

## **JUDGE STATEMENT – WAA MEMBER EXHIBITION 2017**

### ***Shari Weschler Rubeck, Sumo Bunni***

It was an honor to be chosen as judge for this year's Member's exhibition at the Wickford Art Association. As an artist myself, I understand that this process is to be taken very seriously and yet it is subjective in nature.

Skill, presentation, subject, balance and especially the presence of the artist's energy are of ultimate importance to me. A work of art should be 'offered' professionally – whether mounted, placed, framed or installed. As a viewer, I am uncomfortable if the art is 'embarrassed' by its encasing; the moment of transportation is lost and the magic trick ends abruptly. There were many wonderful choices and others well worthy of award, narrowing it down took some time.

I chose First place "Empreintes de Peau" created by Eric Hovermale because it drew me in immediately standing with great strength and a peaceful stillness. The female gazing within an empty space was full with endless imagination. I particularly appreciated the square format of the imagery and the framing was clean and perfectly balanced with the artwork – the mark of a true professional.

Second prize to Mark Knapp for "Basket Forgery" took my breath away. As I held it and carefully studied the material, I realized it was something completely different than what it first revealed itself to be. The level of technical skill had me standing in awe of its precise and loving craftsmanship – a true wow moment.

Third prize to Vanessa Piche for her painting "Lemonade Queue" carried me to another place and time. The muted color and manipulation of paint were skillfully handled and conveyed a great energy. It took a few times past to fully accept the frame, typically I prefer an artwork to have breathing space; floating the painting within a frame would have taken this to the next level. However, the frame's coloring along with its dry, aged appearance spoke 'lemonade' from simpler days long gone.

Honorable mentions to Nina Ackmann & Donato Beauchaine were stand outs for me on many levels. Their human spirits were fully present and in the moment within their artworks.

Donato paints with such vigor, skill and confidence it is admirable. There seemed to be an energy injected into every brushstroke of "March Magic". He chose the painting's dimensions wisely and used a floater frame that enhanced the painting while leaving it alone just enough to speak volumes - jumping from the wall and everything around it.

Nina Ackmann demonstrates a mastery of understanding layers, texture, color and balance in her print "Caught in the Net". Having a particular affinity to the monotype process, I am familiar with the skills required to create such imagery. I admired the contemporary

abstraction and the attention to detail in the framing. It would be a pleasure to see an entire exhibit from this series.

When I very first walked into the gallery to judge, my eyes scanned the room and I fell first onto "Charlie and Edgar (Reincarnated)" by Donna Pompano Thies. Having a special place in my heart for crows & ravens, I could not help but smile. I enjoyed the way the two birds sat in their environment with such character, but found myself wishing again for breathing space around the imagery up to the frame. A tad more variation of thickness in the paint application in some areas, but not all, would help bump up the richness when viewed at a closer distance.

There was one painting in the Member's Exhibition that I continuously returned to and that was "I Saw Her First" by Brett Cimino. A huge fan of Roberto Matta and Jean Dubuffet I took note of the rich texture, limited palette, hidden and revealed layers and the overall humor in this work. I felt moments of complete confidence but also slight hints of doubt from its creator. With full trust, the energy and life Cimino employs in his process will surely take him far.

Thank you again for the invitation.

S

First Place

"Empreintes de Peau", Photography  
Eric Hovermale

Second Place

"Basket Forgery", Wood turned locust, pyrography, colored  
Mark Knapp

Third Place

"Lemonade Queue", Oil  
Vanessa Piche

Honorable Mention

"Caught in the Net", Monotype  
Nina Ackmann

Honorable Mention

"March Magic", Oil  
Donato Beauchaine

Judge's Award

"I Saw Her First", Mixed-media  
Brett Cimino

Judge's Award

"Charlie and Edgar (Reincarnated)", Oil  
Donna Pompano Thies