



CONNECTING LA CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS WITH LA HIGH SCHOOL ART TEACHERS

## Newsletter | Vol 2 Spring 2018



by [David A Valentine](#) Founder, LA Guest Artists Series

The LA Guest Artist Series has concluded its third academic year of artist visits in LA area high schools. In addition to adding new artists to our roster, we expanded the program into three new schools. Here are highlights of the year's activities.

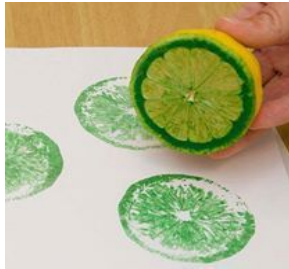
### **Maywood Center for Enriched Studies** October 2017

We began the Fall semester with a new visual arts program managed by art teacher, **Sonia Hansen** formerly of Los Angeles Senior High School. The Maywood Center for Enriched Studies is a K-8 public school with plans to expand into a four year senior high school in the near future. Though the LA Guest Artist Series normally works exclusively with high school level art teachers, I was confident Sonia and I could devise an artist's visit that would resonate with her 6th grade students.



Enter [Cassie Zhang](#), a recent graduate of Art Center College of Design in Pasadena. Cassie practices a range of visual art disciplines including murals, paintings and sculpture. Sonia

wanted to introduce her students to printmaking but her resources for the teaching unit had yet to materialize. After bringing the artist and teacher together for a brainstorming session they settled on inexpensive methods to make prints with oranges, string and food coloring.



Cassie dipped a sliced orange half into a shallow bowl of food coloring. Then, she applied it to paper to create engaging colored orange images. Students took over preparing small dishes with food colors before taking their own orange halves and applying them to paper. Next, Cassie showed them how to combine stamps from separate primary food colors to make even more expressive patterns.



In her second demonstration, Cassie took a small wooden block and wound white string around it several times. Then, she dipped it into one of the food color dishes and began to fill up a small piece of paper with overlapping line designs. The students mixed and matched stamps with food coloring to create colorful abstract designs on note cards and large pieces of paper.

## School of Visual Arts and Humanities (SVAH) January 2018

The School of Visual Arts and Humanities is located within the Robert F Kennedy Learning Center on the site of the old Ambassador Hotel in Koreatown. Veteran AP Art teacher, **Janet Yoo** asked if she might engage [Jodi Bonassi](#), a figure painter whose acclaimed works depict Angelinos on public transit, in barbershops, and throughout LA's diverse neighborhoods.



*Instadream*, 2017 from the Metro Series, oils on canvas 30"x40"



Janet wanted her students to learn about Jodi's daily art practice, so Jodi brought in her sketchbook which acts as a visual diary and workbook. The pages were filled with examples of her warm-up doodles, quick sketches and drawings of people she observes riding Metro rail and bus. Jodi spends up to two hours a day drawing in her sketchbook. She considers it an essential practice to maintain her



skills which are the foundation of her richly decorated figure paintings. Watch a video excerpt of her demonstration [here](#).

After showing her sketchbook and demonstrating some of her figure drawing tips and tricks, Jodi sat with individual students to review their portfolios.

## Culver City High School May 2018

**Kristine Hatanaka** is chair of Culver City High School's Art Department and Co-Director of its Academy of Visual and Performing Arts, an after-school program designed to train students in a variety of visual and performing art disciplines by noted professionals. Three LA Guest Artists challenged Kristine's very accomplished students with fresh perspectives on drawing and painting.



The first artist to present was [SP Harper](#), whose mixed media paintings are inspired by luxury fine-cut diamonds. She led the 2nd Period Art class in a step-by-step tutorial showing how she employs simple geometric shapes to build luxury diamond-inspired designs. Click [here](#) to see a video excerpt from her visit. During her tutorial SP explained how shading can affect perceptions of diamond facet depth and brilliance (above left). The artist incorporates various media shapes and colors to energize her diamond paintings. She also has a fondness for using recycled commercial papers and fabrics as backgrounds in her art (above right).



[Natasha June](#) is a native of Johannesburg, South Africa who recently settled in Los Angeles after spending many years living and exhibiting in the European Union. She challenged Kristine's Academy Art class with four interconnected exercises designed to confront student ideas of memory and self image.



The first exercise involved having the class draw self portraits with their eyes closed and their free hand following the contours of their faces. She also had them use charcoal sticks as the drawing medium which many students had never used before. They wondered aloud what was the point of such a frustrating exercise?



Next, Natasha split the class into pairs with one student acting as the *Artist* and the other as the *Model*. Each *Artist* had to draw a portrait of her *Model* but with restrictions: Once again, the *Artist's* eyes were closed, however she was free to touch the *Model's* face as a reference. Meanwhile, the *Model* (with her eyes open) impacted the drawing by correcting errors in the *Artist's* placement of facial features. Some students found it awkward to work as *Artist* or *Model*.



In the third exercise, students divided a sheet of drawing paper into four sections. Using any nearby object as a model, they drew it from four distinct perspectives in each corner of the paper. The challenge was to devise a strategy to successfully unite all four images into a single composition. The example (left) shows a student drawing a pig-shaped throw toy into four separate areas of the paper.



To connect them she created blends from various shapes which she extended into each quadrant. The result was reminiscent of a mind bending Surrealist drawing.



Finally, the class returned to self portraits with eyes open, only this time they relied on memory alone to render their faces, no touching. By the end of class time most student were surprised at the number of ignored facial details that found their way into the final drawings. When asked to comment on the process, Natasha said we can create a profound tension between our idealized face, the one we commonly observe of ourselves and the one we secretly know to be our authentic face. This exercise gave the students the opportunity to explore these areas through memory and collaborative vulnerability.



**Susan C Price** is a painter who fuses contour figures with familiar objects while filling the canvas with swatches of blended paint strokes and patterns. For Kristine's AP class Susan wanted to subvert student expectations about their familiar painting styles. "If you normally paint the figure do an abstract painting and vice versa. However, absolutely no painting straight out of the tube! You have to work from a blended palette, which must include at least one color you hate or seldom use." Under Susan's irresistible persuasion reluctance was replaced by a sense of adventure. (Above right) **Relaxing Habit** Susan C Price 2016 oils on canvas 22"x30"



(Above left), a student who normally works from the figure tries her hand at non-objective brush strokes with untested color combinations.

When Susan returned to the AP class two weeks later, she had everyone retrieve their paintings and work random color patterns into them (above center and right). Students reported they eventually felt liberated from their self imposed ideas about painting preferences. Susan reminded them painting can be an invitation to explore, reassess and grow.

## Crenshaw High School May 2018

This year we were excited to extend the LA Guest Artist Series into Crenshaw High's AP Art class led by **Ronda Brown**. Unfortunately, our visit occurred during an unscheduled graduation practice for Seniors; so only a handful of Juniors were available to meet **Art Sims**, founder and CEO of **11:24 Design**, an award winning advertising firm based in Los Angeles. In addition to presenting a slide and video showcase of his most notable ad campaigns, Art revealed 11:24 Design was the first agency to produce theatrical posters for Marvel Studios release of **Black Panther**.



A theatrical poster for Marvel's, **Black Panther**



Art Sims with AP Art teacher, Ronda Brown

Art shared his original pencil, concept drawings (below left and center) of Black Panther in various action poses that inspired a range of subsequent posters for Marvel's print advertising campaign. Talking about his work in feature films, Art regaled students with insider anecdotes about collaborating with such iconic film directors as George Lucas, Steven Spielberg and Spike Lee. He also advised them to ground their renderings in the fundamentals of art and design, "that way you will be able to draw anything".



After complimenting students on the high quality of their artwork on display throughout the classroom (like this student painting of Van Gogh's Self Portrait), Art advised them to consider pursuing their art training beyond high school. He offered his assessments of outstanding local, private and public Bachelor degree programs, Associate degree and Certificate programs.

Art Sims concluded his visit by handing out a variety of 11:24 Design full color advertising cards from recent motion picture and product brand

campaigns, a full size Spike Lee movie poster and his office cell phone number. He said he would be glad to review any serious student's portfolio. He also reminded them that 11:24 Design has a summer internship program.

## LA Guest Artists Series 2018 Fundraising Campaign

LA Guest Artists has been an all volunteer program since our inception in 2015. We began with four visiting artists in one high school art class. Today, we have 20 artists available to present in seven LA area high schools with two more expected to come on board during the 2018/2019 academic year. Up until now being an all volunteer program relying on the good will and personal commitment of its participating artists has served our needs well; but LA Guest Artists is growing at a pace that requires a more sustainable management structure with an annual budget to meet the expanding number of schools we serve. To that end, LA Guest Artists Series is now fiscally sponsored by Fractured Atlas, an online non-profit dedicated to helping nascent arts organizations get fiscal sponsorship and fundraising support.

Our goal is to raise **\$15,000** by December 31, 2018, This will enable us to:

- guarantee each visiting artist a stipend of \$60/hr.
- cover FBI fingerprint and tuberculosis screening fees required by LAUSD and other neighboring school districts.
- provide insurance coverage to protect visiting artists work samples on display during classroom visits.
- make the management of LA Guest Artist Series a paid administrative position.

We have a couple of donation options available for your convenience. First, there is the secure link (below) to our donation page on our fiscal sponsor's website where we are able to accept credit card donations. Second, you can also give by check.

Please send contributions to

*David A Valentine*

2717 S Raymond Avenue

Los Angeles, CA 90007-2125

Checks should be made payable to **Fractured Atlas**, with **LA Guest Artist Series** in the memo line.

LA Guest Artist Series is a sponsored project of Fractured Atlas, a non-profit arts service organization. Contributions for the charitable purposes of LA Guest Artist Series must be made payable to "**Fractured Atlas**" only and are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Please, give at whatever level you can to help us reach our goal. With your generous support LA Guest Artists can continue to connect emerging and established LA contemporary artists with LA area high school Art teachers to inform their students about Contemporary Art practices and issues.

Thanks for your support,

David A Valentine, Founder **LA Guest Artist Series**

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