When thinking about public artwork in New York City, I go back to the work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens—the Sherman monument at Grand Army Plaza, or the Farragut monument in Madison Square Park. These are commemorative artworks, created to honor military figures and the specific historical roles they played. I am reminded of what Model to Monument (M2M) instructor Greg Wyatt refers to as “the public square speaking for the people”—the artist as a voice for the public. What is public art if not a mirror of the aspirations and expectations of a culture and society? Michelangelo’s David stood in the Piazza della Signoria, a reflection of Florentine civic pride.

Recently, I returned from a trip to Beijing, China, where I traveled to meet with the artist Ai Weiwei. Our conversation was primarily about his experience at the League, where he attended from 1983 to 1986. He remembers well the sense of freedom he felt in pursuing his art and the open discourse he had with his instructors. One thing that interests me very much about Ai Weiwei’s work is the freedom with which he expresses himself on issues that are controversial to the Chinese government, and the clarity of his statements. On the wall of one of his studios is the list of the names of thousands of children who died in the Szechuan earthquake, from which he created a very moving mural using backpacks such as those the children would have carried to the schools that collapsed on them. It is a great example of public art in its most potent form.

Art in the public sphere continues to remain relevant in contemporary practices. Through the M2M program (now in its fourth year) selected advanced League sculpture students are given the opportunity to grow professionally, to make their contribution to the dialog between artist and public. In this issue of Lines we profile the current M2M participants, whose sculptures will be installed in June 2014. Also profiled are the recipients of the Fantasy Fountain Fund scholarships for study in France, and other students—current and former—forging their way inside and outside the studio.

For decades League students have been going out into the world and making their mark. The League thrives as a community of artists coming together to exchange ideas, hone skills and grow creatively. That vitality continues to expand as art and the “public sphere” become global in scope. What we have seen is that art encompasses many practices, and the art created by many of our students engages the public on many levels. It is part of our mission and commitment to support their efforts.

Ira Goldberg
Executive Director
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When did you know you wanted to be an artist?
I guess I could answer that I always wanted to be an artist, saying, “...since I was a kid I always blah, blah, blah….”, or, “...at the age of four I used to spend long hours bla, bla, bla...” But that probably would be wrong, because I have never known that I wanted to be an artist. These days even more so, being an artist is something that I’m not sure about and probably I will never be. I’m not sure if this “being an artist” is the best thing I can do for myself, and I’m not sure if “being an artist” is the best thing I can offer to others either. It is a never ending dilemma. There are days I feel right about it and other days I feel that this whole show is just wrong and my time could be better invested in something else. At the same time I’m aware of the importance of art in this life and I believe that is what keeps me going.

So I’m still trying to figure this out. Meanwhile the only thing I can do is keep working. Art making brings me happiness and it offers me a way to express myself and communicate with others. Since I left home to go to university art making has been how I make my living too, so I guess art for me is a way of surviving. Things probably could have taken a totally different direction in my life if it wasn’t for my high school philosophy and art history teachers, who taught me that there was nothing wrong with my idea of becoming a lawyer, but showed me that my constant doodling could be a career too. I have never known if I should be thankful to them or not.

Where did you study and what is your background training?
I went to Art University in Bilbao, Spain; moved to Bradford, England, with an Erasmus Scholarship; then moved to Edinburgh, Scotland, and ended my university years in Barcelona. Once I completed my B.F.A. I decided to go to Mexico, where I spent an entire year traveling the country in a thirty-year-old Volkswagen van. In Mexico I drew, photographed and interviewed lots of people, with the idea of documenting the different lifestyles of people from the countryside and the city. It was an incredible experience. After a year I moved back to Spain and put together a show with all the work I had brought from Mexico.

Beñat Iglesias-Lopez is also a past recipient of the Xavier Gonzalez and Ethel Edwards Travel Grant, the Edward G. McDowell Travel Grant, the Nessa Cohen Grant, and the Gail von der Lippe Merit Scholarship.

Left: Beñat modeling a clay figure for his multi-figure monument, The Bathers (currently installed in Riverside Park South, 2013, polychrome cast stone, 16 x 25 x 15 feet)
his studio I decided to move to New York. I started taking classes at the League and The National Academy. I have been at the League for eight years and I have studied with many different painting, drawing and sculpture teachers and enjoyed every single one of them. I have participated in many League programs, traveled in Europe and Spain thanks to the McDowell and Gonzales-Edwards travel grants, and recently participated in the Model-to-Monument sculpture program. The League has offered me an incredible artistic environment where whatever my needs were in a specific time I could always find what I needed.

What is your medium of choice and why? I enjoy painting, drawing, sculpting, printmaking and photography, but I do not have one specific medium that speaks to me more than the others. I like video installations too. So far that is something out of my league, but I hope to get to it someday. Different mediums offer a wider range of possibilities to express ideas, and some specific ideas may be better suited to one specific medium. I often feel that the ideas are what dictate the medium to be used. They all compliment each other, so I believe it’s good not to get intimidated by the fact that it may be unknown territory and to enjoy the exploration and possibilities each medium offers.

What or who is your inspiration? My everyday life experiences are my source of inspiration. Everything around me affects my work one way or another. I react to what I see and in a conscious or unconscious way I filter what I feel is important and use it in my work. Every place I have lived has been very important for my development as an artist and as a person. But overall New York probably has been most influential in my artistic career. The amount of artwork you are exposed to in this city is incredible. When I moved to New York, the city offered me a perfect set up where I could focus without having any other distraction, and basically what I did was spend time at the League, museums and galleries. In this city I also met Fumiko, who makes my life more and more exciting every single day, so I guess there are a few things I should be grateful for to New York.

What keeps motivating you to make art? Life in general is my motivation. Walking into a gallery and seeing a good show brings me a lot of joy and excitement, it makes me want to go back to my studio and work non-stop. At the same time, walking into a gallery and seeing a show that I dislike gives me a similar feeling. It may not bring me joy but it excites me and makes me want to go back to my studio and work, hoping to be able to offer something to the art world more worthwhile.

What life lessons has being an artist taught you? That money does not open the door to happiness, but it opens the door to a nice studio space.

If money was not an issue, what is your dream project? Money will always be an issue, no question about it. My Dream Project is to have a happy life close to the ones I love and be able to bring something good into the lives of others through my work.

www.benatiglesias.com
Two-and-a-half years ago, when I was in Bruce Dorfman’s mixed media class, I started taking welding. I realized the possibilities of sculpture, and made my first metal sculpture/mixed media piece, which casts shadows on rice paper as if it were sculptural Asian calligraphy. I have worked in various mediums such as fabric, paper, plaster, papier-mâché, wood, and wax, but the strength, flexibility, and directness of metal inspire me more than any other material.

I’ve studied at the League with the welding technical instructors, with Leonid Lerman, and with Dorfman, and my artistic influences include Richard Serra, Isamu Noguchi, John Chamberlain, Michael Heizer, Lee Bontecou, Sarah Sze, Santiago Calatrava and more.

Public art is everywhere, and open to everyone without charge. When a public art piece inspires me, gives me new perspective on something, or opens my thoughts through the artist’s unique aesthetic, I very much appreciate its existence. For example, I like George Rickey’s kinetic sculpture piece—multiple objects moving just by wind force. We can usually only feel the wind, but this piece visualizes it.

For me there is not much of a difference between public art and private art. Public art has to be a continuation of what you have been doing in private. The premise should be that you have developed something worth sharing with the public. In gallery shows, you deal with a selective group of people who, for the most part, readily accept your aesthetics or statements because they are either educated in a certain way or accustomed to similar kinds of work. With public art you don’t have that kind of selectiveness, so you have to be more careful not to offend and to be inclusive. On the other hand, if you are so careful that you lose your identity, you will end up with something meaningless. The challenge is to find a balance between your personal statement and the readiness of the public. In the end, public art is a practice of giving.

www.natsukitakauji.com

Clockwise from top: Seduction, 2013, welded steel, steel mesh, plaster, 8 x 15 x 8 inches; Kaki, 2013, welded steel, fabric, paper, 5 x 8 x 6 inches; Pineapple Kind, 2013, welded steel, fabric, wax, 4 x 7 x 9 inches
One day, 11 years ago, I found hundreds of beautiful marble blocks at a construction site. They were about to be thrown away and I wanted to rescue them. I visited a carving class at the Art Students League and met Seiji Saito, who told me that it might be difficult for the school to accept them as a donation. “But Earth spent millions of years creating them,” I said. “I don’t think humankind can take whatever they want from nature and just throw it away!” Seiji said, “How about bringing one piece of marble here and carving it yourself? You can invite other students to get one for themselves and each student can decide how to move it and where to keep it.” I couldn’t refuse. That was the beginning of everything, and I have been studying with Seiji Saito at the League for eleven years. I also studied ceramics for two years in Tokyo.

I love carving stone very much; it’s like having conversations with pieces of this planet. I can hear their voices and see what they want to become. I also love bronze, which gives me freedom from the weight and fragility of stone. I have also been a painter, calligrapher, kimono designer, poet, and essayist. My book, Dreamer, was published in November 2013.

Michelangelo’s artwork is a primary influence. His first Pietà has been my favorite sculpture from the very first time I saw it. The piece is so powerful that it made me cry even before I had any knowledge of marble or sculpture or religious stories or history. It was full of love, mercy, and absolute beauty. From that encounter I learned that a real masterpiece has the power to reach anyone in the world. Public works are like the doors to communication; it is almost like the connection point. I stop, I look, and I think about its meaning and reason.

Personally, the twelve statues on the façade of the Hearst Tower, which I restored by myself in 2005, hold the most meaning for me. That project gave me the ambition to someday make my own public art in New York.

Like other Japanese artists, I carry with me the history of Hiroshima-Nagasaki, and of Fukushima in 2011. At the heart of my Japanese identity is the desire to bring the vision of peace to the world.
Ana Sofía Martí
Model to Monument Fellowship 2014

Public art has a significant role, not only in my life, but also in the life of the community that surrounds it. It amazes me how art transforms the way people see things. It can actually change the way you feel by simply looking at it. As an artist it is a great honor to have the opportunity to strike up a conversation with the people in the community through your public art.

El Angel de la Independencia in Mexico City, a monument built to commemorate one hundred years of Mexico’s Independence, has become an important part of everyday Mexican life and part of the identity of the people. It is what every monument should be. By portraying a specific time and space public art creates a special connection with and among people.

I have been studying art since I was five years old. As a child, I studied under the instruction of several artists in San Luis Potosí and Mexico City. Later on, as a teenager, I had the opportunity to go to Paris for a year, where I continued my studies in art at a private school. At the League, after I began studying with Bruce Dorfman, I engaged in different types of techniques, including sculpture.

I enjoy working with different types of materials, especially recycled ones, and making illusions by transforming everyday objects into beautiful works of art. Objects are taken out of context to fulfill a new objective. A touch of irony merged with an unpredictable twist invites the viewer into a different kind of discernment, transforming each exposure into a unique experience.

One of my main influences is daily life. I think everything in everyday life is somehow connected, so I could say many things influence me: materials, colors, texture, geometry. Each of my pieces brings to mind a moment of my daily life and narrates a different story. Major artistic influences include the artists of Impressionism, Matisse, and Mexican artists such as Diego Rivera, Rufino Tamayo and Gabriel Orozco.

www.anasofiamarti.com

From top: Orange, 2013, mixed media, 36 x 30 x 11 inches; Tire, 2012, mixed media, 28 x 28 x 12 inches
I was about five when I walked into Saint Lucy’s Church in East Harlem. Inside there was a very large copy of Michelangelo’s Pietà, and I could not take my eyes off of it. I remember I would hustle a nickel from my sleeping mother every Sunday (she was very tired from work) and walk three blocks by myself so I could go stare at it. It was an epiphany for me.

When I was thirteen I was asked what subject I wanted to major in at the High School of Art & Design and I immediately knew it was sculpture. I was told it was only available as a minor, so I chose that. My very first influence came from my mom. She was young and divorced, raising my sister and me alone in the projects. When she wasn’t busy working, she spent her time painting. I would watch and think: “I want to be an artist just like her.” I loved the smell of the oils she used, and I tried to copy every single painting she made.

I enjoy working in both painting and sculpture, but my favorite medium is drawing because it was the first thing I remember doing as a child. From drawing you can go anywhere. I like to decide on the medium according to what I am trying to project.

Before I came to the League, I moved from place to place, first to the New York Studio School then to the School of Visual Arts. I even took a small Russian class in a Long Island City studio. It was there that a student said, “Why don’t you try the Art Students League?” At the League, I began working in clay under Barney Hodes. I felt the need to begin in an abstract, large way. I then felt prepared to work under Anthony Antonios, where I could strengthen my anatomy.

I feel the purpose of public art can change with its environment. For example, in a big city public art should divert one’s attention from the repetitive monotony of every day life. Yet in a smaller, quieter environment, public art can introduce a concept that may take the viewer outside of him or herself. The role public art plays for me is as a platform of hope—a chance to correct mistakes made.

www.phyllis-sanfiorenzo.com

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Left: Anacaona (Taino Queen), 2010, Hydrocal cast with bronze patina, 18½ x 16½ x 15½ inches

"Model to Monument Fellowship 2014"

Phyllis Sanfiorenzo

Left: Anacaona (Taino Queen), 2010, Hydrocal cast with bronze patina, 18½ x 16½ x 15½ inches
I decided to pursue sculpture after the long illness and subsequent death of my husband. I found the process to be very therapeutic and honestly felt his spirit guided me to the medium.

Public art in my life includes a Vietnam Veterans monument at the center of our town’s major intersection, which I see every morning as I leave my neighborhood in upstate New York. My husband spent seven tours in Vietnam during the war. I think of him, of course, every time I pass the monument.

In addition to working in sculpture, most of my adult life I have been a photographer. I have always enjoyed shooting at night; experimenting with the manipulation of light sources utilizing fireworks, car lights, flashlights and of course the moon.

As a sculptor I work with a variety of metals: iron, stainless steel, copper. The solidness and contrasting flexibility of the materials and their reflective qualities engage me. I developed my skills for bronze and learned the lost wax process at a former job in a metal foundry.

Since 2007 I have studied sculpture with Silya Kiese, honing my creative process of manipulating found metal objects into abstract sculptural constructions. Currently I am focused on the “U” shape. I’m inspired by kinetic qualities: the exploration of motion, light, and sound.

David Smith, Brancusi and large-scale architecture are among my influences. Years ago my first “in person” view of the Eiffel Tower was of its magnificent base totally covered in fog. I nearly lost my breath I was in such awe, thinking how tall the structure must be!

Photography with www.gettyimages.com

Top: Unity (two versions), 2013, contrasting metals (stainless and hot-rolled), mechanically connected, 20 x 9 inches

Right: Universe, 2011, plumbing foam, photo images and plasma cutter writing in steel on base, 65 inches (height), 16 x 24 inches (base)
In my view, the unique characteristic of public art is its potential for expressing shared human experience: we recognize ourselves in the artwork, locked in mortal combat in the human struggle, and that recognition can bring both dynamic coherence and self-awareness to our individual, often isolated, daily struggles.

Well-conceived, designed, and executed public art can unite me in common purpose with other people in ways that people themselves often fail to do. This is because skillful sculptors extract the very essence of their subjects to invest in their sculptures, casting out what is superfluous or redundant. What we see is a concentrated, refined sensibility. Maya Lin’s *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* is a good example of this pure concentration of meaning.

Although I carved wood and modeled clay as part of my BFA program in college, making sculpture with full intention is something I began to do only last year.

I don’t have a preferred medium. Different sculptural ideas, pressing to be released into three dimensions, present themselves in different ways. Some ideas want to come out as ceramics; others want to be corten steel or cast bronze, or paper, or the earth itself. It is very important to allow an idea to tell you how it wants to be executed: part of the challenge of making sculpture is to find the most expressive medium for the emotional or intellectual content of one’s idea.

At the League, my teachers were Frank O’Cain, Jack Henderson, Gary Sussman and Leonid Lerman; in Boston, my teachers were Andrew McMillan and Harris Barron. My main influences are Manzu, Maillol, Matisse, Nadelman, Daumier, Rodin, Lin, Gris, Braque, Gaudi, Seurat, Rembrandt and Vermeer.

I find inspiration in the daily vanishing of a finite life form into its elemental components and in my need to order the universe in a way that allows for a human presence but avoids a human dominance. I also find inspiration in writings and riddles with multiple layers of meaning or oppositions of purpose; complex structures; and limitations of any kind.

Laura Barmack
Winner of the Henry Matisse Estate Scholarship for 2013/14
Model to Monument Fellowship 2014

Top: *Those Who Are To Memory Attached*, 2013, ceramic, 16 x 18 x 12 inches
Directly above: *End of the Long March (work in progress)*, direct plaster with inclusions, 26 x 60 x 17 inches
My first sculpture classes were at the Center for Creative Studies (CCS) in Detroit, Michigan. As I developed my personal work, my paintings quickly broke out of the two-dimensional plane and turned into shaped canvases; form started taking priority over surface. I was also taking impressions of the environment in handmade paper and transforming them into objects, again manipulating a flat plane to make it three-dimensional.

Inspired by my surroundings—both people and architecture—I like to find the character of individuals and enjoy figurative sculpture most when it is raw, fresh and gestural. I am drawn to the ghosts of industry and am especially interested in the urban landscape and the beauty of decay in contrast and conjunction with organic beauty.

In terms of material I prefer working with cement because it reminds me of our urban environment. It can go outside, grow moss, crack and decay. It is cold and hard, a wonderful contrast to the plants which are alive, organic and growing. However, I will use whatever material suits the need. I have worked in foam, clay, steel, wood, grass, wax, paper, glass, plaster, fiberglass, found objects and more. Currently my emphasis has been on the figure, so I am sculpting in clay and casting in cement or Hydrocal.

I am influenced by the people I know; where I live, and where I grew up. Barney Hodes has been my primary mentor at the League. I have also studied figurative sculpture with Jay Holland at CCS, and Susan Clinard at the Palette and Chisel. I have been working with an art combine, Madagascar Institute, and on the Temple Crew at Burning Man, which have changed the way that I look at art and the world, and broadened my interest in found objects, technology, and collaborative projects. Together we can create something beyond what I dreamed of alone.

This meshes easily with my attitude about public art. It should snap you out of the monotonous and get you to see things in a different way. I hope it can influence your day, soften your surroundings, just make you stop for a moment and reboot your senses. My sculptural memories are of my hometown: The Isamu Noguchi fountain in Hart Plaza, the Spirit of Detroit and the Robert Graham fist, but it is just because I am proud that I grew up in Detroit. M2M and Greg Wyatt have already inspired me to go on a sculpture hunt to become more aware of the wonderful works that we have right here in New York. www.portfolio.lindsaymccosh.com

Left: Interior/Exterior Shelter, wood, grass, 4 x 3 x 4 feet
Above: Portrait, fired clay, 18 x 10 inches
For nearly a year, Thomas and I took photographs with Sequoyah Aono’s sculpture Watching Upon the Present. This project began because I had a dress like the figure and, after running past her nearly every day last summer, thought it would be fun to take a picture with her. From that day on we decided to incorporate Watching Upon the Present, or “Marisol” (as we came to call her) into our life, marking the holidays throughout the year.

Each week we would create our props and embellishments. We tried to plan our photo shoots to coincide with favorable weather, which was not without its challenges. Hurricane Sandy hit within hours of the Halloween photo, and on Groundhog Day the temperature outdoors was 23 degrees. Our friend Patrick lent us the hat for that one and also encouraged us to do something for the Chinese New Year. We tried to make an origami snake out of paper but found it was a little tough to scale. Without fully considering the storage implications, we bought 24 feet of aluminum dryer duct and then added a 6-foot tail. Our Easter bunny, Hop, added new spontaneity to the project. We borrowed him from a pet store for a few hours. Thank goodness he was on a leash because he had never been on grass before that day.

Sequoyah started to follow us online in February and we have periodically been in touch. We think he is extremely gifted and, of course, feel deep gratitude for all that Watching Upon the Present brought to our lives. It was really hard to see her go in June, not just because we would miss seeing her but because, through art-making, Thomas and I learned and loved more about each other. We are now doing different photo shoots with the new group of M2M
or “Marisol”

sculptures in Riverside Park. Instead of focusing on one piece, we are trying a range of ideas from origami boats with *Preservation: A Wonderful Life* (by Anna Kuchel Rabinowitz) to mermaid dreams with *Wave* (by Anne Stanner). Recently we started building a structure for a project we plan to shoot. For most New Yorkers, having abandoned scaffolding around your building is an annoyance, but in our case it’s a perfect studio space. Hopefully the construction team won’t be back before we finish spray-painting 25 feet of cardboard tubing.

Sequoyah Aono’s year two M2M piece, *Watching Upon the Present*, was purchased in June 2013 by collectors in the Hamptons for display on their front lawn. Sequoyah also sold two of his maquettes for this piece.
My father, Abraham Ginsburg, studied at the National Academy of Design from 1918 to 1922. His drawing teacher was Charles Hawthorne and his painting teacher was Ivan Olinsky. He was considered the best in his class and received many awards including a 2-year fellowship to study in Paris and Berlin from 1922 to 1924. I believe some of his influences were the great portrait painters such as Sargent, Van Dyck, Franz Hals, Henry Raeburn, and Thomas Eakins. He was a portrait painter and his style was more classical and controlled, but with his alla prima approach he became more painterly and impressionistic. When he painted actors for movie posters in the 1920’s his style was much more colorful and stylized. Perhaps here he was influenced by J.C. Leyendecker and Haddon Sundblom, but his drawing was more accurate. My father seemed to be influenced by Joaquín Sorolla in the 1930s, when he (my father) was painting Native Americans outdoors in New Mexico and Spanish laborers in Majorca and New Yorkers in Central Park and in his studio. He loved painting color and his later work became quite impressionistic.

He was a professional portrait painter, working primarily from life. But there were periods when he worked from photographs, such as when the subjects were deceased or children who could not pose. But there was a period of time after 1940 when he and other portrait painters could not get enough commissions, so they “ghosted.” Certain “agents” made their way into wealthy homes, especially in the South, and told people who wanted their portraits painted that they were artists (which they weren’t), and that they could paint their portrait from a photograph. These agents would bring the photos to my father who would then paint the portrait. Then the agent would sign his name on the painting. Many of these real artists had no access to wealthy homes partly because they were foreigners or Jews like my father.

When my father decided to stop painting for the movie industry in 1929 and do his own fine art painting, he and my mother travelled through the United States and Europe. That is when I was born in 1931 in Paris, France. I was told that when I was two years old I walked into my father’s studio and he had just finished a portrait. Having seen him paint, I took his brush and painted on his finished portrait. Of course I immediately received a spanking. I consider that my first criticism or art lesson. Fortunately, I’m a slow learner so it did not dissuade me from becoming an artist.

As a child, watching my father work gave me insight into painting traditional realism from life, which was practically not available in any of the art colleges or universities in America. When I went to Syracuse University (1949-53) and the City College of New York (1960-63) there was only a modernist approach to art. The instructors were ill-equipped to teach the realistic skills of traditional painting.

My father did not teach formally. He had a Saturday painting group of artists who painted from life in his studio. I often joined the group as a teenager and my father would then criticize my drawing, values and color basically in terms of the form I was seeing. He would often repeat what Charles Hawthorne said: “Paint what you see, not what you know.” I am 82 now and in the last few years I’m beginning to realize much of what he said but even more what he painted.

One of the main differences between my father and me is that I became more interested in multi-figure compositions where an idea, usually a social idea, is expressed. But what he mastered is the poetry of painting, especially color, which I am
still struggling to understand and achieve.

My father had a great influence on me but at the same time there was a breaking away period. When I was in my 20s and 30s I felt that my drawing skills were lacking as a realistic painter and this is when the art world was overwhelmingly modernist, and the galleries wanted more modern work, or at least more loosely painted work. So I began to question my realist direction and even reject my father’s approach and worked less and less from life. I became more influenced by Daumier, working on my paintings only from pencil sketches I drew on the street and in the subway. However in the 1970s, while teaching at the High School of Art and Design, my friend Irwin Greenberg (Greeny) and I began our “Morning Group” to draw and paint from life where interested serious students could join us every day from 6:30 to 8:30 a.m. This program was purely voluntary and not available in the school curriculum anywhere in the city. It also enabled me to improve my realist skills, and I think my father really appreciated this development.

When I got out of the army (I was drafted in 1953–55) I was doing commercial art and then taught at HSAD until 1982. So essentially while he was painting I was a full time teacher in order to make a living. However, I did exhibit regularly between 1966 and 1980 at a gallery and sold quite well. My father appreciated my artistic development. In the late 70s he became blind and developed Alzheimer’s disease. He died at the age of 93 in 1984.

Abraham Ginsburg was an artist’s artist. He was very humble, a nice guy and a terrible promoter of his own work. He was always straight and never devious. He didn’t know how to bullshit. He was a quiet man but when he spoke it was with a Jewish Russian accent and he stuttered. He was always drawing and painting, never stopped. The act of painting was most important to him, and very often he didn’t even sign his work. People loved his work. Artists came around seeking help with their portraits. But he was not a business man. He knew nothing about “gimmiks” and “shtiks.” He was a beautiful artist.

www.maxginsburg.com

Clockwise from top left: Abraham Ginsburg, illustrations for The Big Parade of Stars (Metro Goldwyn Meyer), c. 1927; Max Ginsburg, Subway, Study of Miriam, 2013, oil on panel, 18 x 14 inches; Abraham Ginsburg, Self-portrait, c. 1960, oil on board, 10 x 8 inches; Abraham Ginsburg, Artist’s Wife Reading in The Sun, c. 1960, oil on canvas, 8 x 10 inches; Abraham Ginsburg, Portrait of Geneva, 1930, oil on canvas, 30 x 24 inches
Learning and Perseverance

Catherine Gallagher

Recipient of the James C. Johnson Scholarship for 2013/14

My earliest memory, at the age of four, was in a museum, standing in front of a marble bust, *The Veiled Nun*. I was totally captivated by the piece and could not take my eyes off it. When I was ten years old, I overheard my art and music teachers commenting how good a project of mine was. From that moment, art became a vocation for me and I never looked back.

My family settled in Greenwich Village and I attended an all-girls high school which offered an art program. My mother encouraged me to go for it. It meant staying in high school an additional year, but I did so gladly and focused my studies on advertising so I would be able to support myself. I worked all through high school and after graduation I found a position designing greeting cards. I continued my studies at various night schools such as Pratt Institute (magazine design, advertising, promotion, computer graphics), FIT (jewelry design and gemology, figurative clay sculpture) and NYU (book design).

Shortly into my career I got married, I had my wonderful daughter, and I put my career on hold until she could attend kindergarten. Soon after, I got a divorce and became the sole supporter of my daughter and myself. I found a job at Scholastic Magazines in the Promotion Department. My whole career has been a learning curve; working in promotion, magazines, catalogues and educational books. Some of my employers were McGraw-Hill, American Book Company, and Newport News. All this time, I also had my own freelance business designing brochures, pamphlets, and books for appreciative clients.

Sculpture was always a fascination of mine and although I never worked at it professionally, it was far more than just a hobby. My apartment was close to Stuyvesant High School and it was there I took adult education classes in carving stone and got hooked. I spent a great deal of my spare time learning and perfecting this art form. The transformation of a rock into a work of art surprises me every time I see it happen, whether it is my work or someone else’s.

As I changed jobs, I continued to find nearby schools to take art classes, and that was how I came to the League. I have had many wonderful teachers here – Sherry Camhy, Robert Cenedella, Barney Hodes, Leonid Lerman, Frank O’Cain, and Fred Wong. Each one has taught me something I did not know before. My medium of choice is clay maquette. This is a crucial medium to help perfect an idea before starting a stone piece, and helps prevent disaster from happening by going directly to stone. The imagination and time that it takes to evolve and see the finished piece is the true challenge of the medium. Leonid Lerman encourages me to persevere and suggests additional directions I may want to consider.

The team of technical instructors has been an invaluable resource since I first came to the League. I have been taking an amazing class in abstract watercolor with Frank O’Cain, who has helped me open my head to new and exciting moments. I plan to use my merit scholarship to explore painting abstractly in oil.

My work is semi-abstract, stylized, and figurative. My inspiration comes from: my subject itself, my teacher; great artists like Brancusi, Noguchi, Sargent, Matisse, Pollock; magazines; books; movies. My work-study as a gallery sitter has been as important to me as my classes. The Instructors Show and the Student Concours meld all the different influences, and seeing this happen again and again is a huge cultural exchange and learning experience. The library has done the same for me as far as offering ideas from many diverse cultures to extrapolate from. When a piece I’m working on nears completion, I start researching ideas and thinking about the next piece.

Art has helped me to encourage my daughter and grandchildren to keep pursuing their dreams. So many teachers and students at the League have that outlook. The overriding theme I see continuously in the school is “Keep going.” You never know what wonderful event might happen, like winning a merit scholarship. Dream on. Thank you ASL! 😊
I majored in Fine Arts (Sculpture) in Korea. After being fascinated by the charm of wood as a material of sculpture, I devoted myself to carving. In order to gain experience I studied with an artisan who taught me some traditional Korean techniques which have been used in Buddhist sculpture.

I feel intimacy and ease from carving wood because wood is a life-form (unlike stone or metal) and, like our bodies, every piece of wood contains traces of its own life such as growth rings, gnarls and so forth. I try to unearth the wood’s own feeling, rather than just carving as I like. I usually try to vitalize the unique shapes of their annual rings and save gnarls as what they were and how they looked. In addition, because I find the procedure of work as important as the artwork itself, I want to show the traces where I’ve used my carving knives on the surfaces of the works. This helps preserve the material’s natural beauty without any kinds of surface treatments like sanding, waxing, and so on.

All of my sculpture expresses mental scars—my own and those of all human beings who live in the modern world—through carved wood. Paradoxically, by the process of harming wood and contemplating its scars, I think the viewer and I can find a kind of spiritual comfort.

Eunjin Kim has studied with League instructors Peter Reginato, Charles Hinman, Grace Knowlton, Leonid Lerman, Martha Bloom and Peter Golfinopoulos.

Clockwise from top left: Confined, 2011, red pine, 115 x 115 x 124 inches; Twisted, 2010, ginkgo (maidenhair tree), 260 x 85 x 70 inches; Forsaken, 2011, almaciga, 38 x 58 x 67 inches, 80 x 80 x 50 inches, 34 x 67 x 4 inches; Healed, 2010, nut pine, 43 x 43 x 35 inches
The Architectonic of Printmaking

Jeff Atwood

Recipient of the Ruth Katzman Merit Scholarship for 2013/14

I spent many years studying architecture, first at the University of Virginia and later at Georgia Institute of Technology, where I graduated with the Henry Adams Fund School Medal and Certificate of Merit. Architecture appealed to me because of its unique combination of aesthetics and technology and its emphasis on process. After school I practiced the profession, working as an architectural designer for ten years in Atlanta and for ten years in New York City. I was also a partner in my own firm for several years in Atlanta.

As I became frustrated with the transient, excessively competitive, computer-dominated New York market and my stagnant career, I was diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, making the hectic, stressful life of a New York designer difficult for me. Printmaking at the Art Students League provided me with an alternative that has allowed me an outlet for my creativity and to expand on my architectural background in a fresh and unique way.

My architecture background influences the printmaking that I do in my choice of subject matter, the methodology that I have developed, and in the way my compositions are structured. The etchings remain grounded by the architectonics of their compositions. They are aligned and controlled by regular geometric lines and patterns, giving them directness, impact, and an architectural quality—spaces are defined and regulated by strong lines and clear rhythms; compositional alignments echo and reaffirm the rectangular format of the embossed edges and the boundaries of the paper.

My work has always utilized sketching, drawing, photography and research as a generative means of producing results that convey the feeling of the context. My prints capture the complex visual experiences of New York City’s architecture in bold and provocative images which often bridge the gap between realism and abstraction. Vignettes, streetscapes, buildings, and architectural details are collaged. Views are combined, patterns are overlaid, and elements are multiplied. Space is compacted. Reality is amplified and enhanced to make you see the commonplace in a new way.

Through the etchings, I explore interesting vantage points and dramatic multiple perspectives that exaggerate, frame, distort, and layer, capturing the city’s intricacy and energy by using strong contrasts in light and shade, interwoven and varied patterns, textures and reflections, and interesting juxtapositions of disparate elements. Often images are drawn with techniques traditionally associated with architectural rendering, such as axonometric views.

Having the opportunity to combine my architectural background with my newfound love of printmaking at the Art Students League for the past five-and-a-half years has been a special and exciting experience. During that time I have enjoyed and learned a great deal by studying with Richard Pantell. During my tenure at the League I have received the Jean Gates Scholarship and have benefited greatly from the work-study program. I have also learned a great deal by being exposed to and working with other artists as an assistant to Pam Koob, formerly the curator of the Phyllis Harriman Mason Gallery, and now Jillian Russo, the current curator. I have also greatly improved and expanded my knowledge of the New York printmaking community by working for Kathy Caraccio at her printmaking studio in Midtown.

I will use my merit scholarship to continue to study at the League, expanding my repertoire by taking classes with other printmaking teachers, enrolling in a drawing or outdoor sketch class to enhance my drawing skills and a watercolor class, hoping to learn how to combine printmaking with watercolor. My methodology will continue to develop so that I can produce work that better conveys the excitement and complexity of New York. Also, I need to begin to bridge the gap between school and the professional art world and establish myself more as a professional artist by responding to more calls for submissions, participating in more shows and exhibitions, and generating more income by selling more prints.
I have been painting and drawing since I was a child, but I didn’t take it seriously until much later. It was just something I always did and took for granted. My first degree was actually in English Literature.

I was born in and raised around New York, but in our twenties my husband at the time and I moved to San Francisco, and we eventually opened what became a very famous restaurant in the city—creative, but not at all related to fine arts. However, through it all, I still painted and started to show my work. I also haunted museums and exhibits and enjoyed studying the history of art. So at some point, I decided that art was not only a big part of who I was, but that I should begin to take it and myself as an artist more seriously. I decided that I really had to start from scratch and learn the basics by taking painting classes and going to workshops. I eventually enrolled at the San Francisco Art Institute, graduating with a BFA with honors in 1977. The surprise there is that I majored in printmaking, not painting.

Much later, in the 90’s, after my son was grown and on his own, I opened two art galleries, both of which started as adjuncts to my studios. The first was in Maine, where we spent our summers, and was open only during the summer months. It represented about ten artists. The second was in Sarasota, Florida, where I was living at the time. That gallery grew to represent twenty artists and was an important part of the Sarasota art community for over ten years. Being in an art-related business was perfect for me and definitely encouraged and stimulated my growth as an artist. Around 2004 I found myself spending a lot of time back in New York and it was then that I began studying and working at the League.

I studied in many places before coming here, but I will say that it was a perfect fit for me from day one. The camaraderie at the League is amazing and we all learn from each other every day. I have studied most consistently with Michael Pellettieri in the printmaking department. Etching has been my preferred medium and the foundation for most of my experimentation and work ever since. I love everything about it—from the preparing of the copper plates, to the acid etching techniques, the choice of papers, the printing process itself. It all becomes a very satisfying and complete artistic experience to me.

My first inspiration was my family. My great grandfather was a successful and relatively well-known Italian painter named Giuseppe Cosenza. My great grandmother, Amelia Cosenza, was a mezzo-soprano, and it was her singing career that brought the family to New York in the late 1800’s. My maternal grandmother was an accomplished amateur painter who had a studio of her own and exhibited her work as well. My brother was one of the most creative people I have ever known, and my son, Luke, now a very successful painter, is currently teaching at my alma mater, the San Francisco Art Institute. I guess I could say art is in my genes. Living near the water for most of my life influenced my exploration of water and rocks and boats as my subject matter. Now I have started a whole new investigation of nature in farm animals!

Artists have freedom that most people don’t. We also create a personal vocabulary as we grow that we use throughout our work. I always think how fortunate we are to have a means of expression to say things, which may not be evident to the viewer, but we know without that way of expressing ourselves, we would be the poorer.

I would love to be less self-concerned as I go forward and find a way to give to the community through the talents I’ve been so blessed to have. If I could, I would like to establish a printmaking studio that would offer outreach to the community, especially to children and to those who could not afford the luxury of attending art school or classes, and to encourage them through professional gallery exhibitions and sales of some sort.

As with most artists, my art is a work in progress all of the time. I love the surprises and the mistakes and the unexpected places I end up in. There is that sort of joke that says how you know God has a sense of humor—just try making plans. That’s how I feel about my most successful pieces. I may start with one idea, and then am completely surprised to see where I end up. That’s quite a journey and a huge privilege. www.katharinebutler.com

Above: Apple Tree 3, 2005, 9 x 9 inches, etching, chine collé; Bottom, from left: Granite, 2008, etching, chine collé, 8 x 8 inches; Beneath the Surface IV, 2007, multiple etching, chine collé, 12 x 12 inches
My incredible experience this summer on the Fantasy Fountain Fund scholarship at the Marchutz School in Aix-en-Provence, which I won through the Art Students League, is the latest highlight in my development as a painter. A few years ago I was lucky enough to spend time at Anderson Ranch, Colorado, through a scholarship from the League.

After studying drawing and painting in art school in Scotland in the 1980s, where I learned from wonderful artists like Alberto Morrocco, Jack Knox, James Morrison, I went on to teach art in high school. Then came stints in Hong Kong and New Zealand, working in the wine trade and teaching English.

I came to live in Brooklyn ten years ago and threw myself into my art! I found out about the League through a life drawing group in Brooklyn. Having been to art school, I needed somewhere I could develop my work, find my artistic voice and be part of a community of artists. Perfect!

I was drawn to a painting by League instructor Ken McIndoe. In the years I’ve studied at the League he has given me educated instruction without feeling the need to leave his personal artistic footprint. He’s helped me immeasurably to express myself and move forward with my painting. I’ve also gained insights through Nicki Orbach and Frank O’Cain.

I paint in oil. I love the consistency and the vibrancy. I do plein air sketches in pastel and watercolor. They evoke the experience of being in a location; the colors remind me why I was attracted to it. I then use this distilled vision of nature to work on an oil painting.

The Marchutz program is carefully orchestrated, founded on experience of the visible world and the study of great paintings. The ethos is to look at “the whole,” using not only the eyes but the senses as well; trying not to paint the concept (what we know is there), but to paint what is actually there; looking at color and form in a less isolated way. Technique, Marchutz director Alan Roberts said, is a quality of vision. Therefore, they could not teach us how to paint, but would teach us how to see. It already felt tailor-made for me.

My plein air oil painting improved and changed, not because I learned how to paint a tree, but as a result of an amalgamation of learning experiences: seminars comprised of discussions where we analyzed drawings, paintings and writings; illuminating field trips; sketching and copying great works of art; and writing about every aspect of my trip and my art.

Living with my French host, Eve, an opera singer, enriched the experience, giving me a complete cultural immersion. I loved my room overlooking the orange rooftops of Aix, and the heated discussions over dinner! It was enlightening, educational, transformational and I’ll move forward in my art and my life with Marchutz embedded in me thanks to the incredible opportunity I was given. 

www.catrionaherd.com
My Experience in Art

Kate Robson-Sharkey

Every day I get up at 6:30 in the morning. I feed my cat, eat breakfast, get dressed and leave to go to the Art Students League of New York. It’s an hour ride from my apartment in Bay Ridge Brooklyn, and when I can get a seat I draw; mostly people sleeping, sometimes reading or playing video games. When I get to the League, I set up the classroom and get to work right away, only breaking for coffee and the occasional snack. I work right up until the start of the next class because I find it hard to tear myself away. This was one of the biggest lessons I learned about art, the power of consistency and determination.

Earlier in 2013 I was nominated by Ronnie Landfield, my painting instructor, for the Fantasy Fountain Fund scholarship to study in France, and was fortunate enough to gain the opportunity to spend a month in Paris.

My only plan when I went to Paris was to make as much work as possible, and to be open to experiences and learning new things. What I experienced and learned was far beyond what I could have ever expected. On day one we went straight over to the Louvre, the Louvre, which to me before was this great magical place with fantastic art and treasures. Seeing it in person though was confusing and overwhelming, but in a good way; there was just so much to see. Calum Fraser, our professor, was an excellent museum guide. He would zip through the museum like a fish swimming upstream to show you a specific painting, and then on to another to tie them together through a narrative that would connect styles or techniques. On day one he mostly focused on old master techniques for figure paintings: how to start with earth tones like Venetian red, ochre, black and white to create warm paintings that have a realistic flesh tone.

As I grew up in California and came to New York to study painting in my 20’s I have mostly learned impressionist techniques and modern abstract painting. Together these two aesthetics have emphasized bright colors over earth tones with little to no use of black. So in my trip to Paris I used the opportunity to learn the earth tone palette and use techniques that I have not yet tried and to apply them to my style.

At this point, I have been taking art classes for roughly twenty years, beginning from age twelve when I took art classes at the local Michael’s art store. After that I took private lessons and had art classes in high school. I was, at that time, extremely interested in experimentation and had a body of work that was all over the place. Even though I was very devoted my school counselors suggested I hold off going to art school until I was a bit more focused and took time to build a better portfolio. I attended classes at the local community college for a year, studying anatomy and figure drawing. Then I moved to New York and started at the Art Students League. I took classes in life drawing with Costa Vavagiakis and learned how to find the angles and draw the figure from back to front. I studied abstract painting with Larry Poons and learned how to turn my brain off and just paint. And with Ronnie Landfield I learned how to develop my own style and technique.

I spent the most time in Ronnie Landfield’s class because developing an original style and technique takes time. Even if it is not complicated, progress still takes a lot of experimentation and a lot of consistency. With my foundation in figure painting I began to abstract the figure for a while, then I moved to abstracting trees. From there I began a new series of paintings that is a combination of everything I have learned: paintings informed by natural colors gained from studying the figure; strange forms I learned from studying the rhythm of life; and a deeper conceptualism I learned from practice, devotion, and meditation.

Before I came to Paris I was beginning to believe that my viewpoint on painting was too strange and different from my contemporaries to be understood. I now see that what I wanted to communicate has been passed down to me through the history of art. Without this trip I might have never known why time is so important to me in my work, or how to use a French earth tone palette, and why the color blue is so moving. My month in Paris was life-changing, I felt I learned so much and was very inspired to enhance my work.

So I wake up early every day to do my favorite thing, excited to spend my time painting because how you spend your time, you spend your life.  

www.katesharkey.com
As a child, I made things: toys emerged from moss and bits of wood, evening gowns from cloth remnants. But it took many years for me to use the word “artist” to describe how I interacted with the world. My unorthodox professional trajectory began with my becoming a rabbi, followed immediately by an MFA in sculpture. The next stage precariously balanced many worlds: teaching, making art, raising children, running a community Jewish group, gallery representation, solo and group shows. As the demands of daily life took over, the wherewithal to produce art slowed to an intermittent activity. Then, six years ago, my mother died, and I resumed making art full-time.

Addressing the common complaint that being an artist is a lonely activity, I decided to shake up my routine and join the Art Students League. Flipping through the catalogue, Charles Hinman’s work jumped out: a painter who interacted with space through form and color. Signing up for his class brought needed change. Conversations with classmates and pointed talk with Charles resulted in color becoming prominent in my work.

As I underwent a metamorphosis, so did my work. Sculpting progressed into painting, white plaster into vivid paint. I approach painting as a sculptor, cutting out elements and moving them into place. Returning to sculpture with an arsenal of color, the sculptures are painted planes interspersed with wood. I am building a visual language; fierce, playful, rooted and curious. I use recognized symbols of daily life to bridge private interiors and external realities: biological illustrations, EKG lines, architectural grids, geometric forms, biomorphic shapes. Having formerly focused on the home and gallery, I now also create models with an eye toward public art.

My works are “landscapes” in the way Brice Marden or Willem de Kooning’s paintings are landscapes. I look to the playful forms of Calder and the boldness of Stella; the exaggeration of Martin Puryear, the subtlety of Richard Tuttle, the colors of David Hockney.

The Fantasy Fountain Foundation Scholarship to study at the Paris American Academy this summer introduced me to classical painting through still life and plein air exercises and visits to the Louvre and the Musée d’Orsay. Weekly “safaris” to historical markers and daily walks through Paris infused me with the interplay of architecture and landscape.

A breakthrough for my work came during an outing to the Seine. We sat along the bank and painted a scene. The right bank, the water, the southern curve of the Île Saint-Louis, trees and buildings along the boulevard—all sat patiently as I painted them in four colors. The time allowed my mind to wander through possible interactions of form in that environment.

Back in the studio, I explored my onsite musings and made models that I then photoshopped onto the landscape. My current inclination toward large-scale outdoor painted pieces is a result of this summer. Now as an artist I experience faith every day: my art-making is the vital engagement of the private and the shared.

www.miriamancis.com
In partnership with EMOA Space Chelsea, a fine arts gallery on 25th Street in Manhattan, the Art Students League of New York curated an exhibition of works by twenty-two Seeds of the League scholarship recipients. Also on display were works by four League teaching artists and two teachers from the High School of Art and Design. Most participants are currently in their senior year of high school. Included among them are recent graduates currently pursuing undergraduate studies in fine art. All the students had the opportunity for summer study at the League through scholarships supported by the Chervenak-Nunnallé Foundation, the Jack Kamen Fund, Exploring the Arts Foundation and a gift from the Leon Lowenstein Foundation.

HIGH SCHOOL OF ART & DESIGN
James Harrington, Teacher, AP Illustration
Maria Jimenez, Teacher, Illustration
Paulina Beron
Victor Bustamante
Richard Cabral ('11)
Maria Caceres
Maya Carino
Ana Cobar
Kenneth Fitzpatrick ('11)
Edwin Flores
Kreg Franco
Amanda Jones
Kezla Lappya
Lisa Li
Rosa Loveszy ('12)
Kalisha Montoya
Anna Niklova
Delilah Ramos
Devon Rodriguez
Mikolaj Wiecek
D’Andra Wright

NEWCOMERS HIGH SCHOOL
Xuan Zhang

MANHATTAN COMPREHENSIVE NIGHT & DAY SCHOOL
Saud Al Iraqi
Guillermo Espino
Piero Santacruz

SEEDS OF THE LEAGUE TEACHING ARTISTS
Amy Digi
Kevin Galeazzi
Sonomi Kobayashi
Roberto Reynoso

This page and next: Photos from a Seeds of the League exhibition opening
Kentaro connected with many people through his work, his vision, and his friendship. His vibrant personality was expressed in his willingness to experiment with art from realism to conceptualism. The people who knew him describe him as modest for his accomplishments. He won grants and had many one-person exhibitions, yet he didn’t shy away from doing what was required of him in the maintenance department. He was and continues to be an inspiration to those looking to explore. His work was displayed at SPC Gallery in Tokyo this past autumn 2013.

Clockwise from top left: Kentaro (left) with friends in front of a Colors in Destruction painting; Kentaro setting up Reflections: Water Sculpture Project, 2008, water and rubber, 57th Street; Water Sculpture Project, Columbus Circle; Water Sculpture Project, DUMBO, Brooklyn; Locus of Momentum: Bicycle Drawings (in progress), 2008, graphite on paper, 24 x 3 feet; Untitled (work in progress), part of Colors in Destruction series, 2008, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 48 inches
Magical Butterfly

Yuko Ueno

Born in 1976 in Tochigi, Japan, Yuko Ueno moved to New York in 1997. She studied figuative sculpture with Barney Hodes at the Art Students League and the National Academy of Design, and received awards from the National Sculpture Society and Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Art Club, among others. Yuko is currently a technical instructor of sculpture casting at the League, and has taught children’s art workshops in the United States and Japan. She has been involved in theater since she was a toddler, and had a career as a dancer before turning to visual art. Her work has been featured in numerous group and solo exhibitions.

I was inspired to create Magical Butterfly while visiting my hometown in Japan in 2007. Influenced by the vitality of nature, and attracted to the beauty of butterfly wings, I began creating 3D mixed media butterfly installations through my own original process. Each butterfly piece has unique designs, colors, and patterns inspired by my dance background and passion for music. I have tried to infuse the work with the flavors of different musical styles, including Jazz, Blues, Afro-Cuban, Latin, Dixieland, and Big Band, and with an ambience of carnival and circus. For every unique musical sound, rhythm, and style, there are as many varieties of butterfly, all uniquely beautiful and equally fragile. Just as instruments of varying timbre, pitch, and tone are combined to make music, butterflies of varying pattern, shape, and color were combined to create a story in my artwork. I would be happy if viewers could feel the beauty of strength and fragility and the spirit of excitement through the rhythm and beat of the work. Butterflies have a very short life, but they live it fully and beautifully, in harmony with the earth, the way nature intended.

Celebration of Nero

The black tent represents the limits that society imposes on us, which manifest in our fear, but at the same time it’s the entrance to the magical world. The design comes from my imagination, inspired by dark, old castles in Europe, the atmosphere of a quiet Japan ceremony, and my black cat, Nero. I also dedicate it to my friend Kentaro’s life, with elegance and silence.

About Kentaro

The moment when dazzling brightness that I cannot contain overflows from a pitch-black hole—I love that moment unbearably, and that is why I have been creating butterfly installations continuously. Kentaro also loved the sparkle of a diamond, and that enthusiasm inspired him in his work. We used to talk passionately about how much we loved the beautiful, dazzling brightness. I think that pure brightness is visible only in deep darkness. Probably Kentaro went to run after the light, to catch it. Like a butterfly flying freely forever.

www.yukoueno.com
Friendships Endure

Yee Mee Lee

The friends I made in my years of studying at the Art Students League are diverse and truly unique. They have all enhanced, nurtured, supported and inspired every part of my life.

I had never even heard of the school when a colleague mentioned that the League offered a Friday night portrait class (taught by John Howard Sanden) where we could learn to paint a portrait in one sitting. We would admire our fellow student Larry Nanton’s quick portrait studies, and I still cherish a piece he gave me. My friend Nancy Hill and I took the class for about a year, and then she moved away and left me alone at the League.

For many years I would attend an evening or Saturday class, always in portrait. On Saturday mornings I would watch from across the hall as some beautiful flower still life was set up in Lisa Specht’s studio; but I was too intimidated to join her class. By chance I saw a colleague, Shelli Ardizzone, in the League restroom, not realizing that she was an artist too. Shelli said she was Mrs. Specht’s monitor. She invited me to her apartment and I was in awe; flower paintings bloomed everywhere. She has been a great mentor to me as I tried for years to navigate a career and part-time art classes. Since then, every summer, as the hydrangeas grow in my garden, my family and friends are inundated with my flower paintings.

My friend Robert Jones was my co-monitor in Ellen Eagle’s class. Although I had known him for many years, that was the first time we were students together. He taught me to be more patient and tolerant. When a new student would come into class he would help guide them with commendable care and concern, when I would have preferred them to just sit down, start working on their piece, and not make too much noise. I did not last very long as Ellen’s monitor but Robert and Okim Woo were a perfect monitor duo. Both of them taught me to be kind and considerate. I was very happy to see them every Saturday morning.

Yuka Imata, Mia Herbosa, and Peter Accettola were my classmates at the League. We were full-time evening students for many years in Ron Sher’s portrait painting class. As new student would come into class he would introduce me to bus travel. I had told him I like trains better. He said, “Yee Mee, riding the bus is more economical and more practical.” I guess he had prepared me for an artist’s life: practical and economical. When I bought a heavy vase from a flea market, Kentaro helped me carry it back.

We bonded through our tremendous experiences in Studio 7, and became lifelong friends. Whether it was support in a health crisis, help hanging a show or photographing work, starting a jewelry business, going on a vacation, partying for a big birthday celebration, standing in as a witness for a City Hall marriage, or picking me up by car to a flower power workshop—we have been there for each other. Jeannie Lawson bought me warm clothing because I mentioned the weather was cooler than expected in Spain, and poor Yuka has been there for me every time I have to set up a new gadget. She patiently brings me up to speed in each new phase of technology.

In 2005, I received the Ethel and Xavier Accettola award at the League, along with fellow recipient Kentaro Fujioka. I called him my Spain partner. We only met a few times before we both left for Madrid, but we promised to stay in touch. He left a month earlier than I, and as I anticipated leaving my job after 14 years, I would see Kentaro’s e-mails come in and feel secure and excited about embarking on this art journey. Coming from the fashion world, I had traveled for many years but was perhaps a bit spoiled. When I realized that I was not in Europe for work anymore, Kentaro introduced me to bus travel. I had told him I like trains better. He said, “Yee Mee, riding the bus is more economical and more practical.” I guess he had prepared me for an artist’s life: practical and economical. When I bought a heavy vase from a flea market, Kentaro helped me carry it back.

We lost Kentaro earlier this year, but I can still see him just sitting on the beach thinking about his life and his art. I see my beautiful friend Akiko Hoshino bringing us popcorn from the cafeteria knowing that it will give us some energy to keep painting through the night.

My teachers at the League are the best. Joe Peller, for showing me his incredible sketchbook when I told him I will be going to Spain but had no idea how to begin a landscape drawing. Ellen Eagle, for showing us that she is as devoted to her students as we are to her. My Saturday painting friends continue to amaze me with their hard work, dedication, and desire to learn and to do good work beyond what they do during the week. Ron Sherr continues to be our studio 7 mentor and friend. He asked us recently, on a visit back to New York, if any of his former students were still attending classes. Reluctantly I said no, since we all graduated from studio 7.

I miss going to class but my friends are within reach. There are still so many more stories I want to share from my studies at the League and the experience of friendships I made along the way. ©

www.yeemeesgallery.com
John F. Hoffer March 31, 1925 – October 12, 2013

John Hoffer, a genial presence in the League community for over half a century, passed away in Otisville, New York in October 2013. He was 88 years old. John worked in many mediums, including stone carving, oil painting, and printmaking, and also composed music. Before his death, he was working on a book called The Lost Island Series, a hand-bound collection of etchings based on his experiences as a United States Air Force captain in the Pacific during the Second World War.

A League member since 1954, John contributed money to the school’s expansion program in the late 1950s, and worked in the League’s maintenance and security departments between 1963 and 2012. Robert Ward Johnson, John Hovannes, Louis Bouché, and Harry Sternberg were among his early League instructors.

John was born in Frankfurt, Connecticut and lived in Massachusetts before moving to New York. He is survived by his daughter and son-in-law, Heideli and Henry; his granddaughters Samantha Lilly and Emma; and his cats. A steady presence in the League’s lobby in recent years, John always had a smile and a twinkle in his eye. He will be missed by his friends at the League and elsewhere.

Above: John Hoffer at the League
Below: Satoshi Okada, Mocking Bird/Grandpa, oil on three panels, 8 x 6 inches (left), 8 x 9 inches (center), 8 x 6 inches (right)
### 2013–14 Calendar: League Dates to Remember

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 11–December 1, 2013</td>
<td>Grant Winners Exhibition (Reception: November 14, 6-8 PM)</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 28, 2013</td>
<td>League closed for Thanksgiving</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 4, 2013</td>
<td>Members Meeting, 7 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 6–22, 2013</td>
<td>Annual Holiday Show &amp; Sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 25, 2013</td>
<td>League closed for Christmas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1, 2014</td>
<td>League closed for New Year's Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 6, 2014</td>
<td>First Week of Student Concours Begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 20, 2014</td>
<td>League closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 17, 2014</td>
<td>League closed for Presidents Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 20, 2014</td>
<td>League closed for Easter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 25, 2014</td>
<td>Last day of Regular Session Classes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### 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. We’ve added a new Members page with key dates and an *In Memoriam* section.

From the League’s website you can:
- Join our E-mail list
- Become a Facebook fan
- Subscribe to our YouTube channel
- Follow us on Twitter & Pinterest
JOIN THE ARTISTS GUILD

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David A Leffel
Sherrie McGraw
Jacqueline Kamin

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