

# LINES from the League



# Message from the Executive Director



Since 2011, *Lines from the League* has focused on stories from our member artists about the transformative power of art as realized from an Art Students League education. Together, these past issues comprise a colorful collective biography of a diverse body of students, documenting the aesthetic range and reach of the Art Students League. We are grateful to the efforts of Denise L. Greene and her team who put them together.

Moving forward, *Lines'* editorial mission will align with our online journal LINEA. Articles will emphasize topics related to the education of artists, embody the voices of our instructors, and update you on the League's many community and professional development programs. In addition, we are reserving a section of every issue for member news. We want to hear about your recent exhibition, award, or other form of recognition, and share it with the rest of the membership. Please e-mail your information to [lines@artstudentsleague.org](mailto:lines@artstudentsleague.org).

In this issue, I would like to tell you about exciting changes to Model to Monument (M2M), the League's flagship professional development program. Since 2010, M2M has provided forty-two artists the opportunity to create sculpture for public spaces under the guidance of master sculptor Greg Wyatt. In partnership with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, students learn to obtain public permits; gauge the scale and visual impact of their installation; budget time, materials, and labor needed to produce; and install large, three-dimensional work, all of which gives them valuable professional experience.

After six years at Riverside Park South, the Parks Department has requested that we refocus M2M to create a site-specific work at Riverside Park North at 145th Street, addressing the needs of the diverse community that regularly uses this expanse along the Hudson River. Our M2M team will work with LERA, a structural engineering firm, to collaboratively design an installation that explores the concept of a wave in an area commonly used for music performances, picnics, sports, and recreation. This is an exciting new opportunity for artists to apply their skills and training to bring aesthetic value to a popular public space, encouraging dialogue and enhancing the quality of life in this often crowded urban environment.

The Art Students League is committed to providing an education that enlightens us about the power of art to impact our lives. Indeed, whether working in a public space as part of M2M or in a studio, we are reminded that our ability to create is the greatest attribute of the human condition.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of *Lines from the League* and that, in reflecting on the importance of the Art Students League to your own life, you will be as generous as possible in making a year-end gift. A return envelope is enclosed for your convenience. Your contribution to the League matters and will help ensure the continued success of the institution that we all care about so deeply.

Ira Goldberg  
Executive Director

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*Lines from the League*

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**Cover image:** Instructor Rhoda Sherbell demonstrating on Jennifer Foley's piece during her Tuesday evening class  
PHOTO: LILIAN R. ENGEL

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# Modern Renaissance

## *The Fourteenth Street School and Classical Life Drawing*

Jillian Russo

In the decades between the World Wars, an influential group of painters who had studios near Union Square began to redefine realist painting. Led by Art Students League instructor Kenneth Hayes Miller and his students Isabel Bishop, Reginald Marsh, Arnold Blanch, and Raphael Soyer, the group became known as the Fourteenth Street School. Observing the activities on the streets around their studios, they combined an interest in modern urban subjects with an admiration for Renaissance art and an attention to the figure.

Throughout the 1920s and 30s artists explored many different approaches to realism. Precisionist painters, such as Charles Sheeler and Charles Demuth, responded to the impact of photography, while regionalists, like Thomas Hart Benton and Grant Wood, focused on the American heartland. Urban and social realists depicted city life, with the latter, including artists Mervin Jules and Harry Sternberg, taking on social and political issues. The work of the Fourteenth School painters, who were also known as urban realists, was distinguished by their engagement with the tradition of classical life drawing that formed the core of the League's curriculum.

The roots of their academic approach to realism, extended back to the decades following the League's founding. Beginning in the 1880s instructors Kenyon Cox and H. Siddons Mowbray brought French atelier practices to the Art Students League. Cox, who taught drawing, anatomy, and antique classes at the League from 1885 to 1909, had studied at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in the late 1870s with renowned academic painters Jean Léon Gérôme and Alexandre Cabanel. At the *École des Beaux-Arts*, students had to pass competitive examinations, demonstrating exceptional drawing skills. Successful drawings of plaster casts from the antique class were a prerequisite for entry into more advanced life-drawing classes, a requirement that was applied at the League in the early years. The League's extensive cast collection included replicas of Michelangelo's sculptures *Dying Slave* (1510-1513) and *Night from the Tomb of Giuliano de' Medici* (1520-1534). Further propagating the French tradition, Cox introduced the practice of concours exhibitions at the League as means to highlight exceptional work and demote students who needed additional training.



While drawing from the nude and from plaster casts was central to Cox and Mowbray's teaching philosophies, the instructors advocated different approaches. Upholding the ideals of academic painting, Cox lectured his students on the importance of compositional structure, the placement of the figure, a considered use of light and shadow, and knowledge of Renaissance art. Mowbray advanced a more naturalistic style, with a focus on rendering an almost photographic level of detail to capture the individual qualities of the subject.

Two years after Cox retired from the League in 1909, Kenneth Hayes Miller began teaching life drawing and mural painting. A student of Cox and Mowbray, Miller conveyed the importance of drawing from the nude and studying the Old Masters to his students. Echoing Cox's emphasis on idealism over naturalism, Miller explained to his monitor his traditional requirements for posing the model: "The female form is the primary art form. I want the classic type rather than character... Aim for standing poses. I don't like seated poses because they don't really show the body, they fold it, they crumple it and you can't get at the human body that way." Miller also stressed the principles of classical art in lectures that analyzed the works of Giotto, Titian, Rembrandt, and Botticelli, as well as modern artists such as Renoir and Albert Pinkham Ryder.

In his own painting Miller was trying to develop an approach that reconciled the classical techniques of the Old Masters with contemporary subjects. He had seen the explosion of Cubism and Futurism at the 1913 Armory Show but remained committed to realism. Eschewing popular trends he wrote: "Just now anything [that] can be even vaguely identified with nature or reality is dubbed 'illustration.' All subject is of course 'banal.' I like the things, or some of them, but don't believe all need follow, certainly. Enough are doing that." Miller began his career with paintings of female nudes in ethereal landscapes and continued to paint nudes throughout his career. In 1926 he created several compositions that placed the nude in modern domestic settings and were inspired by Renaissance Venuses and odalisques. His interest in the female form became the basis for his genre paintings of urban shoppers in the neighborhood surrounding 14th Street, which gained him acclaim. In *Women in the Store* (1937) Miller uses three Greek columns to bring balance and stability to a depiction of a bustling department store. His solid



figures, who move with the gravity of Giotto's female protagonists, also exert a grounding force in a highly-trafficked commercial space.

Miller's influence on his students is nowhere more apparent than in the early work of Isabel Bishop, who depicted the class of her most influential instructor in a 1927 mural designed for the Art Students League library. Taking the practice of drawing and painting from the nude as her subject, Bishop placed the model at the heart of the image. Just to the left, and directly facing the model, she appears to have included a self-portrait seen from behind. She presented herself in a mirror image of the model's pose, with one hand raised and the other in her lap, emphasizing the act drawing as an interactive process. Stylistically, the painting so closely parallels Miller that it could almost be mistaken for his work. Bishop, however, is beginning to find her own softer approach to the figure in the portraits of herself and her classmates. Bishop struggled to free herself from Miller's approach and later in life destroyed several canvases from 1925 because she found them "terribly awful" empty exercises in her teacher's style. Her work blossomed in 1927 when she created a series of psychologically probing self-portraits, including *Self Portrait #2*, in the tradition of Rembrandt and Vermeer.

In order to establish her independence, Bishop set up her own studio first at 9 West 14th Street, in the same building as Reginald Marsh, and then at 857 Broadway, near 17th Street. Her artistic practice centered on drawing Union Square, which she often



presented as Renaissance piazza in the tradition of the Old Masters. She was captivated by the surrounding architecture, a mix of nineteenth- and twentieth-century structures, and the people, of all economic levels, who were drawn to the public space. Bishop explained: "Union Square interests me in a way I don't understand myself. I think it has to do with a deep association from the time of my childhood, when my family lived one street from the "good" neighborhood in Detroit, and there was kind of an appetite I developed for the other direction, toward the slum region. It seemed warmer to me. It seemed more human, and I liked it better." In contrast to Miller, who rendered his female subjects in a rather formulaic manner, Bishop was interested in depicting a range of different individuals and carefully capturing their unique physical forms and personalities.

Although Fourteenth Street School artists shared a commitment to drawing from life and the use of classical techniques or subjects,



they each took Miller's example in different directions. Bishop's work was sensitive to portraying class differences on display on the city's streets and Raphael Soyer developed an even more socially critical, political approach. Soyer studied at the League with Boardman Robinson and Guy Pène DuBois, and through DuBois became affiliated with the Fourteenth Street School artists. He

shared with Bishop, Marsh, and Miller an academic approach to the figure and an interest in recording women's experience in the city, but expanded his subject matter to chronicle the effects of the Great Depression and the struggles of the poor. In contrast to Isabel Bishop's optimistic portrayals of working girls enjoying the autonomy offered by urban spaces, Soyer's subjects often appear worried, distracted, or lonely.

Arnold Blanch and Reginald Marsh presented the figure in the context of New York City's commercial culture and modern sexuality. In *Circus Girl* (1926) Blanch evoked the contemporary classical goddesses Miller painted, depicting the performer with solid forms and a robust physique, but further modernizing the subject by dressing her in a feathered hat and bright red leotard. Juxtaposing Renaissance themes with the vogue for carnivals, vaudeville, and burlesque, Blanch anticipates subjects that Marsh would fully develop in the 1930s. Miller encouraged Marsh to pursue the sensual themes in his work with the advice "[Y]ou are a painter of the body. Sex is your theme." Nowhere was the body more on public display than at Coney Island, where carnival rides, performances, and the atmosphere of the beach and boardwalk loosened social codes and brought different types of people together. Along with the stores and theaters surrounding Union Square, Coney Island became one of Marsh's favorite destinations for observing, sketching, and gathering source material for his prints and paintings.

As much as the Fourteenth Street School artists drew from the past, they used classical life drawing practices to contemporary ends. Their work examined the city and the changing lives of its inhabitants, addressing the current cultural moment and pushing realist trends to the forefront of American painting. Kenneth Hayes Miller and his students played a role in reversing the stylistic preference for abstraction that Miller had observed following the Armory Show, and realist styles became incredibly popular during the 1930s. This important chapter in the history of American realism laid the foundation for the development of post-war realist movements and for figurative painters, including many League instructors, who are working today.

*Opposite page, left to right:* Kenyon Cox, *Untitled*, 1900, oil on board, 30 x 18 in.; Arnold Blanch, *Circus Girl*, 1925, oil on canvas, 50 x 30 in.; Kenneth Hayes Miller, *Women in the Store*, 1937, oil on canvas, 9 x 24 in.; Raphael Soyer, *Woman with Scarf*, oil on canvas, 23 x 19½ in. Courtesy of Forum Gallery

# Revelations from a Retrospective

Stephanie Cassidy in conversation with Bruce Dorfman

## Stephanie Cassidy

Your retrospective exhibition

*Bruce Dorfman: Past Present* includes forty-three works completed over twenty-eight years. What goes on in your mind as you're looking at these paintings assembled together? There could be a moment of triumph and pleasure but also a paralyzing fear of where to go next and a questioning of whether you've reached your greatest potential as an artist. Does a show of this scale push those issues forward in your mind?

## Bruce Dorfman

Where to go next, for me, is never an issue. I've spent my life going along from one piece of work to another, from one year to another. The last piece of work prompts questions that can only be dealt with by doing another piece of work. One of the things that struck me about the show overall is that I was very familiar with the person who painted all these things. I could see constants running through everything, regardless of the shifts of emphasis. There are feelings and ideas and visual qualities that I love, and, apparently, I always have loved. I'm looking at things that were done quite a while ago, and things that I wrote quite a while ago, which are not very different from what I am thinking now. My ability to express those things, perhaps, is greater at this point, than it was then.

I have never seen that many pieces of my work at one time under any circumstances. We chose the very best of what we had but did not allow chronology to dictate those selections. The starting point was set at 1988 and the endpoint at 2016. If and when the retrospective opens up more, it would begin with a single piece of work that was completed at the Art Students League, in 1952, a very critical painting that marked an early turning point.

## SC

You're saying that the origins of your mature composite paintings are to be found in this single 1952 canvas?

## BD

The painting, *Broken Pitchers*, was done in Yasuo Kuniyoshi's and Arnold Blanch's classes. It embodies a love of color and space and shape. The conversations I had with both Kuniyoshi and Blanch moved toward a very open-minded idea about works of art incorporating whatever the artist felt was necessary to get to the particular end that they needed to get to. One had to be open to what was right in front of oneself, rather than be concerned with whether or not it was consistent with some category or way of doing things.

## SC

Could either Kuniyoshi or Blanch have predicted the path of your work, taking on materials outside of paint and canvas?

## BD

Yes, I think so. Both artists were concerned primarily with the individual in their classes. They did not promote an ideology or a particular performance skill of any kind. I walked out of other League classes because they didn't do that. There was more of a shtick involved, and they were teaching to a whole class. There was some kind of ideology or infallible way of doing things that they felt was crucial. And I've never been able to understand that point of it at all. I don't believe in general fundamentals or basics. I simply do not.

## SC

You describe the Art Students League as allowing you to pursue these things freely, which I think echoed some early encouragement from your parents to pursue what you felt was interesting and valuable and to have confidence in your own instincts. It's a position contrary to being the good student and conforming to lessons or fundamentals taught in schools. It was an unusual attitude for parents to take with children at that time.

## BD

I think it was and continues to be very unusual. The idea of distinctiveness and the importance of personal choice, so long

as it was creative and not destructive or harmful to someone else, was an important thing to be valued. My family said that I had the responsibility for saying something or doing something that would be a contribution and of value and importance. They were both creative people. There was an ongoing constructive validation and reassurance at all times, provided I took the responsibility for the doing of these things.

I think the creative act is very different than the ability to perform a skill set. I think what needs to be understood are what one's preferences or choices are, and then to be able to give expression to them in a constructive way. Individual choice is as distinctive as the human being who makes those choices. We are part of a collective, I understand that, but within that, there's this other thing operating: the willingness to risk identity, come what may. There is something very valuable in that when it happens.

## SC

Let's go back to the selection of the forty-three works for the retrospective because that can't be a small task. You culled them from three different galleries and from your own storage. What is the process of sifting, sorting, assessing? You worked with a curator who might have had his own agenda about what goes on the wall, and different ideas about how to represent an evolution, a life, or themes and variations in the work. How did that process unfold?

## BD

There was, of course, a desire to exhibit work done over a span of time. We picked out pieces that reflected the whole time frame and would hang well together. There are more pieces of work in certain years than there are in others.

## SC

The starting point of this show is 1988, which leaves a big gap between 1952, the year of your breakthrough *Broken Pitchers* painting, and 1988. Why was 1988 a good starting point for the show?



**Bruce Dorfman**, *The Weight of Light*, 2016, canvas, wood, metal, paper, fabric, and acrylic, 65 x 62 x 6 in.

**BD**

That's a great question. There was a persistent issue following me during those in-between years: there were concerns over whether I was going to fully and unquestioningly accept what I believed in or whether I was going to adjust to a more categorized way of thinking about things and find what I needed to do within that. Between 1960 and 1988, I attempted to rearrange or redefine what a painting space could be, and what painting meant or what it might mean. I became increasingly more conscious of painting not always resolving itself as just paint on a rectangle.

**SC**

A retrospective affords a special vantage point. I'm wondering what you see on the walls now that the work is assembled together. What have you gained from walking into the gallery at different points?

**BD**

It struck me in a coherent way that creating those paintings, the doing of them, is the great and loyal constant of my life. These works were all very close, more than great friends. There was also a sense of persistent concerns, persistent feelings, the persistent presence of qualities of feeling that I love. I had never seen it that way. I had thought about that, but I was never really sure.

**SC**

Is it a catharsis, in a way? Or is it a catalyst to do more? Does it set a new agenda?

**BD**

I think it is both. It has confirmed something that I've suspected: one can trust one's impulses. When something comes to mind, trust it. Go with it because it is doable, and you've just proven that it is doable.

*Bruce Dorfman: Past Present* was on view at Monmouth University's DiMattio Gallery from September 6 through December 18, 2016.

# The League's New Sequential Classes

## *Building an Arc of Knowledge*

Ken Park

Since the fall of 2015, the League has been offering students a new series of time-limited learning opportunities we call sequential classes. These classes—covering topics like color theory, drawing fundamentals, and portfolio development—offer an alternative to our one hundred traditional ongoing studio classes and our popular intensive workshops.

We call the classes “sequential” because instructors follow a specific syllabus of goals and objectives for the students to achieve. Each class session builds on the previous one. “In other words,” explains instructor Lisa Dinhofer, “the course follows a definite line of thought with a beginning, a middle, and an end.”

Seventy students, many of them new to the League, are taking sequential classes this fall. Meeting once or twice a week for twelve weeks, in the evening or on weekends, students focus on specific techniques and concepts, enabling them to acquire

skills and grasp key ideas to take their work to a new level. Out-of-class assignments reinforce the studio learning.

This approach “affords students more time for practice to internalize the lessons,” explains Alex Zwarenstein, who has been teaching drawing fundamentals. “Students are happy to take on something new each week.”

“I can build an arc of knowledge through practice,” says Dinhofer. “This approach allows me to explore a very complicated subject without having to introduce the class again and again.”

Students, too, appreciate the syllabus-based approach. Zwarenstein’s students praise his “explicit instruction,” “supportive approach,” and “constructive critiques.”

Sequential classes can require more of instructors, but Dinhofer says it’s worth it. “For each session I need to have a complete lesson plan, which follows the course outline. Throughout the class students

come up to me saying how much they are learning. Last week a student said she thought she had just finished a very difficult game of chess. Every time I teach this class I learn something more. I am grateful to my students for that.”

Sequential classes have become more popular each fall and spring. In January 2017, offerings in this category will be: “Fundamentals of Drawing” with Margaret McCann, on Wednesday evenings; “Color Theory” with Lisa Dinhofer, on Tuesday evenings; a “Portfolio Review” class with Wendy Shalen, on Sunday mornings; “Lectures on Anatomy for Artists” with Michael Burban, on Thursday evenings; and “Symbolism in Art & Design” with League newcomer Farrin Chwalkowski, on Thursdays at 4:45 p.m. You can learn more about these special classes and register online at [www.theartstudentsleague.org](http://www.theartstudentsleague.org).

### Weekly Course Topics for Alex Zwarenstein’s “Drawing Fundamentals” Class for Fall 2016

**Week 1** Approaches: linear and/or tonal approaches. Practice drawing man-made and organic forms.

**Week 2** Loosening up exercises: drawing with eyes closed; walking the pencil line around the page; drawing from the shoulder rather than the wrist.

**Week 3** Point relationship exercise: learning to measure to achieve proportion. Studio strategies.

**Week 4** Draw first from observation. Edit second by point relationship.

**Week 5** How gravity works on the posed figure; how the position of head, thorax, and abdomen align.

**Week 6** Living anatomy by observation (what anatomical features to look for under the skin: where bone or muscles show at the surface).

**Week 7** Elements of anatomy: identifying bone and muscle.

**Week 8** Expressing anatomy through contour.

**Week 9** Approaches to modeling form: developing crosshatching, etc.

**Week 10** Perspective: as it relates to drawing from life and observation. Studio strategies.

**Week 11** Principles of drawing drapery.

**Week 12** The human figure from imagination. Stereotypical proportion, anticipating the moving figure.



# New Instructors

## PROFILES



### Michael Burban

#### PROFILE

Michael Burban studied at the League with Robert Beverly Hale and has taught and lectured at the National Academy of Design, Cooper Union, and Columbia University. His book *Lessons from Michelangelo* was published by Watson-Guption in 1986. He has exhibited at several galleries in the New York area, and his drawings are in many private collections.

Michael Burban, *Old Man*, graphite on paper, 12 x 9 in.



### Lisa Dinhofer

#### PROFILE

Lisa Dinhofer received an MFA from the University of Pennsylvania. Her works are widely-collected and represented the collections of the Brooklyn Museum of Art, City College (CUNY), and IBM. Dinhofer's ninety-foot glass mosaic mural, *Losing My Marbles*, is installed in the Times Square subway station. She is represented by Denise Bibro Fine Art in New York.

Lisa Dinhofer, *Light Travels #1*, oil on wood panels, 44 in. (diameter)



### Marshall Jones

#### PROFILE

Marshall Jones has taught figure drawing and painting at the Salmagundi Club and Studio 371. He has twice received the Richard Pionk award at the Salmagundi Club's *Annual Members' Exhibition*. In 2010 he was awarded a Fantasy Foundation Travel Scholarship from the Art Students League to study at the Paris American Academy.

Marshall Jones, *Moon*, 2016, oil on linen, 42 x 50 in.



### James Little

#### PROFILE

James Little holds a BFA from the Memphis Academy of Art and an MFA from Syracuse University. His paintings are represented in many museum, corporate, and private collections, including the Newark Museum, the DeMenil Collection, the Everson Museum of Art, the New Jersey State Museum, the Studio Museum, Harlem; the Library of Congress, and Maatschappij Arti Et Amicitiae, Amsterdam.

James Little, *Jump Start*, 2016, raw pigment on canvas, 34 x 40 in.



### John Varriano

#### PROFILE

John A. Varriano studied at the Art Students League with Frank Mason and Gustav Rehberger. His numerous awards include Best in Show at the UCJF's *Annual Fall for Art Show* and the National Art League's *Annual Exhibit*; the Sanford Grumbacher Gold Medal; the Alfred and Mary Crimi Award; and the Guilia Palermo Award from the Audubon Artists. He is represented by Mark Gruber Gallery in New Paltz, NY.

John Varriano, *Father's Day*, 2015, oil on canvas, 30 x 40 in.



### Alex Zwarenstein

#### PROFILE

Alex Zwarenstein received his BA with honors from London University and his MA from the Royal Academy of Arts in London. In 1979, he was awarded the prestigious biennial Royal Academy Gold Medal for painting and the Turner Traveling Scholarship. Mr. Zwarenstein exhibits in New York and around the world.

Alex Zwarenstein, *The Drive*, oil on canvas, 16 x 24 in.



# On Teaching

## Rhoda Sherbell

**T**he essence of good art teaching consists of a number of things. I encourage my students to be cognizant of the art world as a whole. It's a gestalt one can achieve by repeated visits to the museum. I start with Cycladic art at the Metropolitan Museum. I tell my students to look at the world of aesthetics up close and find where their affinities lie. Understanding another culture is a gift. All art gives you something. Embrace the variety. That is important in art. Keep stretching the possibilities of where you can go. The more you learn, the more you grow.

The best way to get students to work is for them to know their own family background. That is their ballast. If you don't have that, you have nothing. When you have a sense of who you are and where you came from, you learn to discriminate and decide what you want in your life. The-

se are the principles that you start to live by and strengthen as you go along. They inform your relationships. In my class, relationships between students are very warm. I encourage them to talk to each other about their work. Learning is more intense this way. Every student has to be dealt with as an individual.

Then, there is the process of learning the formal qualities of art-making. Again, I use the Met as a teaching tool. Any room will do. Here a student can see how well-known artists have dealt with problems. Who can you not love there? You are overwhelmed with beauty and the possibilities. I show my students that form and content are essential in art. When the two are married, you have a very happy situation going: a full-fledged work of art.

Everyone has a point of view and aesthetic. The instructor's task is to recognize

what the student is crying out for and encourage that. You don't want carbon copies of yourself, but rather the expression of their talent, knowledge, and unique voice.

If you don't have the talent, it is not going to work. That's not mechanical. Most of the artists that emerge, they are talents. These are individualists who both understand their background and possess an innate gift. You don't even know where this talent comes from.

In my studio there is continuous talking. I greet everyone when I walk in; I say hello to each student. I walk around the room, look at the piece they are working on, and point out certain areas for a closer look. "Think about this," I suggest. I never tell a student that something is awful or not right. I talk about the specifics of anatomy but also about writing and music. I explain the array of tools I use and demonstrate what each does, which can make them more efficient sculptors. My fingers work quickly, so quickly that during demonstrations I often have to slow down so students can see what I'm doing. My fingers seem to have their

own intelligence at times. Call it muscle memory. I tell my students this: When you work, you have to think just like an actor or filmmaker. A public will be looking at your work. You need to strive for clarity in what you are saying.

William Zorach, my teacher, was so different from me. He loved stone and wood. I loved clay. He used certain tools that were far too large for my hands. I found them unworkable. Our styles were different. But he respected that I was independent. From the very beginning, ours was a friendship more than a teaching relationship. He was not extremely articulate. He would just say, Keep working. But he would call me to his studio on Hicks Street, in Brooklyn, to help with commissions. His wife, Marguerite, would make lunch. Zorach loved Martha Graham. On long days, he would stop working and take certain dance poses. I wish that all students could have a friendship like that with their instructor. Now, so many years later, as I'm walking out of the building after teaching my evening class, I pat the Zorach bust in the League's lobby.

Art is difficult. Each piece comes with its own challenges. For one commission, I worked with a 6,000-pound piece of clay in my studio. To move that clay one inch, I had to lean into it with my whole body. In the beginning, I was angry because it was so physically taxing. But you don't feel sorry for yourself. You do your job the best you know how. I forgot about the discomfort as I worked. By the end of the day, the tools just fell out of my hands. I would get into a warm tub because I was tensed up and in pain. Then I would go make dinner. No matter how difficult it is, the work has to be to my standards. Every inch of that piece has to be excellent, to show me in the best light, and to communicate the right feeling. It has to be a work of art, after all. Nothing more, nothing less.

The Art Students League embodies a unique approach to teaching art. Many schools have a way they want their teachers to work. Here, the personality of the artist is important. Artists are allowed to teach and speak with their own voices. The school does not interfere or dictate. The League respects the teacher and the student. Diversity is also important. Just think of the different people who have studied here. Those who have the talent and tenacity, who know the discipline of work will be encouraged and find a place.

*As told to Stephanie Cassidy*



# Grant Recipients 2016

The first significant donation to the Art Students League was the legacy of Miss Elizabeth Henderson in 1895. Her \$1,300 bequest became the Henderson Scholarship Fund and so began a long tradition of support for aspiring artists. Over the years, artists like James Rosenquist, Lee Bontecou, and Cy Twombly received scholarships to study here, underscoring the importance of philanthropy to the fulfillment of the League's mission.

Among the major grants currently offered, the Edward G. McDowell Travel Grant, earmarked for travel in Europe by unmarried students, was the first and continued to be the only cash award until 1995, when the Phyllis H. Mason Grant—for traditional painters—was established. In 1998, the Nessa Cohen Grants were added, offering support to printmakers and sculptors for special projects. The Xavier Gonzalez & Ethel Edwards Grants provide stipends to artists for travel in Spain and were first awarded in 2002. Beginning in 2008, the Sara and Yasuo Kuniyoshi Foundation has provided scholarships in painting and printmaking, and the Donn Russell Grant for Art Materials was created just last year.

During the week-long scholarship and grant competition this past May, judges reviewed the work of 300 applicants to award 14 grants and 37 merit scholarships. The judges—artists, gallerists, academics, and critics from New York City's arts community—were Kathy Butterly, Deborah Chaney, John Dubrow, Andrew Freiser, Michael Gitlitz, Anthony Panzera, George Henoche Schechtman, Sara Sosnowy, Karen Wilkin, and Daniel Zeller. Grant recipients have two years to prepare for the annual *Grant Winners Exhibition* held every November in the Phyllis Harriman Mason Gallery. Presented here are the winners of the top grants in 2016.



Sergio Cabrera, *Untitled*, 2016, papier-mâché, 54 x 27 x 31 in. Recipient of the Ann & Bruno Lucchesi Grant



Ayumi Nakao, *Untitled*, 2015, lithograph, 11 x 10½ in. Recipient of the Kuniyoshi Award for Printmaking



Keiko Nakamori, *Victoria*, 2015, oil on canvas, 36 x 24 in. Recipient of the Gregory Lysun Grant



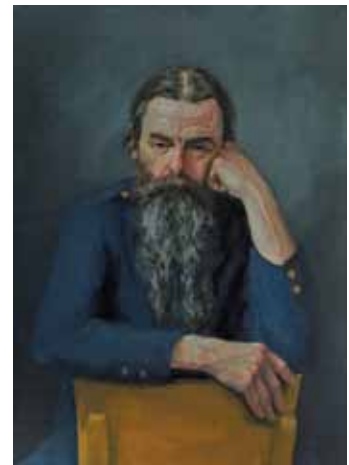
Nathalie Madelaine Gregoire, *Palmyre*, 2016, acrylic on canvas, 54 x 34 in. Recipient of the Marianne Brody Gaston Grant



Jeannie Friedman, *Didn't Really Mean to Hurt Her*, 2016. girl's dress and found wood, 28 x 25 in. Recipient of a Xavier Gonzalez and Ethel Edwards Travel Grant



William C. Wallis, *Babel*, 2015, sumi ink and oil on canvas, 78 x 62 in. Recipient of a Xavier Gonzalez and Ethel Edwards Travel Grant



Eleanor Adam, *Though Much Is Taken, Much Abides*, 2016, oil on canvas, 28 x 20 in. Recipient of the Doreta Kesson Masterton Grant



Renee Larson, *Self*, 2014, oil, 10 x 8 in.  
Recipient of a Fantasy Fund Foundation Grant



Yolande Heijnen, *Betty Seated*, 2016, oil on canvas, 40 x 30 in. Recipient of the Edward G. McDowell Travel Grant



Cecilia Monteverde, *Obstaculo 428*, 2016, acrylic, sand, gel, graphite powder, watercolor, gesso, ink, cardboard, wire, resin, liquid tar, 36 x 48 in.  
Recipient of a Fantasy Fund Foundation Grant



Akiko Asanuma, *Holes*, 2016, etching and aquatint on paper, 11½ x 8½ in. Recipient of the Will Barnett Grant



Jeremy Day, *Untitled*, 2016, graphite, 14 x 11 in. Recipient of a Nessa Cohen Grant



Mitsu Haraguchi, *House in Poughkeepsie I*, 2015, watercolor on paper, 32 x 45 in. Recipient of a Fantasy Fund Foundation Grant



Siu Wong-Camac, *Sunny Side Up*, 2015, mixed media collage on cradled panel, 12 x 12 in.  
Recipient of the Marilyn Laurie Grant



Anne Richter, *Stone Bird Black*, 2016, acrylic on paper, 26¾ x 22 in. Recipient of the Kuniyoshi Award for Painting



Marina Zaslavsky, *Carpet of Flowers*, 2015, oil on linen, 48 x 36 in. Recipient of a Fantasy Fund Foundation Grant



Sheila Berger, *Bird Deconstructed*, 2015, steel, kinetic, 90 x 72 x 48 in.  
Recipient of a Nessa Cohen Grant

Establishing a named grant or scholarship is a very meaningful way to honor or memorialize a cherished family member, friend, or colleague. For more information about creating an award, please contact Jeanne Lunin, Director of Development, at 212-247-4510, ext. 185 or [jlunin@artstudentsleague.org](mailto:jlunin@artstudentsleague.org).

# MEMBER NEWS & IDEAS



## *What advice can you offer art students transitioning from the structure of the classroom to working in their own studio?*

Much like making art, the transition to working on your own is a process. Commit to the momentum of a schedule and go with an open mind, accepting what will or will not happen each day. It is a place to be in your own head, to experiment without judgment. Learn to trust your instincts and know that all you've learned and experienced in class is still inside you.

**Lilian R. Engel** studied with Rhoda Sherbell, Barney Hodes, Peter Cox, Frank Porcu, and Seiji Saito.

The most important thing when you strike out on your own is to establish the habit of painting as much as you can, virtually every day. I initially found it difficult to get to work without the structure of the classroom. I frittered away a lot of time. Then, I made the decision to ask myself every morning what it was I truly wanted to do. On that first day my answer was to paint. I never had trouble with discipline again.

**Elizabeth Torak** studied with Anthony Palumbo, Isaac Soyer, Hughie Lee-Smith, and Frank Mason.

The best approach to transition from the classroom to your own studio is to be there every day, no matter what. Go to your studio every day and paint or draw or read, take a nap. Just go! I found that having rituals like making a cup of coffee, sitting, and reviewing my work from the day before, sketching, or reading is helpful. Having a routine, no matter how

small, creates a pattern, which gets me going. Stay connected to the League. It's one of the best resources for artists. You can take a class whenever you feel the need to, brush up on your skills, or reconnect with other artists.

**Betsy Heffron** studied with Leatrice Rose, Peter Homitzky, Michael Burban, Peter Golfnopolous, and Karen O'Neil.

Treat the art that you do like a job. Not your hobby, not your second job, and not something that you hope "works out." You wouldn't be late for work, so why would you be late to the studio?

**Conrad Stojak** studied with Bruce Dorfman.

Do a little work every day outside of the League, at home or wherever. Gradually build up a portfolio, and then start submitting works for public view, outside the League. This will develop professional depth, which can then lead to awards, commissions, more shows, and commercial viability.

**Markus Holtby** studied with James McElhinney, James Garvey, Grace Knowlton, and Oscar Garcia.

Transitioning from the classroom structure requires good time management, self-discipline, self-critique, and a constant search for network and marketing resources. To sustain myself as an artist, multi-tasking is just as important as producing art.

**Esther Kong Lo** studied with Gregory Lyson, Jonathan Shahn, and Rhoda Sherbell.

While at the League, even as a monitor, you're following somebody else's instructions. Have a sketchbook handy to sketch people and places, draw landscapes, or jot down some interesting color combinations. Reserve some time to work on your own. Find a place at home or in a studio where you can experiment on your own. Find a place to exhibit your work. I still have a connection with the League, but my most important work is that which I create outside of the League.

**Majò L. Foy** studied with Jack Henderson, Michael Burban, Sidney Simon, Harvey Dinnerstein, Richard Pionk, Ellen Eagle, and Henry Finkelstein.

It is always important for me to have certain isolation to allow for inward searching. At the same time, I am eager to see, to hear, to feel, and to learn as much as I can. I currently spend most of my time in the studio, but I will always go back to the class when I feel the need.

**Fei Li** studied with Frank O'Cain, Henry Finkelstein, and Leonid Lerman.

From left, Conrad Stojak, *New World Trade Center*, mixed media, 4 ft. x 8 in. x 5 in.; Dominique Medici, *Pali*, 2016, oil on aluminium, 16 x 12 in.; Esther Kong, *Young Immigrant from Ukraine*, 2016, cast hydrocal, 21 x 12 x 10 in.; Aurelia Liwag, *Cliff Hanger*, oil on linen, 20 x 20 in.; Ellen Buselli, *Lady Tang*, 2016, oil on linen, 20 x 21 in.; Noah Jordan, *The Other Shore*, 2015, charcoal and white paper, 16 x 16 in.; Martha Ives, *Double Bogey Boogie Woogie*, 2016, linocut, 9 x 10 in.



## MEMBER EXHIBITIONS & AWARDS

### Elizabeth Allen

Group show: *Land and Light and Water and Air*, Bryan Memorial Gallery (Jeffersonville, VT), September 9–November 16, 2016.

### Ellen Buselli

Honor: Buselli has been selected as a finalist for the *12th International Art Renewal Center Salon*. This year the ARC received 3,196 entries from over 1,300 artists representing 63 countries.

### Irene Christensen

Two-person show: *Paper the Walls*, with Lynne Mayocole, Ceres Gallery (NYC), October 4–29, 2016.

### Emily Duong

Group show: *2nd New York International Miniature Print Exhibition*, Manhattan Graphics Center, November 4–December 18, 2016.

### Evelyn Eller

Group show: *Talk, Talk, Central Booking*, Haber Space (NYC), September 22–October 30, 2016.

### Jan Emerson

Group show: *Works on Paper*, Manhattan Borough President's Office and Art Students League of New York (NYC) June 29–August 31, 2016.

### Majô L. Foy

Solo show: *Cityscapes & Landscapes*, Arco Cafe (NYC), ongoing 2016.

### James Harrington

Group show: *Audubon Artists 74th Annual Exhibition*, Salmagundi Club (NYC), October 24–November 4, 2016.

### Betsy Heffron

Group show: Ms. Heffron exhibited work in the Osaka Art Fair (Osaka, Japan), in partnership with HPGRP Gallery (NYC) and T.O.A.S.T One Art Space (TriBeCa), May 11–23, 2016.

### Yuka Imata

Publication: Yuka Imata's *Portrait of Tom* was on the cover the *Drawing* magazine's Fall 2016 issue.

### Martha Ives

Solo show: Martha Ives will be exhibiting her etchings, lithographs, and linocuts at the Morningside Heights Branch of the New York Public Library, December 1–30, 2016.

### Noah Jordan

Award: Jordan's drawing *The Other Shore* is a finalist in *The Artist Magazine's* 33rd Annual Art Competition, which will be announced in the January/February 2017 issue.

### Jennifer Li

Publication: In conjunction with an exhibition on Elizabeth Davey Lockrie she co-curated for the Hockaday Museum (Kalispell, MT), Jennifer Li has published "Woman Alone in Her Way," a brief biography of the artist. <http://www.distinctly-montana.com/elizabeth-davey-lochrie>

### Aurelia Liwag

Solo show: *Res Ipsa Loquitur III*, Philippine Center (NYC), September 8–18, 2015.

### Dominique Medici

Solo show: *Emerging*, Chelsea Classical Studio Gallery, October 20–30, 2016.

### Pamela Pearce

Group show: *WORD 2016: Words in Art/Art*

*in Words*, The Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art (Peekskill, NY), February 27–December 17, 2016.

### Marsha Plafkin

Award: *ArtPrize 2016*, West Grand Neighborhood Organization (Grand Rapids, MI), September 21–October 9, 2016.

### Gail Postal

Solo show: Art Institute & Gallery (Salisbury, MD), September 16–October 21, 2016.

### Roberta Samuels

Solo show: *De Mon Point de Vue*, Office de Tourisme (Montpezat de Quercy, France), July 1–15, 2016.

### Bonnie Steinsnyder

Group show: *SCNY Non-Members' Painting and Sculpture Exhibition*, Upper Gallery, Salmagundi Club (NYC), July 18–29, 2016.

### Conrad Stojak

Award: Mr. Stojak received a Pollock-Krasner Grant in 2016.

### Theodosia A.G. Tamborlane

New Studio: Opened her a new studio in Dunedin, FL, and became a member of Dunedin Fine Arts Center.

The Graphic Image is a group show of relief prints at the Belskie Museum of Art and Science (Closter, NJ). The exhibit runs from November 13 through December 4, 2016. Several ASL members exhibited work in the show: Julie Abraham, Katharine Butler, Veronique Coutant-Godard, Martha Ives, Fejzo Lalaj, Julie Nadel, Richard Pantell, Ellen Singer, and Karen Whitman.

# SEEDS OF THE LEAGUE

## *Building a Foundation*

Denise L. Greene

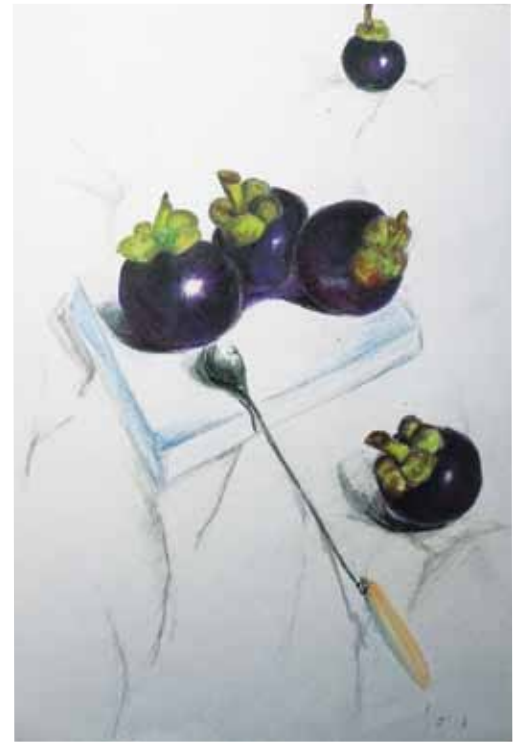


*This page, clockwise from above: Tiffany Vargas, *Deep Thought*; Krisleyde Cabrera, *Untitled*; Matthew Ramos, *Broken Promise*; Opposite page, left to right: Devon Rodriguez, *World-Weariness* and W. Sheng, *Untitled**

What do you like most about Seeds of the League? a colleague asked me. Without hesitation, I said, The results. Since 2010, the combined efforts of our partner institutions and League teachers have helped students enter specialized high schools, colleges, and professions. Of course, not everyone who receives a Seeds scholarship becomes a professional artist, but this early exposure to rigorous study at the League lays the foundation for exploring those possibilities.

The Seeds program is part of the Art Students League's larger history of nurturing young talent. Many well-known artists received scholarships to study at the League, including Georgia O'Keeffe, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Jackson Pollock, James Rosenquist, Cy Twombly, Ai Wei Wei, and Lee Bontecou. As early as 1935, the League began recruiting students from New York City high schools. Noted illustrator Jack Kamen studied at the League from 1937 to 1941 and credited his time here with learning the skills that would support him for life. In his memory, Jack's family funded Seeds of the League, which has helped sustain and expand the program.





Seeds has grown from serving one high school class of twenty students to serving more than five hundred youth from fourteen high schools, three middle schools, one elementary school, eight New York City Parks centers, one conservancy, and four social service agencies every year. The Seeds program has won awards for after-school excellence from NYC Parks and Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center. Seeds participants, moreover, have won many more for their artwork.

Seeds students come from all five boroughs, and for many, it's the first time they have ventured outside the familiarity of their neighborhoods. Is it any wonder they are filled with excitement? Students might find themselves studying at the League next to a grandparent, a surgeon, a retired teacher, or someone their own age. Weiting "Ben" Sheng, a student at Edward R. Murrow High School, in Brooklyn, explains, "What makes art fascinating is the differences between artists. We live in the same world, yet can elaborate on the same object very differently. During the summer, I get advice from the teacher and other artists to improve my skills, bringing me inspiration, and helping me see things from different points of view."

Some students find their focus early and study with one instructor for a few years, while others prefer to explore different styles and media until they find their individual voice. Over three summers,

Matthew Ramos attended the League every morning and afternoon studying in the classes of Mary Beth McKenzie and Sharon Sprung. In 2015 Matthew won the Sutton Area Community Scholarship; the School of Visual Arts Chairman Merit Award (\$48,000), the SVA Grant (\$8,000), and Residence Life Waiver (\$5,000), all helping to fund his undergraduate degree.

Tiffany Vargas, a Seeds alumna, competed against 449 other entries in the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery Teen Competition with her portrait *Deep Thought* and received the grand prize. Her drawing is now on view in Washington, DC, as part of the exhibition *The Outwin 2016: American Portraiture Today*.

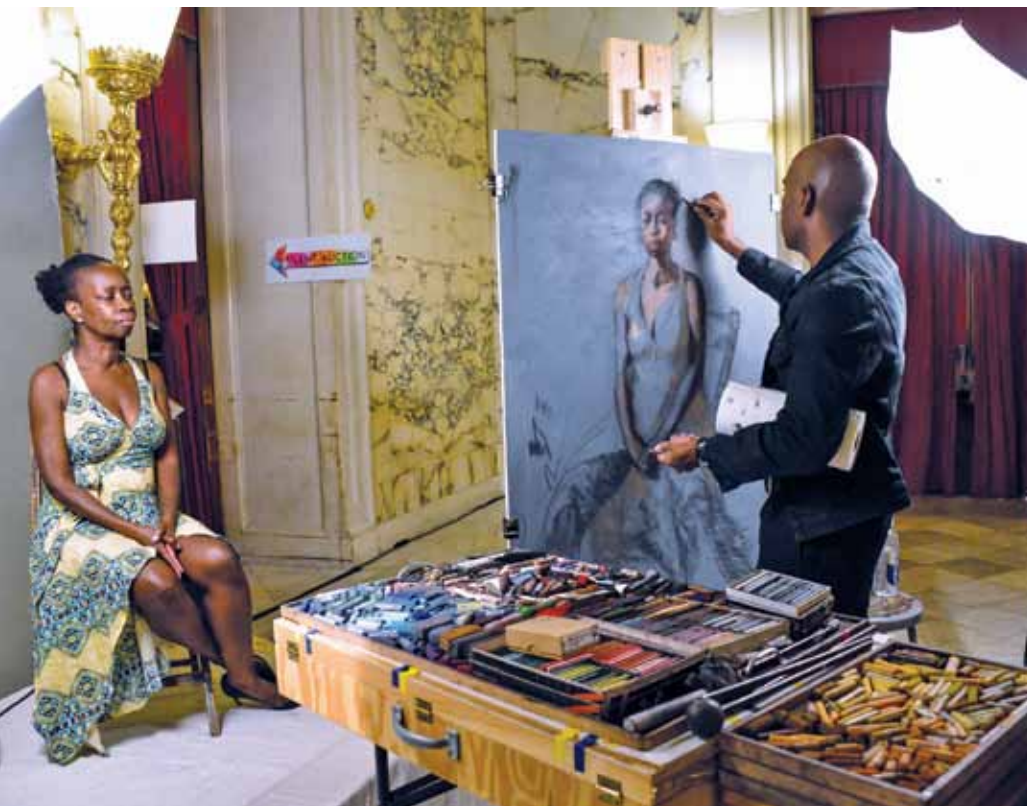
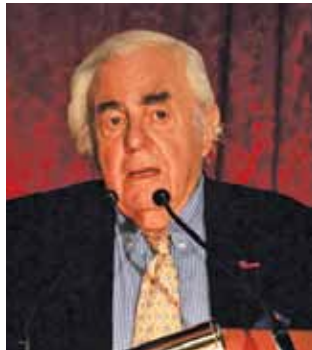
Devon Rodriguez, a student at the High School of Art & Design, had early artistic inclinations but few outlets. He explains: "[I began] doing graffiti, because I'm from the South Bronx and that's the only art those kids do. But I got arrested, so I started doing portraits." Rodriguez studied at the League with Dan Thompson. The artistic director of EMOA Gallery in Chelsea, which hosted the first Seeds of the League teen exhibition, invited Rodriguez to develop more work for inclusion in another exhibition. His portraits earned him three gold medals in the National Scholastic Art & Writing competition in 2014, and he represented his high school in the citywide P.S. Art 2014 exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. More

recently, Rodriguez has been mentioned in several artist magazines that profile artists under 30 to watch. The September 12, 2016 issue of *The New Yorker* includes Rachel Corbett's "Two Generations of South Bronx Artists," which describes Devon's friendship with the sixty-five-year-old sculptor John Ahearn.

The Seeds program awards around seventy-five scholarships for study at the League each year. We supplement high school art departments with Seeds teachers for an after-school experience, which also provides assistant teaching opportunities for some of our teens. Seeds provides an experience for youth that they cannot find anywhere else. We care about and nurture each individual student. Seeds of the League is made possible through the generosity of donors like you.

# 2016 GALA

The Art Students League held a memorable gala benefit on October 20 at the Metropolitan Club in New York City, honoring arts patrons Louise Hirschfeld Cullman and Lewis B. Cullman, seminal Pop artist James Rosenquist, and renowned portraitist Everett Raymond Kinstler. We are deeply grateful to all our supporters for making this the most successful League gala ever! Executive Director Ira Goldberg was joined by co-chairs Tommy Tune, Michael Rips, and Morton Kaish in paying heartfelt tribute to our distinguished honorees. The special medal presented to the honorees was designed by League instructor and celebrated sculptor, Greg Wyatt. The League's three hundred guests also reveled in live demonstrations by watercolorist Mary Jo Anzel, sculptor Ramón Sierra, painters Sam Goodsell and YUKAKO, and their models. League instructor Sharon Sprung donated a portrait session. A silent auction included works by League artists Anthony C. Antonios, Will Barnet, Bruce Dorfman, Knox Martin, Peter Reginato, Douglas P. Safranek, and Thomas Torak.



*Top:* Guests mingling in the Great Hall of the Metropolitan Club, NYC  
*Above, from left:* Mimi Thompson accepting the medal on behalf of James Rosenquist, Everett Raymond Kinstler, Lewis B. Cullman, and Louise Hirschfeld Cullman  
*Above:* Susan Benedetto and Tony Bennett  
*Left:* Sam Goodsell at work on a pastel portrait

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# The Art Students League of New York

215 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019 TEL: (212) 247-4510  
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