

## East Suburban Artists League holds annual show

*From an article in the Tribune Review by Rex Rutkoski dated Sunday, December 4, 2016:*

NEW KENSINGTON, Pa. --Ted Scanga of Lower Burrell has a wish for his art that some might say is beautiful in its simplicity.

"If people see beauty in it and it makes them feel better, that's the goal," says the veteran artist. "I hope that they see it is well done and they enjoy it."

Such sentiments are shared by others joining him in taking part in the annual month-long East Suburban Artists League exhibit at Penn State, New Kensington, under way daily through Dec. 29 in the Upper Burrell campus gallery.

It features more than 80 paintings, drawings, photographs, sculptures, intarsia, quilts and paper crafts, many of which are for sale at prices ranging from \$50 to \$1,200.

The artists league, founded in 1965 in the home of Pittsburgh-area artist Mary Ann Clarke, is a nonprofit organization that fosters the arts and crafts, providing inspiration and encouragement to artists and patrons in Pittsburgh's eastern suburbs, including the Alle-Kiski Valley.

"I like doing art because it is fun and it helps seeing the world better and with more beauty," Scanga says. He is represented in the show with two mosaics, "Mr. & Mrs. Giraffe," in glass, and "Rooster in the Morning" in wood and glass.

He believes the Penn State gallery "is the best setting in the area," and the art, he says, "is seen by many."

Patti Giordano of Lower Burrell, a member of the organization for a decade, says its "a great group of human beings who happen to be wonderful artists."

Color is a motivating factor in most of her work. "I paint because I enjoy it and if by chance someone finds viewing it pleasurable, then that is just great," she says.

She has "Creation," an abstract watercolor evolving from some of her favorite colors, and "Primitive," a still life she painted for her husband, Dominic, a wine-maker, on exhibit.

This is an opportunity "to show what we can do," says Bob Bickers of Murrysville, who has been in the artists league for more than 20 years.

"It has always struck me as a very inviting group," he says. "It is as far from being elitist as you can imagine, and yet the quality of the talent is quite high."

The broad scope of abilities and range of mediums is always a source of inspiration to him.

Bickers primarily works in oil and acrylic and digital photography. He has entered a pair of digital photos, "Red Barn in Winter," taken in Murrysville, off Cherry Road, and "Winter Fences," snapped just after a snowstorm in Export.

He has had his eye on the deteriorating red barn for years. "When I saw the blue drum next to it, I thought it was the perfect accent to a magical scene," he says.

The artist loves capturing light that portrays a scene he finds remarkable. "Whether I paint what I see before me or literally capture the light in my camera, I am able to harvest what nature has created and make it last a little bit longer to enjoy and share with others."

Beauty certainly is found in the most unusual places, says David Milanak of Allegheny Township, and he hopes that people can see that in his paintings.

"When they first see my work they may feel that it is non-objective. They may only see shape and color. But closer inspection may reveal the flank of a fish or an eye," he says. In this exhibit he offers two paintings, "Brown Trout" and "Tarpon."

It is a continuation of the Kiski Area School District elementary art teacher's study of balance and composition, using fish as his subject matter.

Milanak and fellow Kiski Area art teacher Larry "Klu" Klukaszewski of Upper Burrell have co-chaired the ESAL exhibit for the past three years and it is always a highlight of their year, Milanak says.

"The league truly has a wealth of talented artists and the community has an opportunity to witness their abilities at this show," he says.

"To be surrounded by such talent is truly humbling," says Klukaszewski. "I absolutely love being a member of ESAL. It's so nice to be around others who value and appreciate the arts. Meetings and our annual show are opportunities to engage in awesome conversations while showcasing our unique individual talents."

Klukaszewski's talent particularly shines in sports art. He has done projects for many local and national sports stars, including four NFL licensed works.

He is currently writing a children's book for Pittsburgh Steelers great and Vietnam veteran Rocky Bleier called, "Rock Solid ... The Courageous Journey of Rocky Bleier." Artwork that he plans to use in the book is entered in this show.

Bruce Pipman of New Kensington likes to share his vision of reality through acrylic on canvas. He offers two pieces in this exhibit: "Two Sisters One Dress" and "The Steer."

He brings what he refers to as "a free-wheeling, imaginative, dream-like" approach to what he does. "My work is very visual," he says. "I hope people see themselves in my painting."

It is the beauty of creation and a deep desire to catch it and share it with others that artist-photographer Susan Yaklich of Salem Township says inspires her to create.

She has two photos in this show: one is what she calls an "amazing" reflection of a fall sky and colors in a river; the other is "my crazy and beautiful MoJo cat."

Phiris Kathryn Sickels of Plum has a watercolor, "Spotlight," and a photograph, "Charging," in this exhibit. She also has a solo exhibit underway through Feb. 26 at Pittsburgh Center for the Arts in Shadyside.

"I hope people can see that I am having fun and that they also enjoy my art work," she says. "Painting and sharing beauty gives me joy."

Rex Rutkoski is a Tribune-Review contributing writer.

---

East Suburban Artists League Annual Exhibit

When: Through Dec. 29; 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Mondays-Fridays; noon-5 p.m. Saturdays- Sundays. Closed Christmas Eve and Day  
Admission: Free

Where: Penn State, New Kensington gallery, Seventh Street Road, Upper Burrell

Details: 724-334-6056