

## And now a word from Jimmy Wright, president of PSA

**It was a very good year, indeed!**

December 2015

Dear members, supporters, and friends,

### **Another winner!**

The year 2015 has been a good one for PSA in terms of achievements, improvements, and expanded reach. Membership has reached 1,800 with 80 percent active participants...and it's growing!

Let's start with PSA's Annual Exhibition, the premier art event organized by the oldest pastel society in America. In every way, the Annual fulfills the tenets of the by-laws written in 1972, our founding year, by JoAnn Wellner, daughter of PSA founder Flora Giffuni. We promote pastels and pastelists; spark interest in the medium; disseminate and publish information about the medium; promote research; work with museums, societies, and schools; promote pastel exhibits of other societies—among other activities. Flora, herself, helped to birth more than 35 pastel societies in this country. Now more than 160 societies exist in America, Canada, Australia, France, Spain, Italy, China, Taiwan, Thailand, and Japan. And PSA, with its broad membership, serves academic bodies, professional artists, retirees, young people, and amateurs. PSA's membership roll, exhibitions, and publications serve as invaluable resources for art publishers, academic institutions, commercial galleries, public galleries and museums, and pastel societies and associations worldwide.

This year, 602 artists submitted a total of 1,365 images for inclusion in the Annual. A team of three Master Pastelists—Alan Flattmann, Doug Dawson, and Wende Caporale—juried 183 paintings into the show, representing 38 states, as well as China, Finland, Canada, Spain, and France, indicating a strong international interest.

Richard McKinley once again held the rapt attention of his audience during the Gallery Talk and Reception held the first night of our big annual awards weekend. The Materials Fair, organized by Arlene Richman, outdid itself for the third consecutive year, with more tables, more vendors, and a 38 percent increase in sales. Adding to the glamour of the Materials Fair were the stunning demonstrations executed by Janet Cook, Liz Haywood-Sullivan, and Richard McKinley, who not only painted with virtuosity, but also talked to attendees about techniques and methods. We heard lots of enthusiastic comments, and many expressed hopes that they too would be exhibiting in the Annual soon. And we hope they will be!

The free portfolio review, organized by Susan Story, was once again a popular component of the Fair. Gwenneth Barth-White, Bill Creevy, and Maceo Mitchell were there to review and critique images brought by Associate members. The setting was the beautiful salon of the National Arts Club. The service was free to Associates and \$20 for non-members.



And while I'm talking about the Annual, let me say many thank yous to all the volunteers who made it possible with their hard work and good humor: Jeff Webb, Marty Marino, Cris Kossow, Karen Israel, Valerie Mandra, Jeri Greenberg, Sarah Story, Brian Bailey, AJ Wainwright, Clayton Buchanan, Judy Leeds, Orit Reuben, Kathy Detrano, Olya Powzaniuk, and Ellen Eagle. The annual is a volunteer enterprise for the society, and without them we could not put on such a large and successful event. It's important to note that some volunteers this year worked out of sheer affection for the organization, and with no paintings in the exhibition. A special thank you goes to assistants Shirley Weissman, Eleni Santoro, Naruki Kukita, and Ryosuke Kumakura.

Carrie Raeburn was the chair of award donations and at the awards ceremony announced the recipients of the \$34,260 in monetary and materials awards. This year's juror of awards was Linda Downs of the College Art Association. A standing-room-only audience appreciated the 67 winning artists this year, as well the 8 artists who joined the ranks of Master Pastelist. To see images of all the award-winning paintings, visit the website link [HERE](#). The two top cash awards went to Daniel E. Greene, who received the \$5,000 PSA Founder Award given by the Flora B. Giffuni Foundation, and Brian Bailey, who received the \$3,000 Art Spirit Foundation Dianne B. Bernhard Gold Medal. Bob Ziering won the Herman Margulies Award for Excellence donated by Dianne B. Bernhard for \$1,500, and the Joe Hing Lowe Memorial Award of \$1,100 went to Nancie King Mertz.

Five paintings, donated by PSA members Sephanie Birdsall, Marla Baggetta, Brian Cobble, Helen Kleczynski, and Arlene Richman, were raffled off at the awards ceremony. Five recipients went home happy that evening! The raffle, organized once again by Julie Hopkins, is held to aid the School of the Pastel Society of America. This year, it helped pay for new classroom lighting fixtures, which alternates warm and cool fluorescents, a vast improvement over the previous lighting. This was accomplished through the auspices of Maria Marino, who is currently compiling a full interior environmental report on the condition and improvement of the office and studio for use in PSA fund raising and for NAC use. Future projects include replacing the studio mirror, electric space heaters, and cleaning and painting the interior. Our dream project remains refurbishing the millwork in the studio, a protected historic interior.

Maceo Mitchell continues to be the hero of PSA's educational program. Classes are stable with four instructors. Workshops continue to thrive despite considerable competition from other sources. PSA's first destination workshop in San Miguel de Allende, featuring Richard McKinley, was a resounding success. The next one, to be held in San Miguel November 11-19, 2016, will feature Robert Carsten, a sell-out, popular instructor.

Kathy Detrano of Tampa, Florida, is our new board member. She will take over the award donor program, as well as provide a telecommunications program so that board members can participate from far-flung locations.

Our first re-designed, single-issue *Pastelagram* was launched in 2015. The subject was the controversial one of the use of photography in one's studio practice. Our 2016 theme will be "Content, or What's It All About?" That promises to be challenging and we hope thought provoking. I will be co-editing again with Arlene Richman. *Pastelagram* and a link to the PSA website is available in such prestigious research libraries as NYU's Institute of Fine Arts, Frick Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, National Gallery of Art, J. Paul Getty Museum, and other art research libraries throughout the United States and the world that subscribe to Art Source, an art research database.

Our biggest upcoming challenge is the redesign of the PSA website with new cross platform technology. We've received a generous \$1,000 donation from former board member Brenda Tribush. The website will be primarily funded with contributions and unrestricted PSA funds.

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Which brings us to the subject of PSA's financial health—which we're more than proud to say is in order and satisfies state and federal requirements thanks to JoAnn Wellner and the accounting firm Spetz and Greenstein. And I want to remind you that PSA is also indebted to JoAnn for her generous financial support of the annual awards program and for her wise counsel as an attorney and experienced member of non-profit boards.

The National Arts Club continues to be supportive and generous to PSA. Over the years, the NAC has subsidized PSA rental of the school studio and office. It also facilitates the Materials Fair and all events, including the use of the salon for our critiques; the Milburn School visit, the Metropolitan Museum docents visit and lunch, and the gallery tour and reception. This year, NAC's press release dramatically increased attendance at the McKinley tour and reception. NAC also hosts PSA for the first Sunday Salon of the season, just as the Annual kicks off the NAC's fall lineup of events. We have board member Dianne B. Bernhard to thank for the ease of communication she facilitates with the club, and for her generous support of the PSA awards.

Communications chair Leslie Levy has produced more eBlasts this year than ever before as she reaches out to all members and supporters with information and news. Recently, she added advertising to a limited number of eBlasts and is accepting ads by both artists and vendors. She also produces the school catalog and the Annual catalog.

And speaking of advertising, Peggy Rose is in charge of that vital function for the eBlasts and *Pastelagram*, as well as of the production of the awards ceremony Powerpoint presentation. This year, she achieved an important improvement in ad sales, which resulted in almost covering the cost of *Pastelagram*. I can see the smile on your faces, but this is a first for PSA.... and a good direction for us to be taking.

Winnie Tsai is in charge of preparing all applications for PSA membership and Signature status for digital presentation.

Wende Caporale, PSA corresponding secretary, provides invaluable guidance concerning protocol, diplomacy, and outreach.

Duane Wakeham has retired from his installation duties at the PSA Annual. However, he continues to contribute the \$1,000 honorarium given to the prestigious art professional who juries the annual awards. Duane also underwrites the honorarium given to the selection judges. Above all, Duane is a vital source of information and support to me personally.

But what would PSA be without the tireless, generous, and good-natured efforts of Cindy Harisch, office manager extraordinaire? She is the engine of our society, and we love her for her hard work and loyalty.

PSA's social media presence currently encompasses three Facebook sites. The official site, a PSA page for the society, is closed to postings by anyone other than me, although responses can be posted. The PSA Facebook group page now boasts 5,562 members, while the PSA Atelier group page with 3,238 members is now closed to new members as it mostly duplicates the PSA group. The latter two sites will eventually be merged. We want to extend sincere thank yous to Don Gardi (Ohio), Adrian Frankel Giuliani (New Jersey), Denise Page (Washington State), Lynn Haworth (Scotland), and Barbara Heidi Burns (Melbourne, Australia) for monitoring and administering the PSA group. The official Facebook page, along with our eBlasts, now serves as the PSA update newsletter for member and society news.

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We're looking forward to 2016 and to more achievements and improvements for you. So here's wishing you a happy and successful new year, enriched by the people you love, your artistic community, and the medium from which you derive so much satisfaction.

**Best Wishes for a happy holiday season**



*PSA wishes you a happy healthy, prosperous, and productive 2016!*

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If you wish to contact the office, please write, call, or email us at:

Pastel Society of America  
15 Gramercy Park South  
New York, NY 10003  
(212) 533-6931

[psaoffice@pastelsocietyofamerica.org](mailto:psaoffice@pastelsocietyofamerica.org)

Our office can provide a list of accommodations if you're traveling from out of town and can recommend restaurants in the area.

You can use MasterCard, Visa, Discover Card, or PayPal if you want to pay your dues or pay for a class or workshop.

Please visit us on **Facebook** or on our website at:

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