LINES from the League

SPRING 2013
The idea of travelling to foreign shores and discovering different worlds has been a source of fascination ever since the first boats were built millennia ago. This is especially true for artists. We dream of the great pilgrimage to places like Paris and Rome where the history enriches one's awareness. Step into the Prado museum in Madrid and bask in the glow of Titian, Velazquez and Goya. Be surrounded by the Renaissance in Florence. From the great capitals of Asia, Africa, and Oceania, to the small towns of Europe and the Americas, our art bears the fruit of complex cultural interactions and inspiring new experiences. From the first contact, we are changed; the shell of the familiar is broken and, like sponges eager to absorb the air of a new environment, we learn with senses tuned to their highest gain. This is what it's like to be an artist and to be connected to the world.

The Art Students League has been the foreign shore for students from around the world for decades. Just as Americans seek to connect with cultural history abroad, the League is a repository of American art history welcoming those kindred spirits who wish to enrich their lives through being here. This place has been a source of artistic inspiration and education, encompassing much of the ethos and character of its prominent alumni and faculty since its inception in 1875. The League served as a focal point of New York as the capital of the post-war art world, and continues to be a magnet for those who wish to pursue a career in art.

Our storied past remains alive because our faculty is dedicated to continuing in its tradition by teaching art as visual language expressed through the myriad of dialects they passionately represent. It's interesting to note how the cultures our international students represent are clearly and evidently expressed in the art that they develop here at the League. There is a distinct sensibility that the artistic language they learn allows them to express themselves in a way that defines their individual perception as well as their cultural roots. The greater the means we have at our disposal and the more objectively we can see, the more unique our artistic expression. Those who study at the League come to realize this, and that is why artists from around the world continue to connect to this very special place. Our doors are always open to anyone from anywhere seeking the knowledge and environment we provide.

Ira Goldberg
Executive Director
Florence Workshops
- Reflections on the 2012 Florence Workshop by Thomas Torak
- The Atmospheric Landscape by Naomi Campbell
- Notes from a Student by Kathleen Cornelius

International Artists
- Norway by Anki King
- Haiti by Guetty Lesperance, translated from French by Von F.
- Mexico by Santiago Cohen
- Japan by Kikue Miyatake
- Ireland by Ciara Stack
- Colombia by Diana Carolina Buitrago
- Turkey by Eda Erdik
- The Philippines by Cara Rae Joven
- Romania by Dumitru Molesica
- From Korea to The Netherlands by Laurence Steenbergen
- Brazil by Lucas Melo

Studying Abroad on League Scholarships
- Marchutz School of Art in Aix-en-Provence by Andrea Pascual
- Puerto Rico, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Morocco by Daniel Colón

League Security: Watching the Door
- Maddy Morales
- Richard Atwell
- Mark Kevin Gonzales
- Ed Giordano
- Arthur (Artie) Gorsky

Artist
- Maria Sultan

Art and Science
- Uri Rosenshine

Curatorial Perspectives
- Stuart Davis in Paris, 1928–29 by Jillian Russo

City-as-School Chervenak-Nunnalé Scholars
- Nova Palaquibay
- Nevada Harris

New Scholarships
- Gregory Lysun

Lost and Found
- Did You Know My Uncle Sam Warshaw? by Warren M. and Nikki J. Zapol

Recent Books by the League and its Instructors

League Dates to Remember

Errata: In the Winter Issue of Lines from the League mailed to members and friends in December 2012, the painter of the model Pigeon on the bottom of page 25 was misidentified. The artist is League instructor Ellen Eagle. You can see more of Ms. Eagle’s works on her website: www.elleneagleportraits.com. Information about her new book is available on page 35.
In spring 2012, League students embarked on an artistic adventure to discover and paint the iconic scenes of Florence, Italy. Here, League instructors Thomas Torak and Naomi Campbell reflect on their respective workshops in “Plein Air Oil Painting” and “Atmospheric Landscape Watercolor Painting.” Workshop participant Kathleen Cornelius also shares her experience.

This May, Sharon Sprung continues the League’s annual pilgrimage to Italy with her sold-out workshop, “Painting the Figure—The Florentine Tradition.” Can’t wait until next spring to travel? League students will have an additional travel opportunity this November: “Landscape Painting in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico” with Gregg Kreutz. Check the League website for more details.

Reflections on the 2012 Florence Workshop

Thomas Torak

We were standing in front of Ghiberti’s famous Baptistry doors when I told the class they were probably standing exactly where Michelangelo stood when he called those doors “the gates of paradise.” We walked the same cobblestone streets that Dante and Donatello and Galileo walked. We visited the churches where Massacio created his frescoes. Living and working in Florence was a fabulous experience.

We were a group of a dozen students and we painted plein air landscapes for two weeks. At the League I teach portrait and figure painting but I wanted the students in this workshop to experience and paint the light, space, architecture and energy of this ancient city. We gathered on bridges, and on one rainy day under a bridge, to paint the Arno River. The famous Boboli Gardens were quite formal and crowded so we made our way to the less famous, but no less beautiful Bardini Gardens and painted the gardens and views of Florence. We gathered together at the Piazza Santa Maria Novella and Piazza Santo Spirito to paint city scenes and some went their own way to paint in their free time. We even had a friend who was in Florence on the McDowell Traveling Scholarship paint with us a few times. The Italians love artists and no one, either local or tourist, ever bothered us.

We generally painted half the day and visited museums the other half, with an occasional morning or afternoon off for personal time. The museum visits had mixed results. Many of the paintings at
The Atmospheric Landscape

Reaching for a greater knowledge as a cross-pollination between past and present

Naomi Campbell

Travel is an important facet of knowledge. It puts history in perspective while adding to one’s own personal history, thus informing art practice in the twenty-first century.

The technical aspects of the Florence students’ work enjoyed, of course, a successful learning curve that was independently fulfilling, but it was the ideas brought from this historical bedrock of the Renaissance that augmented a learning of a different kind. The physical connection with the past—and not just the past, but the seat of Western tradition in art history—clearly drew forth a great sense of awe and appreciation for the achievements of art historical figures who remain in the minds of all those who have studied art. To experience this art in the place it was created, with the people for whom it was created, is next to none.

As for Cézanne in France, and for so many other painters the world over, the landscape beckoned. The ideas of form in space, light in the landscape, and the expressive journey combined with the history of art, are all tools brought from the class to this two-week odyssey in outdoor Florence.

Living amongst the Florentines in distinguished settings provided by our gracious host, SACI, was an important part of enhancing our understanding of the culture. Taking advantage of everything from opera to museum interventions, sunset gatherings to meals shared together, and painting side-by-side morning, afternoon, and often evenings for two weeks straight, made everyone’s work develop in ways that would never be possible otherwise. Each person found they grew on so many levels, creating strong bonds and lasting friendships. They continue their journey forward with self-discovery and original vision, much like the friendships and work forged amongst the canonical groups of artists who found each other in the past.
After attending daily classes at the Art Students League for five years, my husband’s job responsibilities shifted, returning us to the Midwest. I now participate in workshops that I can complete in a week or two. I took the 2012 workshop to Florence because I had studied with Naomi Campbell and Thomas Torak.

I painted mainly in watercolor because of the ease of transporting watercolor supplies. I found that I could pack all that I needed for an entire day: paper, pencils, sketchbook, easel, or camera, along with a jacket or quick change of clothes, into a small wheeled suitcase. I did not want to return to my room, comfortable as that was, because I wanted to explore Florence, study, and paint as much as possible. There was no time to waste— the incredibly delicious pasta and refreshing gelato was available throughout the city. As an SACI student, I was given a pass to the major museums, and did not have to wait on the long lines. The trip could be summed up as “Eat, Paint, and Enjoy.”

Naomi Campbell proved to be an informed, enthusiastic and energetic instructor. We gathered early each day at a site where she pointed out important aspects of the place in Florentine art history. Then, I chose an intriguing spot and set up my paints. While working, each artist received individual instruction from Naomi. I took numerous gelato or latte breaks to keep up my strength. The group often met for a relaxing lunch, and then went back to painting late into the afternoon. At day’s end, Naomi gave comments and insights on each of our paintings.

My work in Italy resulted in fresher color, and better compositions. It was necessary to think first, observe, and paint, leaving no time for overworking a painting. I like the spontaneous brushstrokes that captured a more personal point of view, resulting in a painted history of my trip to the city where the Renaissance began.
International Artists

For many of the League’s international students, studying here means even more than making a commitment to an artistic dream—it is also a major life change. For many, it means crossing an ocean, being apart from loved ones and learning a new language. The following articles chronicle these students’ journeys first-hand, from their homes abroad to the streets of Manhattan and the studios of the League.

NORWAY

Anki King

I am not one of those people who knew when I was five that I wanted to be an artist. I simply did not know it was something you could be. Where I grew up in Norway there were no artists around so I assumed they were all dead, and their work was on view in dusty, boring museums visited on occasional school trips. I loved to draw and it seemed people around me liked what I did, but I came to art slowly, beginning with a year of “craft studies” when I was 19. This was after seeing the less than impressive result of three years of economy studies. It was supposed to be just one year, and I was going to get back to “safe job studies,” but I got hooked on art.

I spent three years at a great private art school in Oslo (at that time called Oslo Drawing and Painting School). I learned all the basics there, and at some time during my second year (I was about 22 at the time) I realized I was becoming an artist. Next came love. I met an American musician in Oslo and once I finished school I moved to the States. The relationship with the musician did not work out, but the relationship with New York City became permanent.

It was definitely culture shock for me, the little Norwegian country girl. I was scared when I moved to Oslo. But Oslo had nothing on New York City. People were nice, but I felt they did not really care. It took me about a year to start feeling at home and to make friends. Now I can’t picture living anywhere else; the pace, the art, the food—I love all the food! The most exotic food I had had in Norway was Chinese (stir fry) and Italian (pasta/pizza), so it was wonderful discovering all the food here (especially since I don’t cook).
I found the Art Students League and earned my Certificate of Fine Art Painting in 2000. I studied with Cox and Dickerson until I had the skills I felt I needed for realistic work, and then with Martin, Poons and Scharf. I was developing my own style. William Scharf has been a great teacher and mentor, helping me find my voice. Also it was great to be part of group critiques. This has probably taught me the most after starting to work in my own studio.

I worked in oil for several years. As I felt the need to work faster, I switched to acrylic for about eight years, and then I went back to oil. There is something about the tactile three dimensional sense of oil paint that really speaks to me. I also do some sculpture work, so I like working with a medium I can mold.

Many ask me about the dominant color gray in my painting. Like most of my work, there are few conscious decisions made while I create. I just stay in dialogue with the work until it stops speaking. I think the colors have to do with the Norwegian nature I grew up in—the mountains, the dark forest and the oftentimes gray weather. But if you stop and look, you will find little jewels of precious color all around in the paintings. I usually have figures in my paintings (I have always loved to connect to figures in art myself), while I'm trying to balance the work on the edge between abstract and figurative. I feel it demands a little time from the viewer.

For many years I was inspired by New York and the people here, and I worked from photographs taken around the city. More recently I have been working solely from my imagination. Working without any reference materials was the most difficult thing I could think of, so that is what I do. Artists I admire are Philip Guston, Susan Rothenberg, Edward Munch and Nathan Oliveira, to mention a few. My artbook collection is always expanding and I find a lot of inspiration there as well.

There have been a few turning points in my life. One came after going to India for three weeks by myself in 2004 and realizing that most of my ideas of “this is the way things are: how society is ordered, electrical systems, road building, family life, religion, the number of people you can fit in a bus, what you can carry on a bike etc.” were adopted without question, and that many of them were not correct. In India everything works on a different level, and learning that made my artwork change. I started looking at myself instead of at people around me. The second shift came when I left reference materials behind. I had six months of painter’s block. The fact that I could take any color on any brush and put it anywhere on the canvas completely overwhelmed me! How in the world does one decide what to do when one can do anything? But I slowly found my way and learned to trust my instincts, my feelings and my skills. I am still working this way and I believe I am on the right track.

In 2010 I won the London International Creative Competition (LICC), competing with over a thousand artists in all media from all over the world. My work has also been included in many museum shows and is in the collection of the Appleton Museum of Fine Art in Ocala Florida. Most of my dream projects involve making large public sculptures. While I am waiting, I am making maquettes. The great M2M program at the League feeds my fantasies that this will someday be possible.

I have been an employee at the League for as long as I have been in this country—almost half my life. I think it’s good to have a job on the side so you never have to compromise your artwork to sell it. But then you just might find that it sells anyway. Art is a lifelong relationship—it is great at times and it might be bad at times, but it will never leave. It is the solid in my life. It has also taught me that there are always more exciting things to learn and see. My favorite quote is: Art is not about making a picture of something, it is about making something visible.

believe one is born an artist. One does
not become an artist. It was nature
that made its choice for me. From my
earliest childhood, I’ve always felt
something different inside of me, some-
thing pensive; thoughtful. I was often alone
and troubled. I suffered much from this
attitude because the people around me never
seemed to understand me. The artistic life
is not easy! To this day, I am motivated to
continue simply because I cannot imagine
living a life without art. Art has shown—
has taught me to believe in and see a world
that is more harmonious, more beautiful,
and more hopeful.

My childhood was one full of commo-
ton and turmoil. I started drawing on my
own at about eight years old. I would draw
in class whenever, wherever I could. Draw-
ing was a way for me to escape, to dream
of a different world; a better world. Until
I started art school as an adult I had no
artistic mentors in my life.

In 1993, despite the objections of my
parents, I enrolled in the “L’ecole Nationale
des Arts” (ENARTS) in Port-Au-Prince,
where I studied drawing, ceramics, sculp-
ture, painting, and the art of papier mache.
I studied for four years and I received my
diploma in “l’arts plastiques” (equivalent to
an MFA in the United States). I loved my
classes but I had always wanted to create art
that was interesting and durable; to learn to
work in bronze. When I arrived at EN-
ARTS, I thought that my dream was about
to come true. Unfortunately, while there
was a casting program at ENARTS, I, and
many others were unable to participate in
it. The program itself was suffering from
many difficulties. Financial considerations
as well as conflicts between the instruc-
tor and the school resulted in the casting
program being virtually closed to new
students. Even when I worked at ENARTS
myself, as a professor of ceramics and papier
mache (a position I retained from 2002–
2010), it was not possible to revitalize the
casting program. It seemed as if the art of
bronze casting in Haiti would be lost to
future generations of artists.
I have never had a “chosen medium.” I’ve always worked with and been drawn to all forms of art, all creative ways of working and expressing myself. My source of inspiration has always been my culture, my religion (le vodou), and my country of Haiti. In 1999, in Haiti, I had my first show of ceramics. But the turning point in my artistic career was my opportunity to work with the homeless children of Port-au-Prince (in conjunction with the organization “CEP” (Centre d’Éducation Populaire). I had always felt an interest in social work and in using art to help others. It was wonderful to see the happiness in those children who had no resources of any kind, and who would never have otherwise been exposed to art. In 2003 the Haitian minister of Culture invited me to have a solo exhibition in Taiwan. There, I worked onsite for 15 days to create a series of abstract acrylic paintings in a style not often seen in Taiwan. Also, in 2003-2004 I created several public sculptures: one on the public square at the airport at Port-au-Prince and two in Jeremie, the city where I was born.

A profound event, the earthquake of January 12, 2010 obligated me to leave Haiti. When I realized that I would have to leave my country, I felt almost as if a sledge hammer was coming down upon my back. I felt as if nature herself had betrayed me. Three months later, due in part to family obligations, I found myself in New York City. The differences between Haiti and New York City were shocking to me. I started making art the only way that was possible for me, by creating abstract pencil drawings. These drawings became a form of therapy, a way to comprehend and not lose touch with what was happening in my country. These drawings have become a witness and a relief of the great sufferings in Haiti.

As soon as possible I began searching for a school, or a place where I could continue to create art, to learn new things. In 2011, I started taking drawing classes at the Art Students League with James McElhinney, and sculpture with Barney Hodes (where I was fortunate to be awarded a red dot for my bust of Esteban, the model). Currently, I am studying bronze casting with Oscar Garcia. At the League, I am part of the work-study program, which allows me to continue my studies.

At the League, I feel at home. Everyone has always been very welcoming and kind to me. It is a place that somehow takes me back 20 years, to when I was studying in Haiti, at ENARTS. The League is a place where I am once again able to create and bring some of my artistic ideas into fruition.

Surviving in New York is not easy. I speak a little English, but my mother tongue is French (and Creole). While I do not have my own gallery, I am fortunate to occasionally sell a painting. I am also very grateful for the work-study program at The Art Students League, without which I would be unable to study. But if money was not an issue, my dream project would be to one day return to Haiti where I would open an art school which could provide free or inexpensive classes to all those who might otherwise never have the opportunity. When I return to Haiti, I would like to use my new skills of sculpture, wax modeling, bronze casting, and finishing to help support and enrich the school of ENARTS in Haiti.

Since medieval times my family has spoken Spanish and Ladino (a mixture of ancient Spanish and words from other languages). They moved from Spain to Turkey and Salonika (both part of the Ottoman Empire) around 1500 when Spain expelled the Jews and Moors who refused to convert to Catholicism. Around 1920, when the Greeks took over Salonika, my grandparents moved to Mexico. This was fortunate as the relatives that stayed behind were killed by the Nazis during the Second World War. When my grandfather arrived in Mexico he changed his name from Jacques, which people there couldn’t pronounce. Saint James is the apostle Santiago, a name with the same etymology (the biblical Ya’akov). Thank you Grandpa, I was named after you and I love my name.

When I was growing up, my family was quite isolated from most of Mexican society, and would only socialize with other Jews (Jewish sports center, Jewish school, Jewish friends). Despite this isolation and a few minor racist incidents, Mexico was a fantastic place for Jewish and other immigrant families to flourish in the 20th century. It’s funny, as a kid in Mexico I felt Jewish but as a grown up in New York I feel Mexican. Since my wife, Ethel, and I moved to New York in 1982, the first thing I say when asked is that I am Mexican. I can no longer relate to Judaism as a religion and I am more in love with the Mexico I miss.

When I was a teen I wanted to be a photographer and had a darkroom where I developed my own film. My cousin asked me to photograph her wedding and I forgot to sync the flash properly. As a result I only photographed half of the negative, which meant that I ended up with beauti-
ful pictures of either the bride or groom, but none of them together. When I gently informed my cousin of this mishap she freaked out and cursed me, telling me that I had ruined her wedding. Needless to say I felt horrible. I didn’t want to be a photographer if mistakes could happen that easily, so I did the only logical thing, and started drawing a weekly comic strip for a leftist newspaper. I studied graphic design and taught film animation at my university, then worked as an illustrator in New York. My most influential mentors were R.O. Blechman and Norman McLaren. I worked with Mr. Blechman in an animation studio named The Ink Tank in the 1980s and ’90s; and I met Norman McLaren in Canada in the ’70s. They both helped me to find my true voice as an artist/storyteller.

The transition from illustration to fine art has been very natural and complementary. I earned my BA and MS in Communication Design in Mexico and at the Pratt Institute, respectively. I have been a graphic designer, editorial illustrator, animator for different TV programs and have written and illustrated children’s books. I’ve had periods where I have a lot of work and do okay, but once in a while there are times when it is slow and my wife helps us to get by and that’s okay, too. Everyone contributes in different ways in our family.

In the ’80s I took a few painting and printmaking classes at the Art Students League, but I have been largely self-taught. In the ’90s I met two sister curators who had an influential gallery in Mexico. They asked me to have a solo painting show in their “Galería Pecanins.” It took me a year to have the show ready and this was my first true experience as a fine artist.

I have several mediums. For illustration and animation I use acrylic paint with digital finish. I like acrylics because of the color choices—their intensity and their flexibility. I can fine-tune my work in acrylic and produce graphic effects digitally. I paint in oil on wood or canvas, because the oil paint dries slowly so I can rework it, but has a long-term permanency. I love silkscreen printing, which I learned at the ASL with Michael Pelletieri, because it is very colorful and fast.

My work changed after I saw the work of Charlotte Salomon, who painted her life during the Nazi occupation in France. She did 800 paintings in two years and died in Auschwitz when she was 26. My current project painting my life pays homage to her work. This project, “ExVida,” consists of my life in 1,150 oil paintings in an ex-voto style. The paintings tell the story of my life; from being raised as a Jewish kid in Mexico to becoming an Artist with no religion or country. I have been working on it for six years and I am going to show a lot of the paintings at the Hunterdon Museum in Clinton, NJ this September. This conceptual installation of paintings is the most important work that I’ve ever done. It helped me focus on a theme for a long period of time and I found the process very helpful in creating a good body of work and maintaining cohesive goals during my creative process. My dream project would be to animate all my paintings for a feature film with my life story, or other of my stories. I always like to write stories, even if they are hard to read visually..

There are millions of different ways to tell stories and I have too many stories I want to tell and draw. I love experimenting in color and form. Making art is not something you decide to do one day and stop another. It is an impulse geared by the obsession to create. ☛
Kikue Miyatake

When I was two-and-a-half, my mother looked at my drawing of a person sleeping and thought it was unusual. Most children begin with a standing figure but I started with a reclining one. At four years old she started taking me to exhibitions and paid for private lessons. My teacher started me with crayons but also introduced me to oil painting, which my father thought was too expensive for a child. My mother bought me a set of oil paints; a Holbein set. At 9 years old I saw a Picasso exhibition and at that time, I knew I wanted to be a painter.

I studied to be a lawyer in Japan. I knew it was difficult to make a living as an artist, so I needed an income; Kandinsky and Cézanne both studied law. I continued studying art in the evenings and on the weekends throughout university. Sometime after I graduated, a Japanese gallerist from New York had an exhibition in my area. My mother took me to see him and he said you can go deeper and more spiritual. I loved him as a human being – he had charisma, and I loved his attitude towards painting. So I changed to abstract painting because of him. He changed my life. Pousette-Dart recommended me to exhibit at the National Arts Club and I won an honorable mention. At the award ceremony, one of the judges told me she loved my painting and worked hard to get it the first prize. I had the feeling that if I worked hard, abstraction would be good for me. To learn that the judge loved my painting, made me want to continue at the League with Pousette-Dart. My parents had said I could come for two or three years and then they wanted me to get married, but after that competition they said it was okay for me to continue.

My first red dot painting was bought by a New York lawyer's Swiss wife for her East Hampton home. A German friend of the couple saw the painting and became interested in my work. She took slides to Frankfurt and then I had an exhibition in Frankfurt. The Frankfurt director, Mr. Gunther Steinman, loved my work and the following year, when the Berlin wall fell down, he reserved a space for me to paint a mural on the wall. I was the only Japanese artist invited to participate. So one painting done at the Art Students League connected me to East Hampton, New York, Frankfurt, and finally Berlin.

I recalled an experience I’d had as a child in the northern part of Japan: The black forest was scary and I stepped into it one day with my mom and I saw thousands of flowers. I connected that image with my first impression of New York and this became the painting, _Luce di sotto (Light coming from underneath)_. Many people connected with this painting. It was my second red dot winner and was purchased by the League for the permanent collection.

Seiji Saito was my good friend in New York when I was a student. We met when I had an exhibition, and he encouraged me and gave me good advice. When I got married, at age 39, he said, “keep working,” and we stayed in touch with each other. I stayed in New York for 14 years, exhibiting there and in Germany. I sold my work, and my parents were happy for me because they understood that I had found what I wanted to do.

I contributed to the 2002 _Unity Canvas_ and attended the accompanying exhibition at the Williamsburg Art & Historical Center. The Unity Canvas was an artist-to-artist, New York-based, collective response to the tragedy of 9/11 and the times we live in. Artists submitted 12-inch squares of unstretched canvas, in any medium they chose (e.g., paint, digital, embroidery). The
pieces reflected the artists’ responses to 9/11 and all its horror, sadness, anger and grief, as well as the times since. Pieces were sent from every region of the United States, as well as all over the world. In 2009, The Mie Prefectural Museum held a 50 year retrospective of my work. The show consisted of more than 80 paintings spanning from age 4 to 54 because my father saved my oil paintings.

After a 22 year gap, I had my second solo exhibition in New York. That January 2012 there was an alumni reunion of Chuo University in New York and I came for the ceremony. I hadn’t been here for ten years at that point, but I saw the Nippon Gallery, which is on the same street as the League and it felt like a lot of things were connecting, so I approached the gallery. The exhibition was supported by the Consulate General of Japan in New York.

Art enriches society and each artist’s feelings and talent are important in making this world beautiful. In my case, there is so much fighting in the world but I think the 2011 tsunami in Japan made me realize that life is not forever—it’s finite, so it’s not necessary to fight each other. Time is limited so I want to create unity so that people can get to know each other. Life is difficult, but through my art I want to express more beauty, mercy, and hope. I want to bring these qualities to people. I had an exhibition in Tokyo encouraging the revitalization of Japan. I visited the area of the earthquakes because my friends were there, and I felt an overwhelming fear. I talked to so many people and found out that we are on the edge of a difficult time, but we must live no matter what. Since then, I think, as an artist I speak up more. I used to spend more time in the studio but I feel that I must speak up more strongly and help people because they need hope and encouragement to live.
Ireland

Ciara Stack

I arrived at the League hoping to improve my representational drawing skills while on summer holiday. Almost four years later, I am nearing completion of the International Certificate program, majoring in painting—'Abstract' painting. Two years of lithography and a smattering of sculpture classes with a more extended stay in mixed media has found me knee deep and paddling in paint. Not what I expected on first arrival. But then again...

The League has truly been a turning point for me. Along with many others I have found a place where I can pursue my artistic dreams and nightmares. A career in painting is not exactly 'dreamy' but rather quite questionable on various levels. Striving to accept this is a constant for any artist. Curiosity is my constant motivation; the will to see something/create something you have a vision for and need to see happen; to get to know my medium more.

Paint is expensive. I wonder why I use it. I wish I had more all the time. For me, however, it’s the best medium. It is one of the most engaging substances on the planet, like the sky is engaging for the bird. I hope to draw the eye into and all over my painting, and beyond my painting too. Paint is surprising. I don’t expect to have a handle on it, as such. It’s a regenerative pursuit and one series begets another. It’s powerful, suggestive, sensual. It is the material with which I feel most attuned.

My studio-mates are wonderful and I have been lucky enough to meet the most insane and generous people under the roof of the League! I have discovered artists whom I can admire and respect; a source of vital inspiration to an aspiring artist in New York.

A professional career in fine art may well mean certain death, financially at least. I have learned this much. A studio is what I want next.

Colombia

Diana Carolina Buitrago

In 2009 I was a recent graduate of diplomatic studies, living with my parents in Bogotá, Colombia. After having commenced a career in International Relations, I soon decided to resign my job to pursue my interest in the study of Drawing and Painting. People ask me whether I came to the League because there are no art institutes in Colombia. My answer is that there are too many! Art is everywhere. Bogotá is one of the largest capitals in Latin America and Colombia is well known for its art, music, museums, galleries, and so much more. However, in the field of Painting, only now is Figurative Art being rescued from a rejected corner that has kept it hidden from prominence in many galleries and competitions. For that reason, I came to the League as an International Student to learn from the finest figurative artists that New York City has to offer.

I am truly grateful that the League has become a place where foreign students are given so many opportunities and sponsorships to study. I have been learning not only from the technical training that I had expected to find from the instructors, but also from the dedication and talent that I see in a lot of the student body. This is what keeps me motivated to make art and causes me to remember that there is so much to learn before you can call yourself an artist.

I still enjoy International Relations; it is impossible for me to turn my back on what is happening around the world while I am studying art. What I learned before is a large part of what defines me as a person, and it will continue to influence my work as an artist into the future.
really don’t aim to be understood when I make my pieces, because my pieces are from my dreams. I mean, I really see my work being produced in my dreams. Those dreams are my artistic presence and to protect and sustain them I must keep producing the work. It feels like a vicious cycle, but it is a gracious one.

I have always had an interest in art; how it is produced and exhibited, and the various ways it affects people. There is not just one way of describing art which is what makes me so passionate about it, the freedom of expression linked with the freedom of perception.

I already had this irresistible attraction to the variants of creativity when I moved to Vienna for a year to study German. It was there that I had the chance to visit museums to see the work of the masters. That is when I decided to study art and obtain a bachelor’s degree in Graphic Design from Yeditepe University in Istanbul. My favorite class was printmaking. Though I admire monotypes and etchings, I enjoy working on reduction prints and the elation of carving a woodcut and linocut. I have been inspired by many artists including Gustav Klimt, Antoni Gaudi, Egon Schiele, and Friedensreich Hundertwasser, but I would say that life itself is my biggest inspiration.

My radical decision to move to New York to pursue my artistic career was a turning point in my work. I profit from this city the best I can. It has so much to offer. So much that it stuns you at times. At the League I have taken courses with Michael Pellettieri, Rick Pantell and Bruce Dorfman. They have taught me about planning my work, considering the stages of preparation more carefully. The print I am making becomes like a puzzle for me to solve. The puzzle is composed of differently shaped pieces and colors that fit together to form a complete design, planned to bring the dream to fruition.

My prints have come to evoke both my Turkish roots and my urban sensibilities. They are a means of including my memories in my art. One never relinquishes the impressions of their past, even though they are integrated with the impressions of the present. Being away from your hometown for such a long time stimulates your nostalgia for your roots. All of a sudden you find your art surrounded by what you’ve seen rather than what you see right now. You can never give up on your past and it will never stop following and hunting you. After I moved to New York my past became even stronger and overcame my present. Back in my hometown, I tended to only use wood block, but moving to New York inspired me to mix different components—or I would rather say different “fragments”—of my journey. Every single detail in my work represents the volume occupied by these precious fragments.

And I am most fortunate to have my role model and mentor, Aysegul Ucan, in my life. If life consists of many crossroads,
I moved around a lot as I was growing up. I was born in the Philippines, moved to Singapore and California, back to the Philippines, and back to California for college.

When I started college, I was premed and studying Psychology at UCLA. I was stressed out a lot so I painted to relieve my stress. One day I took a bottle of ink and a pen nib and just started scratching away at some canvas paper. I was doing these automatic drawings and I liked any medium that gave me some kind of texture and the feeling of scratching a surface. My dorm room started filling with drawings and paintings and there was one drawing I was going to scrap and a friend asked if he could have it. He told me all the things he saw in the drawing and I think that was the first time I realized that making art wasn’t just about me. I didn’t want to have to drop out of UCLA and reapply for an art program, so I just took art history and got involved with museums for a while. I loved museum education and will probably get involved with some form of art education in the future.

Once I graduated, I did art whenever I wasn’t working. I was able to be more thoughtful when I approached my work. I did a lot of little illustrations with different types of ink and I started keeping a sketchbook pretty consistently too. Before that I always went straight to the canvas and spilled my guts, so I started doing more studies before starting a piece. I did a lot of textural studies with different types of pens, pen nibs, brushes, and inks on different types of textured paper. Different combinations of mediums and

---

**THE PHILIPPINES**

Cara Rae Joven

I moved around a lot as I was growing up. I was born in the Philippines, moved to Singapore and California, back to the Philippines, and back to California for college.

When I started college, I was premed and studying Psychology at UCLA. I was stressed out a lot so I painted to relieve my stress. One day I took a bottle of ink and a pen nib and just started scratching away at some canvas paper. I was doing these automatic drawings and I liked any medium that gave me some kind of texture and the feeling of scratching a surface. My dorm room started filling with drawings and paintings and there was one drawing I was going to scrap and a friend asked if he could have it. He told me all the things he saw in the drawing and I think that was the first time I realized that making art wasn’t just about me. I didn’t want to have to drop out of UCLA and reapply for an art program, so I just took art history and got involved with museums for a while. I loved museum education and will probably get involved with some form of art education in the future.

Once I graduated, I did art whenever I wasn’t working. I was able to be more thoughtful when I approached my work. I did a lot of little illustrations with different types of ink and I started keeping a sketchbook pretty consistently too. Before that I always went straight to the canvas and spilled my guts, so I started doing more studies before starting a piece. I did a lot of textural studies with different types of pens, pen nibs, brushes, and inks on different types of textured paper. Different combinations of mediums and

---
surfaces created a different reaction. Sumi ink on watercolor paper is my favorite, so far. When I learned how to oil paint and how to better control graphite and charcoal, I fell in love with them too. I’ve also been trying to build textures with different mediums. Not simultaneously, but through different combinations and through varied textures composed on a surface to evoke certain emotions in the viewer.

I arrived in New York in August 2012 specifically to study at the Art Students League with a return ticket to California booked in October. While I was still at UCLA, a friend told me there was no place like the League. Once I had heard about it, I kept seeing the League’s name everywhere, in artist biographies or mentioned in museum exhibitions. I had studied art history as an undergraduate at UCLA and never got a chance to take any studio classes. It wasn’t until last summer that I was able to take a weekly oil painting class while working in San Francisco. But I wanted to try spending an entire month devoted solely to doing art. I think I wanted to see what I could do and then decide if I wanted to continue working or go back to school for graduate studies. I started at the League last September and took classes with Mary Beth McKenzie, Costa Vavagiakis and Frank Porcu. That was an intense month. By the time October rolled around, I started monitoring for Wendy Shalen’s Portfolio Development class and continued to take other classes at the League. I couldn’t get enough of it.

Because I had never been to art school, I was very apprehensive about people watching me work and I didn’t know how I would take critiques. I love the feedback and the discussions I have with my instructors and peers. Of course some of it is difficult to swallow or it may take a while to problem solve, but the struggle is all part of the process. Everything’s a process. I thrive on that.

When I first started at the League my goal was to get the figure down. I got satisfaction from just learning and improving. Then I started with Wendy Shalen, whom I view as a mentor. She helps keep my work technically and conceptually balanced. She pushed me to be conscious of how the model felt and how I was reacting to the model. Previously, I avoided dealing with that because it was really difficult for me to do. I have always kept my abstract work, which is more emotional, compartmentalized from the figurative work I do at the League, which is more technical. I’m trying to bring the figure into my textural compositions. I want to integrate my connection with the model to whatever concept I’m trying to achieve with my work. It’s hard for me to find that connection; do you just make it up? Wrestling with these questions serves as inspiration for me.

A lot of people ask me why I want to stay in New York. I think what I love about New York is the same thing I complain about too: the people. I love how New York is dense with so much diversity. The presence of different social classes and ethnic groups is everywhere. As I was thinking about how my Filipino culture has influenced my art, I realized that one of the ways that my time living in the Philippines has impacted me is that you encounter the poorest of the poor and richest of the rich, one way or another, on a daily basis. One moment you are in some high-end mall, the next you are in the car and a child is begging at your window. Every encounter was a sobering one and I think that’s what happens when I’m in New York. It’s not like Los Angeles where you can avoid everyone by being in your car, or San Francisco where the landscape manages to always stay pretty. New York is alive with people and there is no avoiding it. Everything and everyone is so visually present and being in it keeps me awake to the life I am living and how it is connected to everyone, and how my artwork is inspired by my connection to everything.
I grew up in Bucharest. When I was twelve years old, I was listening on the radio to a play about the life of a famous Romanian painter, Stefan Luchian. I realized nothing could be more exciting and fulfilling than being an artist. Not too long after, I convinced my grandmother to give me money to buy my first set of oil paints. I'll never forget the smell of opening a new tube of paint. It was like magic. I always loved oil paint. I have a special affinity with the medium; the reaction between the layers of paint and the texture of it. When I think of oil paint, I have the same sensation as when you spread butter on a warm piece of bread. I was most excited and full of joy whenever I had the chance to paint in my art classes, and nothing was more fascinating than the visits to the National Museum of Art in Bucharest.

At this time, in addition to my regular schooling, I also went to a school for artistically gifted children. It was there that I really began to understand the love of art. During my high school years I hoped to go to art school, but my father didn’t agree and I ended up in technical school. I never lost hope and found a night school for artists, Scoala Populara de Arte in Bucharest. I studied there for three years. Time passed and my life took a different direction—

Artwork by Dumitru Molesica, this page, from top: The Storm, 2005, oil on board, 23 x 24 inches; Sant’Agelo, 2011, oil on board, 15 x 25 inches; Opposite page: Debris 2, oil on board, 40 x 40 inches
far away from my artistic expectations. Still, I always had, in my mind, the idea of a new beginning.

After the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, I had the chance to visit the United States. That’s when I found the Art Students League. The rest, as they say, is history. I think, in fact, the biggest turning point in my life was the day I first set foot in the League. I had no idea how much my life would change. Since childhood I was fascinated with American culture: film, literature, music. I dreamed that one day I would be able to come to America; dreamed of coming to New York, where the action was, as well as great art museums.

I studied with David Leffel during my first year at the League. Everything was as I had imagined: a new life, a new country, another chance to do what I most wanted—to paint. David showed me the joy of paint and gave me trust in my own possibilities as an artist. The next year he left for New Mexico and I felt I wanted a different approach to my painting. So I enrolled in Bill Scharf’s class. I chose him as an instructor because I was very attracted by his work; it gave me a sense of serenity and warmth.

Going from classic chiaroscuro to abstract painting was like entering another world, one full of excitement and possibilities. Bill helped me to understand how to express myself without fear and showed me the possibilities of abstract painting. He is a very kind and gentle person, and he gave me a new sense of my art and showed me the beauty of color and composition on a big scale. After a few years, I had my first show in an art gallery in SoHo. That was another big turning point.

From all my years as an artist, I realize that the most important thing is to be honest with yourself, let yourself be open to new things, and be consistent. I can’t imagine my life without painting. It’s not the end product so much as the process of painting which is most exciting. You can call it passion, or necessity, or just being alive.

Sylia Kiese really inspired me. I never met a person so fascinating. She gave me a clear view of how things correlate to each other. I am beginning to understand that art is not a goal. It is part of expressing one’s self, channeling energy, creating a beautiful environment, giving depth to life. I wish I lived closer-by so I could talk to her more about art and what it’s all about.

About myself and my name: I was born in South Korea and adopted as a baby. I grew up in the Netherlands. I am named after my grandfather on my mother’s side. The name of my grandfather in the Netherlands is Laurens. However in France the name Laurence is a female name, so my parents chose the French name. In the Netherlands everybody is confused when they see my name Laurence Steenbergen, because it’s a very common male name! And then I turn out to be an Asian woman. My official name is Laurence Steenbergen-van Noort (this is my Korean name) Steenbergen-van Noort (this is my husband’s name). So: Laurence Jung-Hee Steenbergen-van Noort.

I am an alien. I am weird. People would call me a freak if they knew. But they don’t, because I am disguised as a friendly Asian woman living in the Netherlands. If you would look more closely, if you would take the effort to get to know me better, you would

FROM KOREA TO THE NETHERLANDS
Laurence Steenbergen

Sunflower Rhythm
by Laurence Steenbergen

It’s yellow
It’s blue
It’s pink
It’s true happiness
It’s all the colors together
Is it before or is it behind?
In time, I can’t see it
It appears, it disappears
I’ll grab it, it’s everywhere
If I look for, I can’t find
If I close my eyes, I’ll see
The colors, they’re out there
These colors, are in me
It’s me the colors
It’s you
It’s all we are
It’s energy

Written in Silya Kiese’s Experimental Writing Workshop

S


FRoM koReA to
the NetheRLANDs
Laurence Steenbergen

It’s yellow
It’s blue
It’s pink
It’s true happiness
It’s all the colors together
Is it before or is it behind?
In time, I can’t see it
It appears, it disappears
I’ll grab it, it’s everywhere
If I look for, I can’t find
If I close my eyes, I’ll see
The colors, they’re out there
These colors, are in me
It’s me the colors
It’s you
It’s all we are
It’s energy

Written in Silya Kiese’s Experimental Writing Workshop
I had no expectations, because I had never had an exhibition before. Just out of curiosity I Googled “galleries New York” and I found Agora Gallery. I took the chance to upload my portfolio and it took me half the night to get it done. I didn’t tell anybody. It was my secret. I was full of doubts, because I didn’t really believe that my art was good enough. I would have been quite happy if the gallery could have told me how to improve my art. You can understand how astonished I was when Agora gave me a Yes. Since then, I have been invited to exhibitions all over the world and to have my work illustrated in art books as well. Of course, I came to New York for my first exhibition. The city was overwhelming to me and my feelings about it were ambivalent. I did not naturally take to the hustle and bustle of the city. I, who am always in need of quietness and being a part of nature, found never-ending traffic, way too many people, and very noisy air conditioning. However, by the fourth time I visited the Big Apple, I began to find my way around. I drank lots of tea at Barnes and Noble, among all those interesting books. I picked museums and enjoyed the magnificent art of this city. And I found friends and relatives to meet up with and enjoy the great variety of local delicacies. And, finally, I combined my visit to New York with the workshop Experimental Writing in Art by Sylia Kiese at the League.

Below: Laurence Steenbergen with her artwork
Art has always been a professional dream and a personal challenge. I have never thought about any other life than that of becoming an artist. This path has not always been the easiest, but then, has passion ever been the easiest path?

I come from a small town in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. Even though I have always been surrounded by inspiring history and culture, my city does not always support art as a way of life. I have dealt with the isolation of discrimination from people who have never understood the power of art or my place within it. At the age of seventeen I left the town of my birth to live in Curitiba, an affluent city in the south of Brazil. I completed my Bachelor’s degree in Fine Arts there in 2008. Surprisingly, I realized that the prejudice about art and artists wasn’t exclusive to the countryside, but it is a reality that many artists have had to deal with for hundreds of years.

Sentiments such as “you’ll starve being an artist,” “you’ll die poor,” “who cares about art?” and “give up, everything in art has been done;” or even people actually assuming that I do my art for free, donating painting, sculptures, and drawings just because the pleasure of making art pays itself—these ideas have always been a very sad part of my reality as an artist. I have used these obstacles as valuable learning tools to further my view of my art. I perceive that artists are a one-man orchestra; we are the conductor and all the instruments, the ones playing the violin, the guitar, the piano, everything. This is a lonely path; a challenging path. It makes me want to create not only for the senses but for the spirit, for my spirit. This, to me, is the artist’s way of life.

In August 2009 I arrived in New York, this great metropolis where many of the greatest modern artists have lived and worked; where many of the most influential museums in the entire world exhibit great works of art. I had always wanted the opportunity to expose myself to an authentic art environment and so I chose New York City as my home. In 2011, I was accepted as an International Student at the Art Students League. I spent most of this past school year as a monitor and student in Joseph Peller’s class, an experience which contributed significantly to the development of my drawing and painting from life. The works I have painted in that class won me a Merit Scholarship at the League.

I’m currently studying with Grace Knowlton and Knox Martin. I’ve been dedicating myself to the exploration of different media and materials to express my path and my need to use art as my voice. These works are part of a series I call For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge of Art. Each piece denounces, in visual messages, some of the prejudicial concepts that stem not only from the public, but from the art market, dealers, and artists themselves. These negative concepts are conveyed through text, however these messages are not illustrated; the visual aspect of these paintings works independently of what is written. These paintings have a strong appeal for their organic quality. Conventional mediums like oil, acrylic, tempera, gouache, ink, and watercolor are combined with unexpected materials like nails, sawdust, marble powder, iron powder, earth, human hair, enamel, tobacco, and many others. The richness of these works comes from the combination of a limited range of color (mostly black, gray, white and earth tones) in contrast with heavy texture and aggressive gesture.

I would like to end with a quote from Pablo Picasso: “When I was a child, my mother said to me, ’If you become a soldier, you’ll be a general. If you become a monk you’ll end up as the Pope.’ Instead, I became a painter and wound up as Picasso.” In the name of this personal/professional path, I dedicate my life to Art.

Artwork by Lucas Melo, clockwise from top left: Art is an eye fucker; Our geniuses are all dead; What does it mean?
The year 2012 was magical for me as an artist. I was honored to receive the Fantasy Fountain Fund Scholarship and travel to the Marchutz School of Art in Aix-en-Provence. For the next two months I experienced the many treasures of France and immersed myself in what is one of nature’s masterpieces. Colors appeared that I never knew existed and combined in ways I never believed possible.

With its luminous light and gardens of lavender, I understand why Provence captivated so many painters and writers. This area in the south of France was the source of inspiration for some of Paul Cézanne’s and Vincent Van Gogh’s timeless works of art. The ochers, azures, and siennas that swirl through the countryside are abundant in Van Gogh’s palette. It was a thrill to walk through the same landscape. As a brilliant spectrum of lights and darks spun around me I felt transported into their paintings.

I have been drawing and painting for quite some time. The Marchutz program and its holistic approach to the study of painting expanded my adventure and opened up new areas of interest. The Marchutz School is outside the town center, and the lovely, white-washed studio is settled into a grove of trees and surrounded by ancient stone walls. Its mission is to help students “sharpen their visual perceptions of the world around them and decipher their emotional responses to these perceptions.”

The liberal arts discourse, museum study and critical analysis combine into a daily discipline of drawing and painting that formulates what Flannery O’Conner calls “the habit of art” or to quote Yogi Berra, “You can see a lot by looking.”

Discussions of art theory, literature and philosophy compelled me to look at art with a more reflective and perceptive eye. We read excerpts from Venturi (Painting and Painters), Flannery O’Connor (The Nature and Aim of Fiction), Christopher Alexander (The Timeless Way of Building) and others. Visits to artists’ studios and museums enriched this experience. We spent time at the actual sites where Cézanne and Van Gogh painted, taking along reproductions of their paintings for comparison and study. We were able to see what the artists were trying to represent and to analyze their creative processes. Van Gogh’s Old Windmill, Hospital Garden and Tombs of Les Allyscamps came alive. I had a new appreciation of Cézanne’s Mont Sainte-Victoire from different perspectives and at varying times of the day, under the bright noonday sun and in dusk’s dramatic shadows. A visit to Cézanne’s studio was like walking into a time capsule. On display were his easel and the props and fabrics he used in his still lifes.

I had a small apartment in the charming town of Aix, with its winding streets and café-filled plazas. Weekly farmers’ markets overflow with local cheeses, olives, sausages and crispy baked breads. I consumed more espresso and macaroons than is humanly possible. Intense flavors and fragrances overwhelm the senses and bottles of...
Puerto Rico, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Morocco

Daniel Colón

In 2005 I won the Xavier Gonzalez/Ethel Edwards Travel Grant for study in Spain. My heritage is Puerto Rican, which is a mixture of Spanish and North African ethnicities. I also spent some of my formative years living with my family in Saudi Arabia and so developed a deep connection to Arab culture. Artistically, this interest translated to an appreciation for 19th century artists, particularly those that had been influenced by Spanish and Moorish culture. Throughout the 19th century, travel between Europe and North Africa became more common and many artists began adding voyages across Spain and into North Africa as part of their artistic education. When I found out that I would be spending six months in Spain, I decided to structure the trip to emulate these “Orientalist” tours from Spain to North Africa. I traveled south from Pamplona into Madrid, Andalucía, and finally into Morocco.

Marchutz philosophy inspired me to take in my environment as well as to look within myself until “artistic expression springs from a union of sight and insight.”

An imaginative visual and personal expression of the model (or nature) is my ultimate goal. I combine acrylics, inks, pastels, and charcoal and have recently been experimenting with collage. In Provence I enjoyed working exclusively with oils for the first time—the range of colors before me requiring this diverse and pliable medium.

The influence of this trip on my artwork is ever present. I continue to experiment with my palette and try to translate vibrancy into my work. The number of color permutations I now use has expanded exponentially. I still experiment with oils and a range of new media including print work, photography and sculpture. My motivation to write poetry about my art has returned. I am intrigued to learn more about the concepts of both past and contemporary artists. I attended Frank O’Cain’s seminars at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and uncovered a wealth of information about Egyptian, Greek, Middle Eastern, African, South American and Asian art forms. I have a more disciplined approach to my art and try to incorporate drawing and painting into my daily routine.

Following the footsteps of the artists who were so moved by this bewitching part of France made me feel more complete as an artist and also showed me that the journey can never end. I thank Greg Wyatt and the Fantasy Fountain Fund and the Art Students League for this extraordinary opportunity. My spirit is overflowing with ideas. I am also indebted to my instructor Frank O’Cain for nominating me for this scholarship and for all of his creative support and confidence in my art work.

This proved to be an incredibly fascinating and enlightening experience. The further south I traveled in Spain, the more apparent the influence of Moorish aesthetics became. Architecture became more intricate, colors deepened, music became more passionate, and food more pungent. Overall, an intensification of sensory experience asserted itself, and when I finally crossed into Morocco it was as if a veil of Eurocentric history was lifted and I was able to see another side of Spain’s and, consequently, my own identity.

Since I was backpacking and staying in hostels and campsites for a lengthy amount of time, I really had to eliminate unnecessary supplies. I eventually sent much of my painting equipment home, including my travel easel, and kept only essentials: limited oil colors, a few brushes, a watercolor set, my sketchbook, and a cigar box. I think the limitations really helped me focus on exploring the full range of my medium and format.

I traveled with another painter, Amaya Gurpide, and having an open dialogue

LEAGUE SCHOLARSHIPS

artist’s work, the League administers and awards several merit-based grant opportunities specifically grants, Daniel Colón (Xavier Gonzalez/Ethel Edwards Travel Grant) and inspirations, challenges and surprises they encountered as traveling artists.

Provençal Rosé are chilled in fountains outside of bistros.

Painting en plein air offered new challenges for me and led to a valuable understanding of the ways I express myself. It is such an organic art form, with visual threads growing out of the natural world. This affinity with nature helped me see the importance of observing and painting the landscape firsthand. I searched for a creative distillation of the complexities that nature stretched out before me. I created a series of small oil sketches which will serve as inspiration to expand and abstract from in larger format.

Most of my work at the Art Students League is based on the figure represented in an expressionistic manner, or released through an abstraction. Through the process of studying the model and sensing their mood and body language, I can represent not only the model’s manifestation but also express my experience. Similarly, the

Marchutz philosophy inspired me to take in my environment as well as to look within myself until “artistic expression springs from a union of sight and insight.”

An imaginative visual and personal expression of the model (or nature) is my ultimate goal. I combine acrylics, inks, pastels, and charcoal and have recently been experimenting with collage. In Provence I enjoyed working exclusively with oils for the first time—the range of colors before me requiring this diverse and pliable medium.

The influence of this trip on my artwork is ever present. I continue to experiment with my palette and try to translate vibrancy into my work. The number of color permutations I now use has expanded exponentially. I still experiment with oils and a range of new media including print work, photography and sculpture. My motivation to write poetry about my art has returned. I am intrigued to learn more about the concepts of both past and contemporary artists. I attended Frank O’Cain’s seminars at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and uncovered a wealth of information about Egyptian, Greek, Middle Eastern, African, South American and Asian art forms. I have a more disciplined approach to my art and try to incorporate drawing and painting into my daily routine.

Following the footsteps of the artists who were so moved by this bewitching part of France made me feel more complete as an artist and also showed me that the journey can never end. I thank Greg Wyatt and the Fantasy Fountain Fund and the Art Students League for this extraordinary opportunity. My spirit is overflowing with ideas. I am also indebted to my instructor Frank O’Cain for nominating me for this scholarship and for all of his creative support and confidence in my art work.

This proved to be an incredibly fascinating and enlightening experience. The further south I traveled in Spain, the more apparent the influence of Moorish aesthetics became. Architecture became more intricate, colors deepened, music became more passionate, and food more pungent. Overall, an intensification of sensory experience asserted itself, and when I finally crossed into Morocco it was as if a veil of Eurocentric history was lifted and I was able to see another side of Spain’s and, consequently, my own identity.

Since I was backpacking and staying in hostels and campsites for a lengthy amount of time, I really had to eliminate unnecessary supplies. I eventually sent much of my painting equipment home, including my travel easel, and kept only essentials: limited oil colors, a few brushes, a watercolor set, my sketchbook, and a cigar box. I think the limitations really helped me focus on exploring the full range of my medium and format.

I traveled with another painter, Amaya Gurpide, and having an open dialogue
I think the strangeness of a new place awakens the artistic senses. I was more receptive to things that may have been commonplace to locals, and inspired by a sense of urgency since I might not see these things again. The south of Spain and Morocco in particular are overwhelming to the senses. Sights, smells, and sounds are so abundant and rich that it’s nearly impossible not to be affected by them. As I traveled, my use of color became richer, my brushstrokes more daring and textured. I wanted my painting to be as palpable as the experiences these cultures offered. That idea of recreating an experience through the physical qualities of the medium is still very important to my work.

One of my earliest mentors at MICA, Ephraim Rubenstein, also happened to be the person who introduced me to the Art Students League. I learned a lot about different mediums and searching for 2D shapes in his classes. I also studied drawing with Costa Vavagiakis for several years and the methods I learned in his class continue to inform my work.

My primary medium is oil paint. What I like about oil paint is the flexibility it allows me to have in my process. I can work in a limited palette or a full color range; be bold and spontaneous or slow and methodical. I can use it to sketch broadly, or I can fully develop an image in multiple layers.

I also enjoy the physicality of the paint itself. The slickness, the sheen, and the body of oil paint give it a certain luxuriousness. There is also the multitude of solvents, mediums, oils and varnishes, and the knowledge needed to properly use them that turn the act of oil painting into an especially seductive alchemy.

There are many painters throughout history whose work I admire—Velázquez, Titian, Rubens, Rembrandt, Sargent, and Sorolla to name a few. What they generally have in common is an aesthetic sensibility that is inseparable from their appreciation of the medium’s physical qualities. These are painters who don’t simply create images, but who create a textural language with their use of brushwork and impasto.

Thematically, I take inspiration from literature, film, and my own personal experiences and memories. When I look at a great artwork—no matter how experienced I’ve become—there is a sense of awe that all of the disparate elements of it could come together in such a unified expression. All of the artist’s conscious and intuitive decisions somehow came into harmony and created an object of sublime beauty. My motivation lies in the hope that every new piece I attempt will shed a bit of light on this mysterious act of creation.

To survive as an artist I do occasional murals, work as a freelance story-boarder, and teach adults and after-school children’s art classes for Seeds of the League. Ideally, I’d like to support myself with my fine art, but until then I’m happy that I can make a living using my art skills and knowledge. Life has taught me that being patient and flexible is the most efficient way to achieve the results you want.
LEAGUE SECURITY
Watching the Door

I must tell you firsthand how Maddy and the security team knew all the comings and goings. She really watched everything, especially the children, to the point where I, a suburban housewife from across the river, could finally let go. Those that know me couldn’t believe that I am comfortable enough to drop my son off at the League and leave. This year is his fourth summer with Ms. Yeterian. Now that he is twelve, I have even been able to watch him exit the car and enter the League’s inner doors by himself as I see him being greeted by Maddy.

—Diane L. Jansen

Maddy Morales

I’ve been making and studying art for most of my life. After attending the High School of Art and Design, I received a B.F.A. at the School of Visual Arts. This led to a career in publishing and advertising as a designer and illustrator. A friend would always mention that I should check out the Art Students League. It took me awhile, even though I always passed by, but I finally started taking drawing classes on Saturdays with Michael Burban.

This was in 1996. Around this time I decided I needed a change in my life, and I started coming to the League full-time. Over the years I think I’ve studied with almost all of the painting instructors—Kreutz, Leffel, Coyle, Martin, Alberts, among others. First, though, I settled into printmaking. This was something new for me. I spent seven years with Michael Pelletieri studying etching and lithography and became a monitor in the printing studios. I loved it, but eventually I made my way back to painting and found a home with Ken McIndoe.

I’ve been a part of the security team for a long time, started as a work-study position during Rosina Florio’s time as League Director. I became head of security when the department was formed and staffed with full-time employees twelve years ago.

The stories I have heard and the people I have met—all of my experiences could fill a book. I field all sorts of questions from strangers and visitors stopping by the League—some just wondering what we’re all about, others looking to sell or buy things. Occasionally, someone comes through the door looking to hire an artist or to commission work. In 2009, I had six of my paintings appear in the comedy film Once More with Feeling. More recently, an NYPD officer with the Mounted Unit came to the League hoping to find an artist willing to paint an equestrian portrait. I jumped at the opportunity, and the resulting painting (above) now hangs in the conference room of NYPD Mounted Headquarters. The job was unpaid, but it’s one of the most gratifying things I’ve done as an artist. The horse’s name is Pride—and that about sums it up. The Art Students League is like a second home for me, and I look on the staff and students as my extended family.

From Detective Ronald Savarese:
A few months ago, I was challenged with the task, by my Commanding Officer, to have a talented person paint a portrait of a horse’s profile. A person who could express the pride, spirit, and tradition of this elite unit.

Madeline Morales was willing and able to take on this challenge at her own expense. A few weeks had passed when I received the call that the painting was complete. Secured in a golden frame, a portrait of a horse’s profile was revealed. Pride, as he is named, is now displayed next to historic paintings by famed artist and retired mounted officer Olaf Wieghorst. I thank all at the Art Students League and especially Ms. Morales for her kind welcome and support.

Richard Atwell

I began studying drawing and painting at the League in the mid 1990’s. My primary teachers were Anthony Palumbo, Costa Vavagiakis, Ron Sherr and Harvey Dinnerstein. I worked mainly in oils and pastels. My current ambition is to blend my traditional training in art with my Zen Buddhist practice. This means imbuing traditional painting with spontaneous expression.

I started working in security when the department was formed in 2002. One of the changes I’ve noticed most is the growth in students coming here to study from all around the world.

From my post in security I have come in contact with the wide variety of students who come through our doors: elderly students and very young students; advanced students and beginning students; students with physical disabilities; and students working in a vast array of styles.

Artwork by Richard Atwell
I started taking classes at The Art Students League in 1995. I was taking a semester off from The University of Florida due to a knee injury and several surgeries. A friend's brother told me about the League and I enrolled in Saturday drawing class and I've been there ever since. I transferred to Hunter College and continued at the League part-time.

I studied with many teachers—Anthony Palumbo, Michael Burban, Peter Cox, Gustav Rehberger, Richard Barnet, Terence Coyle, Dan Gheno, and most notably Sherry Camhy, and Ronald Sherr. There may be a few names I missed. I also studied printmaking with Vincent Longo, and drawing and painting with Anthony Panzera at Hunter College. Both were terrific by the way. Early on I was very shy and not that confident in my abilities. Sherry really encouraged me to continue to draw and she believed in me. Without her guidance I may not have pursued an art career. Ronald Sherr's painting class was amazing. You had many high level painters there. I found oil painting very difficult in the beginning, so I mostly drew for the first year. Ron was like a general. You couldn't take a critique personally. If something was wrong with your painting or drawing he would not hesitate to tell you. He expected a lot from students and maintained the highest standards of any teacher I have met. He didn't just discuss theory; he gave practical methods to improve. Ron brought my work (and that of many other students) to another level. I was very lucky to have studied with him.

I love to draw. To me nothing is more challenging than portrait and figure drawing. Drawing is everything (in case you haven't heard). I prefer drawing in graphite, silverpoint, and colored pencils. I paint in oils—portraits, figures, still life, and more recently started to paint landscapes. I also do many art crafts like using polymer clay, and I have just started doing Origami and clay sculpture. As an artist I would like to have a career in portrait painting and have my work in galleries. I also have other ideas for sculpture.

I started working security a few years ago, moved to other departments, and just recently returned to this position. As night security, I am probably the only person in the school to see all the evening students and teachers, as well as office, store, café, and maintenance staff members (almost all of them are artists). And as hellos become conversations, I've gotten to know quite a lot of people. It's great to see how dedicated the students are and how hardworking and giving the teachers can be. I have met many people at the League, and many of them have become good friends.  

www.markkevingonzales.com
Ed Giordano

For the last two years, I have been working on Saturday’s “guarding the door” at The Art Students League. During this time, I have met many people from different countries and states who visit the building because they or a family member once studied here. They come because of their affiliation and legacy with the school. Since the League is 138 years old, the conversation may be about an ancestor who became a recognized artist, however it is usually a parent, grandparent or they themselves who have the connection.

There is a lot of traffic entering and leaving the building. Tourists visiting New York come into the building and ask, “What is this place?” They always leave with a catalogue saying they know someone who would be interested in taking classes. Personally, I have had classmates of mine from RISD come to the League to purchase supplies, visit the gallery, or substitute for an instructor.

The League is kind of a thruway for creative individuals. Part of the responsibility is to be discerning enough to question someone coming into the building who appears unfamiliar with the school.

I have been at the League for ten years, both part-time and full time, attending evening lectures and classes. Familiarity is an aspect of the atelier environment of the League I have found to be important. Currently, I am painting in Dan Thompson’s evening class. I consider my time at the League as practice. For me, it’s visual and perceptual exercise that improves my hand and eye. Then I go to my studio and transfer that knowledge into my work.

Last summer, I had a studio space on Governor’s Island through the 4heads Residency Program. I was nominated through the League’s Exhibition Outreach program and was later accepted by the 4heads selection committee. As a result, I applied to the Joan Mitchell Art Center in New Orleans for a residency and was accepted and will not be at the “door” for part of February and March. However, I will return and will be “guarding” the entrance at 215 West 57th Street in April.

Arthur (Artie) Gorsky

I started the work-study program in security about six years ago. On my job, I keep the building safe and help students and visitors find their way. Our experienced security staff works well as a team.

I started my studies at the League as a part-timer. Upon retirement, I went full-time for two years and eventually became one of the monitors in my class. For over seven years I’ve been in Ken McIndoe’s studio. He is a very encouraging instructor and has been helping me with my painting skills. Usually, I paint with oil or acrylic on canvas or wood. In 2011, I won a Janet and Russell Doubleday Merit Scholarship.

I also study with Mariano Del Rosario in mixed media and collage. With my passion for Sci-fi and the combination of both instructors I am reaching my goal in exploring surrealism. My wife Marlann, who also attends the League, has been a great inspiration to me.
Art began for me in a gruff and grimy New York tenement inundated with lead paint peeling, ethnic cooking aromas and cracks. “Crack” not as in the pharmaceutical kind—too early in history for that, but actual breaks, gaps, crevices, fissures and flaws in the walls—my first exposure to urban abstraction. These cracks were everywhere—in the ceiling, in the tiles, in the hallway—detailed and painted over several times. As I pondered these un-commissioned works (and how curious it was that they were never repaired), I was enthralled as if sitting under the stars or watching the clouds roll by. This place was unequivocally my private collection of contemporary art: the Crack Murals of the 20th Century. Years later, I would be equally transfixed by the weather-beaten walls in Venice—history and life embedded deep, the stories these walls tell if you look closely enough. Instinctively, I was creatively fused and organically connected to all things abstract and weathered; energetically drawn to the abstract expressionists I so identified with. Even recently, when MoMA took down the de Kooning Retrospective, I felt as though the rug had been pulled from under my feet.

There was another treasured influence, an unusual character, an enigma: my grandfather. He was a welcome relief—an artist. A “sign painter” (or so he was called, an understated term for the huge talent that he was), Andrew Carnase could paint anything and he had a style and savoir faire that put him in a league of his own. As a young child, I was mesmerized and completely captivated by his small studio, the pungent smell of oil, the random splashes of paint and color on his work surface, the ease in which he held a paint brush, the simplicity of his compositions, but mostly I remember his humor. I was tall enough only to stretch my chin over the top of his work table and all I could see forever was the residue of paint and color randomly streaked everywhere. It was a brave new world to me, an unrestrained universe, and a deep freedom. A passion for art was instilled in me from as early as I can remember. As early as the 1940s, my profoundly underpaid grandfather painted “signs” for movie theaters to advertise and promote upcoming feature films. As a matter of course he painted portraits of movie stars and, when required, entire sides of buildings; everything by hand; panel by panel. My grandfather was a “hoot” and quite a fascination.

At fifteen I left home. I was always well aware that I grew up on the wrong side of the tracks. I was exposed to hard things—things that no one should ever be exposed to, unspeakable things, and this too colored me. I always kept my art supplies under the bed, just to make sure I always had them in case of emergency. Poverty brings many unwanted events and memories. Memories to be shelved, forgotten, or white-washed, or in my case forgiven and colorfully painted.

I put myself through school and received my Bachelor of Fine Arts from New York University. Upon graduation I vied for a job at ABC television and, much to my surprise, was hired. I was prompted to get a “real job” in the “real world” and although my work was visual and not without its moments of creative expression I was never able to shake off my first love—to paint. Not surprisingly, after some years and in the employ of ABC and then CBS, I quit my relatively “safe” staff job (I say this with humor, nothing in television is safe) and moved to San Francisco. There I worked on a Master of Fine Arts, a program that was in conjunction with the San Francisco Art Institute. Northern California was refreshing and I was deeply swayed by the meteorological conditions and the California School. I was especially inspired by the work of Richard Diebenkorn; his attention to linear detail, his often subtle palette choices, and the use of flat space. Now solely an artist I was once again pushed by financial concerns—basically happy but “broke.” I was forced by circumstance to return to New York and to network television. I began painting in a studio in Union Square, where I stayed for a period of three years. During that time I married a jazz musician, a man who played with many of the world’s greatest artists during the Loft Era in jazz; a strangely liberating dissonant and complex period of music. In most circles however, my husband, Juma Sultan, is best known for playing with Jimi Hendrix. Jazz and abstraction go hand in hand and this was another profound sway in the rhythm of my work and I see the correlation in my compositions. I birthed beautiful daughters and along the way, in spite of myself, I won two Emmys in television.

In 2010 my husband began working on a creative project that landed us in North Carolina. There the window of heaven opened
up once again for me to paint without interruption, this time in a glass studio that was attached to an ever-so-trendy designer’s apartment that we rented. (It came with a stone veranda—you gotta love the South.) The atmospheric condition was ripe and there I returned to myself.

My work references an atmospheric condition, the power of being a woman and all that this has entailed—what I have weathered—not unlike those indelible “cracks” of my youth. Mine has been a hard-won freedom. I work intuitively. Flat planes; extreme splashes of rich color (the subtle variance of grays, luminous blues, sassy, straight-up magentas); small, elegant, childlike lines that read as a language; a forceful linear structure; and the beauty of the female anatomy all invariably find their way into my paintings and drawings. I prefer the displacement of space conceptually, like writing on a wall. I am obsessed with color—rich color—and for me, this is a journey unto itself. For that reason I am attracted to combining the lushness of pastel with wet media: gouache watercolor, oil, acrylic. Painting—with a fervor and kinetic inspiration, a frame in time, is a fully captured moment full of life, love, reflection, and excitement. I am a great lover of “truth” wherever you can find it and, that being said, I prefer everything laid out on the table, exposed to the light, filled with nuance and detail. Mostly though, I have gratitude every single time I reach for a pastel or pick up a palette knife. I’m thankful for every stroke of the brush. To be an artist requires an unusual grace in life and if asked, I can unflinchingly say the journey is worth it.
arrived at Silya Kiese’ mixed media and sculpture class in August of 2011. I wanted to see what it would be like to make art. I had no preferences, no experience, and no skill. Silya gave me little more than a brief lecture on the “geometric alphabet” and a spool of wire. I began, as all artists do, I guess, by playing around. By the end of August I had a selection of small sculptures, mostly from wire and one larger piece from paper and wood. What is important to my story is not the small repertoire of art pieces I accumulated, but the concepts and thought processes that sprung out of art-making.

Silya’s class does not teach any particular method of art-making. It imposes no style and trains you in no rigorous process. What Silya does teach is how to think about art. She is just as concerned with the role of the artist and the philosophy of art-making as the art itself. I arrived in class each morning prepared to make art but also to talk about art. Some days I spoke more than I made. We spoke, for instance, about the role of intuition and about how the artistic process renders the subconscious into something tangible and communicable. Silya heavily stresses the development of the thought and the concept behind an art piece. She told me that no art piece is truly complete; each piece is a manifestation of a continuously changing aesthetic process—a single step that is part of a larger journey.

Perhaps because the class is as much about thought as about art itself, Silya is very interdisciplinary. She comes into class, with her wide-brimmed hat, various clattering trinkets attached to her colorful clothes, carrying a stack of books and papers: among them the writings of Proust, Carl Jung, Rainer Maria Rilke, Einstein, and Heidegger. Nothing is off limits. We draw on science, sociology, poetry, music, and philosophy in order to talk about art. She took us to a screening of a documentary on the collections of the same professor at the NYU Cantor Film Center called “Survival of the Beautiful.” The lecture focused on the evolution of aesthetics. It consisted of artists and musicians talking about the natural sciences and biologists talking about art and aesthetics. One topic of heavy discussion was a bird family known as Bowerbirds. Male Bowerbirds have evolved to build sculptural structures out of twigs in order to attract females. They surround these structures with elaborate ornamentation, which can include flowers, luminescent beetle shells, and plastic spoons. Each species and each individual within the species has its own aesthetic preference. The scientists also spoke about birdsong and how Zebra Finches construct elaborate symphonies for the purpose of attracting a mate and for their own enjoyment. Humans like to consider themselves the only animals capable of aesthetic creation, but in reality a wide array of species has achieved aesthetic capabilities.

I was entirely moved by the notion that you could approach science aesthetically and aesthetics scientifically. There was one professor there from Yale University who shared his work on the evolution of feather color. He was using science to gain insight into the immense variety of beautiful forms and colors in birds. I purchased the book around which the lecture was structured, *Survival of the Beautiful*, by David Rothenberg, where the work of the same professor was heavily featured. Around the same time, I was working on a series of sculptural bird abstractions in Silya’s class, and was getting acquainted with the form and movement of birds—namely, cranes and waterfowl. Out of an interdisciplinary impulse, I e-mailed the professor at Yale, telling him that I admired his work and that I would be honored to meet him. He sent me a number of his papers: ones on avian color theory, sexual selection, and even one particularly enchanting paper that used paradigms in evolutionary biology to take a fresh look at the philosophy of art.

I started doing research under his guidance in the summer of 2012, a year after joining the League. I still find it funny to think that trying out an art class would ever lead me into the sciences. But that is the kind of personal development Silya encourages. My work is on avian color theory. I use what is called a tetrahedral color space, which was developed by the professor and his colleagues, in order to model the way birds see color—in particular, the plumage color of other birds. I use this platform to analyze avian mimicry. Briefly, there are situations in nature in which one subordinate species of bird will evolve to look very similar in plumage color to a dominant species with which it is competing for resources. This gives it a competitive advantage over the contested resources. I’m looking at how well the plumage colors of the subordinate species have mimicked those of the dominant species, and what that means about its evolution. It isn’t exactly art, but it’s still riddled with ideas that relate closely to aesthetics: the perception of color, the function of color and form in social dynamics, and the evolution of color.

Applying to the Yale Undergraduate College was sort of a natural decision, considering that I was already doing research there and taking into account how appealing the institution at large is. Nonetheless, I have to thank Silya for encouraging me to apply when I doubted the odds. I plan to continue doing ornithological research at Yale, and hopefully getting a little more into biology as it relates to aesthetics. I may not always be doing ornithological research, but Yale is a great place to continue investigation be it through science, abstract sculpture, poetry or whatever else presents itself with the same keen interdisciplinary excitement that I learned in Silya’s class.
Throughout the 1920s numerous American artists went abroad to travel and study in Paris. These included Art Students League students Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Adolf Dehn, and Reginald Marsh as well as instructor Jan Matulka, and future instructor Stuart Davis. Davis’s time abroad would be influential in many respects. It exposed him to the avant-garde Parisian art scene, offered the opportunity to meet French artists whom he respected, and sparked new developments in his painting. When he began teaching at the League in 1931, two years after his return, he brought with him his first-hand experience with French modernism and a renewed commitment to being an American artist.

In New York there was a small circle of artists working abstractly and a select number of places that sponsored exhibitions of radical modern art, but the consensus among artists and critics was that in order to be fully immersed in the newest trends, it was necessary to cross the Atlantic. Prior to his departure in June of 1928, Davis was already well-versed in Cubism, Dada, and modern design. Although the Museum of Modern Art would not open until the following year and the Whitney Museum was not established until 1931, Davis saw exhibitions of modern art sponsored by Société Anonyme and shows at the Whitney Studio Club, Downtown Gallery, and Valentine Gallery. He had also exhibited his machine-inspired series of abstract paintings featuring matchbooks, coffee percolators, and eggbeaters at these venues. One reviewer praised his works as "as determined as any of his" (1928). When Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney purchased two of his paintings from a May exhibition, Davis decided to capitalize on the opportunity. He recalled that Mrs. Whitney urged him to go to Paris, pointing out that he “was the only one in the [Whitney Studio] Club who hadn’t been to France and she thought the trip would be good for me.” Matulka offered to rent Davis his studio, which was located at 50 Rue Véronigetorix in Montparnasse, the epicenter of the artistic and literary community.

Davis’s friends and neighbors in Paris were American expatriate writers, poets, and artists including Eliot Paul, Robert Carlton Brown, Alexander Calder, Isamu Noguchi, John Graham, George Biddle, Emil Ganso, and Kuniyoshi. His letters home revealed his excitement about meeting Léger, Picasso, and Gertrude Stein. He wrote to his mother:

“I went to the studio of Fernand Léger, internationally famed painter. He showed me all his newest work. Very strong. Next day he came to see my work. He liked the Egg Beaters very much. He thought the street scenes I am doing here too realistic for his taste but said they were done with fine feeling… I am going to Picasso’s studio as soon as he comes back to town.”

While Davis never met Picasso, he did visit Stein and viewed her famous collection of Picasso and Gris paintings. He was hopeful that she would purchase one of his works, but a lack of documentation suggests a sale never materialized.

Davis’s account of Léger’s critique of his recent paintings noted a shift in Davis’s style from an analysis of the shapes and planes of a simple, mechanical kitchen device in his Eggbeater series to more outwardly-oriented street scenes. In Paris, Davis focused on capturing the vibrancy of the new urban cityscape he had been exploring. His semi-abstract painting Café Place des Vosges (1929) paired a flattened restaurant facade with a more three-dimensional view of an adjacent Roman archway leading to a back alley. These components, rendered neatly within a square and a rectangle, created a defined two-part composition, a structure which Davis would refine in later New York paintings such as House and Street (1931). Although, for the moment, he had left his studies in pure abstract form behind, he pictured Paris with streamlined, flattened shapes. He began to integrate his interests in abstraction and the streetscape into a cohesive, distinctive style. By the summer of 1929, with money running out, and missing New York’s energy, he decided to come home.

The following year, Davis began to work on a series of paintings called Paris/New York, integrating his imagery of the cities. In 1931, he reflected that his time abroad had dispelled any concerns that America’s creative environment could not rival Paris’s. His trip enabled him to “go on working in New York without laboring under an impossible handicap. It allowed me to observe the enormous vitality of the American atmosphere as compared to Europe and made me regard the necessity of working in New York as a positive advantage.” He pictured this new outlook in Paris/New York No. 2, where the elevated train and a building labeled “United States” appear at the top of the painting. The cornice of the American office building extends just slightly higher than the façade of Hotel de France beside it. The passengers waiting on the EI platform hover above quaint Parisian rooftops.

In September, six months after exhibiting his Paris/New York paintings, Davis joined the Art Students League as an instructor for 1931-32. Turning his attention to the development of American art, throughout the thirties he would be a tireless political advocate for artists. In 1957 he reflected that teaching and art schools were important in creating a community in which art exists as an essential means of communication. “The more we have of that,” he concluded, “the better for America and the better for the development of those individuals who do have unusual talent.”

Sources:
In November of 2012, the League was officially contracted as an outside resource for City-As-School (CAS), a public high school which allows students to study and work outside of school for credit toward graduation. CAS students are 11th and 12th graders who have transferred from other schools in the city. The school emphasizes fresh starts, and offers students the opportunity to “learn by doing” through internships in their fields of interest. Students choose from over 400 community-based learning experiences, and have a hand in creating their own fully individualized programs. Currently, there are two CAS students taking League classes for school credit. The participation of these students is made possible by generous support from the Chervenak-Nunnallé Foundation.

Chervenak-Nunnallé Scholar
Nevada Harris

I have always been making art of some kind. At birth I was sucking my thumb, and continued to do so until I was twelve years old. Art for me is kind of like thumb-sucking: comforting, therapeutic, and there for us when nothing else is.

When I was in elementary school, visual arts were very important to me. I was interested in fashion design and the anatomy of humans, horses, and dogs. I would draw at home and in school, and would put my all into any art project assigned in class. This continued through middle school when I took the visual art class offered for art credit. My teacher had been doing art since he was in his twenties, and he was around seventy at the time I took his class. He taught a wide variety of art techniques and I used these to continue my work outside of school. When I got to high school, however, I started a program for acting which left little time for other activities. I doodled in class but at home I drew less and less, although I did continue to do some sketches of the human face and figure, more detailed than I had ever drawn them before.

My first year of high school was rough, and my second year even rougher. I found myself dealing with a host of self-issues and ended up taking nearly a semester off from school entirely. As I was spending most of my time freely, I began to miss making art. I had experimented before with clay and decided to try again. I began to draw again, studying anatomy a bit and painting even more. It was as if I had been missing out on a large part of myself for multiple years and had finally recovered a truth inside of myself. I transferred to an alternative school at the beginning of 2013, and I am now a junior.

As I continue to navigate life, my art becomes more and more therapeutic every time I set brush to paper. I find that I often work abstractly in a train-of-thought sort of process, not planning so much as feeling my way through a painting. I choose which colors I am attracted to in that moment and just begin to experiment with strokes, creating different designs and textures which all end up quite evocative of my inner self and my emotions.

I am so happy to have rediscovered drawing and painting and look forward to furthering my abilities in these mediums, as well as pursuing skill in sculpture. I find modeling with my hands and working in three dimensions fascinating and fun, leaving doors wide open for myself with so much to discover, so much opportunity.

Chervenak-Nunnallé Scholar
Nova Palaquibay

Every human needs a medium of expression for thoughts, both public and private. Chosen mediums vary greatly from person to person. My own are: music, visual art, and fashion. I have identified as a musician since I was nine, but otherwise did not consider myself an artist. I’ve always enjoyed doodling and experimenting with colors and textures (mostly in the way I dress), but didn’t immerse myself in it. After transferring to City-as-School—a school full of artists—I felt compelled to thoroughly explore visual art. Initially, I drew nothing but psychedelic flowers, which was immensely fun. As I explored new subject matters, I quickly noticed how the colors and shapes I drew corresponded to my thoughts and feelings, also that I tend to draw geometrically. I was rapidly falling in love with visual art. I began to feel an intense connection to my art; drawing could show me things about myself I never knew. What had once been nothing more than a transient distraction has become a big part of how I define myself. I feel that visual art filled a gaping void, and I am so thankful to have discovered that I am an artist.

The first time I made art that I wanted to show off, it was performing arts. The second time, it was my handmade clothes. I attended the Professional Performing Arts School from 6th to 11th grade. As the years went by, my connection to performing arts faded. I taught myself to play guitar (poorly) at 13. At 15, I joined The Ampupees, a punk band that I play in to this day.

Nova Palaquibay, Gossip
Several months after joining the band, I experienced a long period of illness. As I began the recovery process, I immersed myself in guitar playing, practicing in a structured manner for hours every day. I transferred to City-as-School around this time. The distraction factor alone was great. Greater still was that I acquired skills that allowed me to freely convey thought and emotion through my guitar, which helped me exponentially in the recovery process. Alas, something was still missing. At City-as-School, I met people so radically different from the humans I was used to. After befriending a few artists, I began to explore the realm of visual art. I had no idea that it would change everything about the way I thought. It was as if I had unlocked a new level of consciousness and self-awareness. I began to truly understand myself and my surroundings, and to see beautiful patterns in life itself.

Art (in every form) means many things to me. I understand myself through my art; it is a way to see and explore my subconscious. By studying my art after it’s made, I’ve made incredible discoveries about myself. Whether I’m playing guitar freely and alone in my room, writing a song, or playing in front of a crowd, I express raw, ineffable emotions. Art is among my favorite means of communication. Sharing my art with people is incredibly gratifying and empowering, which is why I love fashion so much: it’s an art that I get to share with the world on a daily basis. Furthermore, everyone sees it, but no one can do anything about it. I have total control over the way I dress, and no one can ever take that away. Without art, I would be an aimless fish in the aimless sea. Thanks to art, I’m a resolute fish in the aimless sea.

Gregory Lysun

Gregory Lysun of Ardsley, New York, an artist and, by his own count, a teacher to 10,000 students, died January 16, 2011 from complications of a stroke. He was 86. Gregory was an adjunct professor and taught traditional painting and drawing at Purchase College, SUNY, and Westchester Community College in Valhalla. He received the Outstanding Faculty Award at Purchase in 1996 and the Adjunct Faculty Excellence Award in 2000 at WCC. He was also an instructor at the Theodore Young Community Center in Greenburgh and the Pelham Art Center. He taught for nearly 40 years.

Gregory was born Oct. 24, 1924 in Yonkers. He was a Navy veteran of World War II, serving primarily as a seaman aboard the USS Savage, a destroyer escort in the North Atlantic. After his military service, he attended the Art Students League from 1947 to 1953 and studied with Louis Bouché, Edward Dickinson, John Groth, Robert Beverley Hale, and Reginald Marsh. He started drawing at age 4 and, at age 15, received a national achievement award in a competition judged by Norman Rockwell. Gregory traveled often by passenger, freighter, and cruise ship in the 1950s and 1960s doing studies for paintings the world over. He was an avid conversationalist and spoke seven languages. His work is in the permanent collection of the Butler Museum of American Art, the New Britain Museum, the Provincetown Museum, and the DeCordova Museum.

The students, staff, members and Board of Control of the Art Students League are most grateful to Gregory Lysun for including us in his estate plans. His bequest establishes the Gregory Lysun Scholarship for study at the League.

Artwork by Gregory Lysun, from top: Morning the Harbor, 1963; Royal Palace in Bangkok, Thailand, circa 1960s

Nova Palaquibay, Flower
I never knew I had a father named Nat Warshaw nor a mother named Millie. That is, not until a stranger phoned to tell me he was my older brother Stanley Warshaw and he had been searching for his only brother ever since he suffered a heart attack two years earlier at age 50. He said that our mother had died in childbirth—my birth—and our father immediately gave me up for adoption to neighbors. In disbelief, I called Florence Zapol, the woman who for 36 years had been the only mother I had known. She reluctantly confirmed that my biological mother Millie suffered a stroke during my delivery due to a poorly understood disease of pregnancy called eclampsia. Millie, Florence confessed, is the reason I have a middle name starting with “M.” Florence said that my father, Nat, was unwilling to raise an infant, and gave me away to the childless couple living across the street. And so began my adoptive life as the only child of Florence and Ben Zapol.

When Florence, who must have been almost as shocked by my call to her as I was by the call from Stanley, told me that she would prefer that I not explore my genetic origins, I suppressed any inclination to learn more about my genetic family.

Now, more than three decades since that startling revelation, and a dozen years since Florence’s death and even more since Ben’s, I am of a very different mindset.

This past winter I decided to visit my brother Stanley and his family in Florida, having lost contact with them after our first meeting in 1978. Taking me into one room of a comfortable, sunny apartment filled with photos, mementos and paintings, Leah, Stanley’s wife, pointed to a large oil portrait of a woman in a scarlet red dress. “That is your mother, Millie,” Leah said.

Next to Millie was a portrait of her husband, my father, Nat. Both were painted shortly before Millie’s death. The vivid colors and immediacy of the paintings brought Millie and Nat to life. They felt much more real to me than when I was thumbing through faded, brittle, black-and-white “Brownie” photos mounted in Leah’s old albums. Millie’s red dress, red lipstick, dark hair, and fair skin were dazzling. She looked warm and kind.

My wife Nikki, whose mother had puzzled over the lack of resemblance between me and Florence and Ben, said the likeness was unmistakable. “These were painted by your Uncle Sam Warshaw, your father’s oldest brother,” Leah continued. “He was quite an accomplished artist.”

Uncle Sam! Another immediate relative to add to the list of the previously unknown. Uncle Sam painted four giant portraits of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt for the Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey (RBBB) Circus (Combined Shows) in March of 1942, exactly when I was born! But I am getting ahead of myself. After seeing his portraits of my parents, I was determined to learn more about my Uncle Sam.

This is where I need the League community to help: did you know Sam Warshaw as a student or friend? Can you help me fill in the gaps about his life? If yes, please e-mail lines@artstudentsleague.org.
Recent Books by the League and its Instructors

**Pastel Painting Atelier: Essential Lessons in Techniques, Practices, and Materials**
League instructor Ellen Eagle's new book, *Pastel Painting Atelier*, shares her approach to pastel and includes magnificent works of numerous historical and contemporary pastelists. The book also includes a foreword by writer and peace activist Maxine Hong Kingston. Watson-Guptill Publications releases the book on April 23; list price $35.00.

**Photoshop for Artists**
League instructor Sylvie Covey wrote this book specifically for painters, photographers and printmakers who want to learn Photoshop tools, techniques and special effects relevant for their artwork. Published by Watson & Guptill (a division of Random House), the book is available for purchase at the League’s Art Supply Store at $29.23.

**A History in Art: A Timeline of the Art Students League of New York**
A brand new full-color history of the Art Students League is now available in the League’s Art Supply Store. Written by archivist Stephanie R. Cassidy and former curator Pamela N. Koob, *A History in Art—A Timeline of the Art Students League of New York* tells the 137-year story of the League with more than 100 reproductions and archival photographs. Just $14.95, a savings of 25% of the list price at the League store.

**Visual Language of Drawing: Lessons on the Art of Seeing**
Published in September 2012, *The Visual Language of Drawing* features the insights of 15 current and former Art Students League instructors. This stunning volume reassesses the art of drawing not as a technique, but as the essential grammar of all visual thinking. Just $21.25 at the League store—save $6.50 off the $27.95 list price.

---

**2013 Calendar**

- **May 20–24**
- **Monday, May 26**
- **May 27**
- **June 6–21**
- **June 27–July 18**
- **June 3–August 17**
- **Thursday, July 4**
- **July 25–August 2**
- **August 8–16**
- **August 18–September 2**
- **Monday, September 2**
- **Tuesday, September 3**
- **September 3–22**
- **Saturday, September 14**
- **September 30–November 1**
- **Wednesday, October 9**

Check www.theartstudentsleague.org/Members for member news or to update your contact information.

**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**
Address Service Requested