

East Suburban Artists offer a variety of media at Penn State

By Rex Rutkoski, VALLEY NEWS DISPATCH
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Photos

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'Camel at Petra'
Eileen Kopelman

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'Water Wheel'
Carrie Plumbo

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'But I Like the Sun'
Patti Giordano

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'Big Sister'
Lucy Slezycki

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'Hummingbird Garden in Wood'
Ted Scanga

East Suburban Artists League exhibit

When: Through Dec. 30.
Hours: 8 a.m.-8 p.m. weekdays; noon-5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays

Where: Art gallery, Penn State, New Kensington Campus, Upper Burrell

Admission: Free

Details: 724-334-6004; 724-327-6097

About the writer

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Gloria Goldsmith Hersch says she fell in love with art with her first box of crayons.

More than 200 awards later, including a listing in "Who's Who in American Art," the Murrysville resident has moved on to other mediums, but has never forgotten the excitement of the creative process sparked by the possibilities she discovered when she opened that box as a child.

One of her most recent works -- in acrylic paints, not crayons -- is "Glass Sphere with Blue Swirl," inspired by the multimedia artist's visit to the studio of a glass artist, where she was drawn to the reflections on the objects.

It is on view through December in the East Suburban Artists League's annual exhibit at Penn State, New Kensington in Upper Burrell.

"I draw or paint when I feel I have something to say or as an escape from the world," says Hersch, whose work hangs in private and corporate collections. One painting is on display at H.J. Heinz World Headquarters. Another, of the late John Minadeo, is on display at the Pittsburgh school named for him. The Hoyt museum in New Castle also has one of her paintings.

"I hope people get some pleasure and enjoyment in seeing my work," Hersch says.

There is much enjoyment to be taken from this show, assures League president Patti Giordano of Lower Burrell. "East Suburban Artists League is a group of wonderful people and fine artists who work in various artistic areas," she says. Giordano paints with the Alle-Kiski Valley-based Monday Morning Artists, instructed by Harmony resident Bill Perry. "The Penn State show is an excellent one with much artistic variety," she says.

Giordano is represented in this exhibit with two watercolors, including the portrait, "Anna," that she did of her 92-year-old mother, who lives in New Kensington. "I painted it from a wallet-size black-and-white photo taken around 1936 when she moved to Arnold from a small mining town called Graceton, near Indiana, Pa.," she says.

Bob McAfoos of Forest Hills went to a different geographic location -- the Grand Canyon's North Rim -- for motivation for his photo composite, "Rocks, Trees and Sky."

"I hope people find my photographs attractive, interesting, perhaps unusual and surprising," says McAfoos, who began taking photos in grade school.

His work has been honored in several local shows.

"I seem to find subjects that people enjoy seeing," he says.

Nature photographer Gordon Sarti, an East Deer native living in Plum, hopes to help people "see what's out there and all around them," with his work. "I am in it for the adventure of capturing nature and all its glory," he says.

"Arizona Grass," one of two photos he has on display, was taken in that state "when the light was right and the subject was interesting," he says. In another photo, he has captured a lone butterfly on a plant.

"When I select a subject, I look for what the story is telling me," he says.

For her oil painting in this exhibit, Judy Kane of Washington Township found her story on a beautiful day in Bear Hollow in Murrysville. "I hope people have a sense of being on the site or experiencing what I felt when I was there," she says. "I am very happy when I draw or paint. Another part of my brain seems to take over and it is so happy to be out and about."

Photographer Bob Bickers of Murrysville, who has submitted two digital photographs, finds excitement in the creative process. He says he is exploring the relatively new field of technological art. "We have plenty of artwork in which people paint super-realistic scenes to make the painting appear to be a photography," he says. "Here I take the photograph and try to make it appear to be a painting."

He asks himself the question: Is this art?

"I have created something of beauty that did not exist before, but my true feelings on digital paintings are still unclear even to me," he admits. "I'm hoping that by simply doing it and getting it out in the open, I can trigger a dialogue among artists and art lovers over the issues of technology in art and art in technology and where all of this should fit into the art world."

Woodworker Ted Scanga of Lower Burrell wants people "to be able to enjoy another art form," so he has included a wood intarsia, "Hummingbird Garden in Wood," among his entries in this show. "It is a picture done in different colored woods that are raised above the wood canvas background," he explains. The background usually is stained wood, but Scanga employs stained wood and an acrylic painted background. "Intarsia, being different in thickness and raised, is better at seeing depth," he says. "The art form is not known in this area like it is out West."

Scanga likes color in painting and hopes that the bright colors he uses give the viewer a feeling of joy. "They do to me," he says.

Eileen Kopelman of Lower Burrell appreciates that people often remark about the detail she puts into her paintings. "I don't know if it helps me as an artist or not, but I enjoy hearing it," she says.

Her "Camel at Petra," which won best of show at the Penn Art Association's fall show last month, and "Bragozzo Boat, Venice," are presented in oil and gold leaf.

"I have always liked art but didn't have an opportunity to get serious about it until about 20 years ago," she says. "I hope people keep thinking about my painting after they have gone home."