art directly onto the bustling street. Putting these feelings into words can be difficult. There is a mystery surrounding this fertile collision of ages, skills, nationalities and educational backgrounds within one crowded studio where everyone is struggling to find a kind of truth: the visual truth available in that room.

Painting from life is one of the most profoundly challenging and compelling skills to learn. All in the studio know this and come from the most diverse circumstances with the same intent: to master this particular proficiency. Painting from the model is about observation; about seeing, feeling, searching, failing and finally succeeding. Both student and teacher—all of us who work here - help to form a community that supports the learning process that enhances and enriches us. Honoring our connection to Art and life and each other is honoring the best in us. Learning to see with our

eyes rather than our brains, using the model as the god, we artists are mere mortals standing in awe of the model's gift to us, because they have so much more to teach.

Walking into the League and standing in the lobby has a deep resonance for me. It is so powerful now, so many years later, to be washed with a sense of history and place as both student and teacher. What a privilege it is to be part of the rich past that has helped to form the body of American Art and is still working to define its future. 🎨



Sharon Sprung, *The Art Student*, oil on panel, 40 x 42 in.

# Pamela duLong Williams

## The Creative Process

Julia Montepagani

Pamela duLong Williams' recent show in Maine, *The Creative Process*, exhibited not only the final paintings of her students, but also the initial inspiration and technical steps that led them to their completed work. In duLong Williams' workshops, process is paramount as she guides students through a series of artistic decisions. In her own work, specifically with portraiture, she maintains an open space for the models to move about and shift, until they settle into their own characteristic pose. She says:

"My creative process for portraiture begins with what the model projects. Body language

is a very important part of achieving a likeness. Therefore, I do not pose my models. I talk with them after they seat themselves. The more we talk, the more comfortable they tend to become in the chair and in my company... Left to position themselves with no more direction than sitting or standing, the subjects will take a pose that is characteristic of them."

Now a prolific painter and teacher, Pamela duLong Williams studied at the League in the late 1970s. She also studied at the Boston Museum School of Fine Art and graduated from Vesper George School of Art. Since then, she has taught at Silver-

mine School of Art (CT), the Coolidge Art Center (NH) and the Heartwood College of Art (ME). She is currently an active member of the Silvermine Guild of Artists (CT), the Copley Society (MA), and the Portrait Society of America. Her work has been published in numerous artist publications, and hangs in such institutions as the State House Collection in Boston.

She will be teaching a workshop at the La Napoule Art Foundation in the Côte d'Azur, France (September 15–22). For more information, visit [pameladulongwilliams.com](http://pameladulongwilliams.com).



Portraits by Pamela duLong Williams



# Bebe Traylor

## Exploring Environments, Exotic and Familiar

Julia Montepagani

Former League student Bebe Traylor has been painting in oils since the age of six, no doubt influenced by her mother, successful watercolorist Margrete Barnes Vause. Today, Traylor often paints her surrounding environment—which has changed regularly over the years. Because of her husband's military job, Traylor has been a temporary resident in major cities throughout the US and Europe, including a two-year stint by the Aegean Sea in Izmir, Turkey.

Her light-filled plein-air paintings not only communicate the

exotic places she's been, but also remind viewers to take a look outside and appreciate their own landscape—no matter how simple. She says: "I love doing special paintings like an old house a grandmother was born in, or a favorite blossom from



one's summer garden."

Before studying with Richard Pionk at the Art Students League, Traylor graduated from the Maryland Institute College of Art and studied with watercolorist Richard Brough at the University of Alabama. Continuing her



mother's tradition of sharing the gift of art, Traylor teaches private painting classes for teens and adults in her home in Allentown, PA. For more information, visit [www.bebetraylor.com](http://www.bebetraylor.com).

**Landscape and still life**  
by Bebe Traylor





# FRIENDS OF THE LEAGUE SUPPORT THE LEAGUE'S COMMITMENT TO ART AND ARTISTS BY BECOMING A FRIEND.



## Benefits

<p><b>\$75 Associate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friends Card</li> <li>• Special Event</li> <li>• Catalog</li> </ul>	<p><b>\$150 Supporter</b></p> <p>All of the previous category's benefits <i>plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 Sketch Classes</li> <li>• Preview Party</li> <li>• Name Listed in Catalog</li> </ul>	<p><b>\$250 Sustainer</b></p> <p>All of the previous category's benefits <i>plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibition Catalogs</li> <li>• Guided Tours</li> </ul>	<p><b>\$500 Patron</b></p> <p>All of the previous category's benefits <i>plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VIP Events</li> <li>• In the Curator's Realm</li> <li>• Fall Exhibition Preview</li> </ul>	<p><b>\$1,000 Sponsor</b></p> <p>All of the previous category's benefits <i>plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Studio Visits</li> </ul>	<p><b>\$1,500 / \$3,000 Art Circle Patron Individual/Corporate</b></p> <p>All of the previous category's benefits <i>plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 Sketch Classes</li> <li>• Instructors' Dinner</li> </ul>
---	--	--	---	--	--

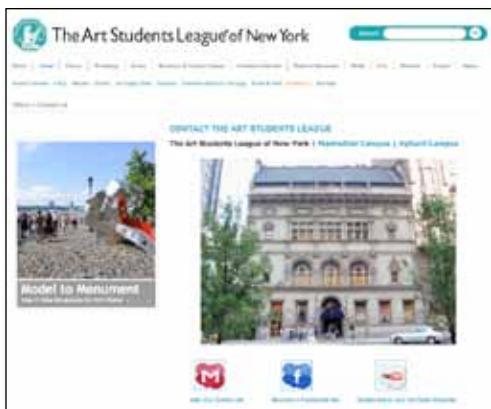
The Art Students League is a 501 (c)(3) organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent that they exceed fair market value of any goods and services received in return. Please contact Denise L. Greene at (212) 247-4510, ext. 130, or at [denise@artstudentsleague.org](mailto:denise@artstudentsleague.org).

## Stay in E-Touch

If you've enjoyed *Lines*, you'll want to keep up with League members and events online by visiting our website [www.theartstudentsleague.org](http://www.theartstudentsleague.org). We've added a new Members page with key dates for members, and an In Memoriam section.

From the "Contact" webpage you can:

- Join our email List
- Become a Facebook fan
- Subscribe to our YouTube channel





# The Art Students League of New York

215 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019 TEL: (212) 247-4510  
[www.theartstudentsleague.org](http://www.theartstudentsleague.org)

**Address Service Requested**