

EMPATHY
FOR *Beauty*
IN THE 21ST CENTURY

June 8 – August 17, 2014

Carnegie Art Museum

424 South C Street

Oxnard, California 93030

Signature Artists of the
California Art Club

Highlighting the works of contemporary-traditional artists discovering and elevating poetic encounters amid today's challenging culture.

Signature Artists represent the top tier of artistic membership in the California Art Club.

Signature Artists FEATURED

Peter Adams	Jeremy Lipking	Junn Roca
John Asaro	Carolyn Lord	Gayle Garner Roski
Clyde Aspevig	Eric Merrell	Mian Situ
Béla Bácsi	Stephen Mirich	Michael Situ
Brian Blood	Jennifer Moses	Christopher Slatoff
Cathey Cadieux	Charles Muench	Tim Solliday
Karl Dempwolf	Michael Obermeyer	William Stout
Dennis Doheny	Daniel W. Pinkham	Alexey Steele
David C. Gallup	Tony Pro	Joseph Todorovitch
Lynn Gertenbach	Gerald Rahm	William Wray

*W*e are honored to bring to our audience by courtesy of the artists such outstanding artworks, many of which have been successful entries in the California Art Club's recent annual Gold Medal Juried Exhibitions. We wish to express deep appreciation to Elaine Adams, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer; Cathy Crowser, Chief Operating Officer; Madeleine Aguilar, Exhibitions Coordinator and the rest of the California Art Club staff for their unfailing assistance in organizing this exhibit. Foremost, we wish to thank Peter Adams, President of the California Art Club, for his vision in creating the exhibition and for his support which has made this publication possible.

– Suzanne Bellah, Director and Curator, Carnegie Art Museum

EMPATHY FOR BEAUTY IN THE 21ST CENTURY:

Signature Artists of the California Art Club

EMPATHY FOR BEAUTY IN THE 21ST CENTURY: Signature Artists of the California Art Club shares thirty contemporary-traditional artists' depictions of experiencing incredible moments of beauty amid our challenging century. The nearly 40 exhibited works are the artists' responses to being confronted by the poetical. The diverse range of subjects displayed, from evocative figures to shinning landscapes and creatures of the deep, shows these artists discovering multiple avenues of inspiration through visual, musical, literary or spiritual encounters.

The impetus for this exhibition sprang from a number of recent art conferences that have vibrantly engaged artists and professors to explore the aesthetic values inherent in 21st century representational art. The eminent author, aesthetics philosopher and visiting professor at the University of St. Andrew's as well as the University of Oxford, Roger Scruton, is noted for his book *Beauty* and BBC2 television production *Why Beauty Matters*, in which he argues the significance of beauty in our time. However, the titling and focus of this exhibition was derived from a phrase used by figurative sculptor, Stephen Perkins, during a demonstration at the *The Representational Art Conference 2014* (TRAC2014) presented by the California Lutheran University Arts Initiative in Ventura, California. Discussing the drive to pursue representational expression and perfection of technique, Perkins, having taught at the New York Academy of Art and The Academy of Art University, mentioned that artists have a particular "empathy for beauty". Either by training or innate talent such empathy appears to enable artists to be more alert and responsive to instances of beauty.

Empathy for Beauty takes the opportunity to explore this notion further. Signature Artists of the California Art Club were canvassed for their experiences of sublime moments that compelled them to create. Their resulting paintings and sculptures reveal where contemporary-traditional artists are finding sources of beauty when challenged by our 21st century culture of exciting technology, but dwindling open spaces and instant postings of brutal events.

Founded in 1909, the California Art Club remains dedicated to promoting the highest standard of fine art, referred to as traditional and representational art. The Club provides a rich history of twentieth century artists seeking inspirational beauty and spiritual contemplation in the natural landscape.

In the 21st century, the inspiration of pristine back country must more often be found well beyond the studio

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doorstep. Signature Artists find unhampered beauty in increasingly remote locations through group treks and camping trips to wilderness areas such as the Antelope Valley, Tejon Ranch and the Sierra Nevada as with Jeremy Lipking's *Sierra Cirque*, reminiscent of glacial tumble or Clyde Aspevig's water edge view of aspens. Artists also venture to extreme destinations for crucial reference information. Peter Adams, noted for traveling in the 1980s to paint throughout the Himalayan regions of Northern India, the People's Republic of China and Soviet-occupied Afghanistan, journeyed to Jerusalem the summer of 2010 to prepare for a commission for Our Savior Church at the University of Southern California's Caruso Catholic Center. Gayle Garner Roski has sketched cultures and artifacts in Bhutan, Cambodia, Turkestan and Papua New Guinea. David C. Gallup traveled this year to Bimini to study a new presence in his paintings—sharks.

A more reachable refuge of beauty for artists is the California Coastline from South to North. Its vistas of yet undeveloped shores and cliffs intersecting with the Pacific's untamed surf are a frequent muse. Brian Blood and Jennifer Moses render two different, dramatic terrains and moods of Point Lobos, while Mian Situ nestles red geraniums and driftwood precariously close to a stunningly sunny tideline. Alexey Steele blends the poetry of Malibu's waves with the form of a young woman buffeted by wind and nearly taking off with the seagulls.

William Stout and David C. Gallup have submerged literally into the beautiful and dangerous environment below the ocean's surface. In *Destiny in the Depth*, Stout relates the awe-inspiring fear of night diving into zero visibility and coming upon a whale and squid in tandem. Gallup, witnessing the savage frenzy of mating sharks, conversely senses little threat and paints a Zen-like encounter.

Mitigating today's Southland build-out, Signature Artists resort to forgotten and desolate locales to take in a more lyrical experience. Eschewing the freeways, Daniel W. Pinkham shows the gracefulness found along the *Old Coast Highway* as it curves its way over rolling land towards a majestic hillside in hazy light. Karl Dempwolf uncovers nostalgia north of San Luis Obispo, eternalizing a gem-toned vale along *Green Valley with Sycamores*. The cold of February helped Stephen Mirich paint in relative solitude among the Malibu mountains. There, he captured the quiet intricacy of bare tree limbs guarding the path to a towering canyon. Michael Situ drove just beyond the reach of urban sprawl to La Quinta and was moved by the late daylight heightening of the colors of the *Living Desert*. In *Amidst the Slowness*, Eric Merrell paints the nocturnal quiet of an ephemerally snow-dusted desert floor.

Some Signature Artists have embraced the current urban scene. Finding "beauty in places most people consider ugly", William Wray has dubbed himself "the painter of blight". In *Rex*, a cement factory in Vernon, Wray found the type of older industrial building silhouetted with dinosaur shapes that intrigues him and rendered it in his style

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of “broken color” Impressionism. Junn Roca has ventured to the Los Angeles Fashion District and painted its most popular spot, *Callejon Santee*. His rapid strokes and blocks of color convey the bustling and festival atmosphere of Santee Alley’s vendors. Gerald Rahm in *Bungalows* turns the urban tussle of rooftops into a colorful precursor for a distant stretch of beach.

Spiritual beauty and its creative influence are active in several works. In *Sources of Light – St. Andrew’s Catholic Church*, Peter Adams has presented the transfigurative power of light in a remarkable painting full of spiritual connotations. A corner of the chapel is illuminated by a shaft of light falling towards an altar and religious murals on the back wall. The light shaft and votive candles gently highlight statuary of a loving baby Jesus held by Saint Joseph, evoking concepts of God as “the Light of the world”. Tucked in the corner, a gilt-embellished statue of Saint Peter holds the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Also revealed in the foreground are missals and high on the wall a Menorah and Chi-Rho christogram, an ecumenical pairing of symbols.

Cathey Cadieux’s utterly luminous landscape depicts vapors slipping out of the barren ground heavenward, reminding us of the fierce generative powers of the universe and divinity. Entitled *Genesis 2:6*, her painting references the Old Testament passage about the last step in earth’s creation before mankind could be formed: *But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground*. Dennis Doheny’s transparent rainbow promises a *New Dawn*. Lynn Gertenbach’s *Sanctuary* radiates the peace the painter felt in a meditative moment upon seeing reflective twilight on a lagoon. Bearing a more enigmatic title is Christopher Slatoff’s sculpture *Paradiso*. The title’s reference to either Dante’s final section of *The Divine Comedy* in which the poet ascends to heaven, or, to an entirely different paradise of earthly delights adds to the nude sculpture’s dichotomy—a lovely, long-legged female body has a humble, unworldly head lost in contemplation.

Music, so available with 21st century technology, triggers a host of poetic responses. Inspired by Richard Wagner’s opera *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, Peter Adams painted the mythical scene, *Alberich’s Vision – Rhine Maidens*, of the three water-nymphs who open and close the cycle having first lost the Rhinegold treasure and then finally reclaim the powerful gold ring forged from it. Adams creates them as beguiling and elusive. His glorious color play is in harmony with the Rhine Maidens’ musical themes, considered to be the most lyrical in the whole Ring cycle. John Asaro always listens to orchestral arrangements as he works and has been recently captivated by dance which mixes the force of music with the beauty of the human form in motion and the drama of stage lighting. *Spartacus, Red Sash*, showing a defiant joy in freedom, is derived from a performance of the Spartacus Ballet. Asaro’s *Orange Quartet*, is a circular pattern of limbs as four members of a corps de ballet stretch in shimmering tutus. Hearing

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a concert of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* echoing through the domed interior of the Church of the Madeleine in Paris, Michael Obermeyer was so moved he could not wait to paint the spiritually memorable experience. Charles Muench's bucolic scene of sheep in a verdant grove, *Oak Arrangement*, is a “visual piece of music” reflecting “quiet interpretation of the rhythms of nature”.

The beauty of the human visage remains a great lure for the Signature Artists who are moved to explore an array of fleeting states of mind. With the incredible technique of a Classical sculptor and an unmistakably contemporary clarity of plane and line, Béla Bácsi, has created a riveting countenance in *Buzz*. Joseph Todorovitch with *Up Keep* paints a cunning contrast of instructive opposites. A young woman of delicate freshness seems to cherish others' past memories rather than being bowed down by the vintage antiques surrounding her. Tim Solliday with unashful colors creates a lush grove as alive as the boy concentrating on a tune on his *Penny Whistle*. Jeremy Lipking shares a beautiful portrait with hints of contemporary frankness of his wife *Danielle* appearing somewhat discomfited and tousled. Tony Pro's *Day at the Beach* shows a thoughtful little girl as charming as Pro shows himself to be determined in *Self Portrait at 40*. Pro depicts himself as a general fit to battle for art, cigar in hand and wedding ring prominent. In a jacket muddied with excess paint the artist grips his key brush and a color palette spreads out behind him.

A few unusually creative inspirations appear in the exhibit. Carolyn Lord has adopted a stellar route being attracted to the patterns of shadows that the changing seasons cast upon her orange tree. Recognizing orange blossoms' similarity to star patterns, she has, imaginarily, invested the tree with celestial meaning. With *Vernal Equinox Navels*, Lord marked her tree's seasonal transition by creating the watercolor on the first day of spring. Giving into the poetry of gastronomy, Gayle Garner Roski has painted ice cream cones that ooze with deliciousness and “in-your-face” temptation. These watercolors celebrate the artist's realization that she had reached an age to permit herself desserts.

Clearly, empathy for beauty is a core attribute aiding the contemporary-traditional artist to develop a high level of creativity, perfectionism and excited engagement with their art and public. United with the classical training and expertise of Signature Artists, the top tier of California Art Club artist membership, empathy has helped instigate the exhibition's masterworks which elevate our real life enjoyment of nature and culture above the uncertainties of the 21st century.

– Suzanne Bellah, Director, Carnegie Art Museum

Clyde Aspevig



Aspen Pond

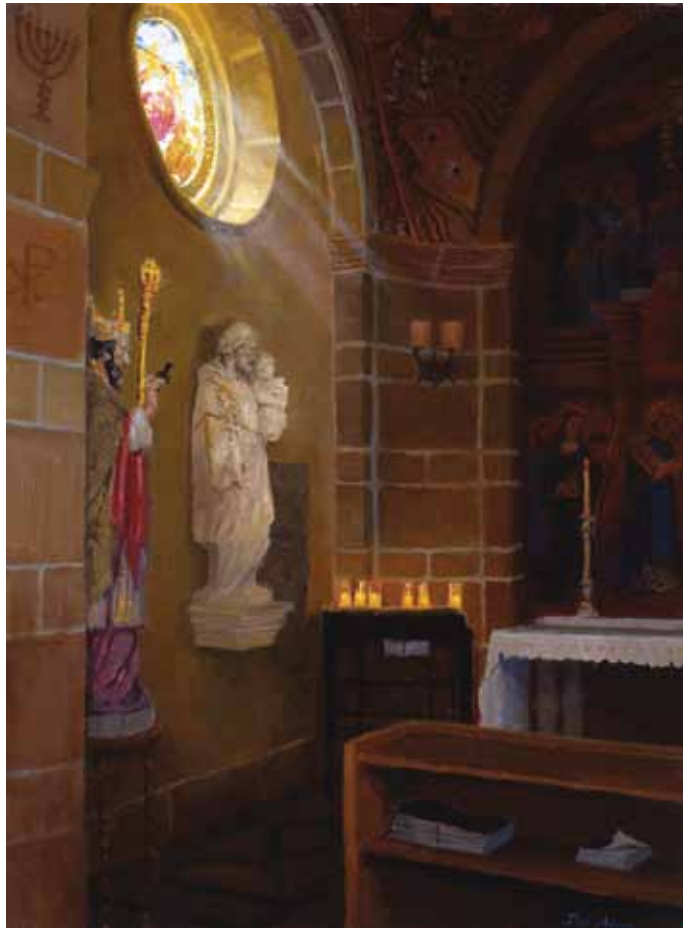
Oil on linen 30" × 60"

Private Collection

Peter Adams

**Sources of Light –
St. Andrew's Catholic
Church, Pasadena**

Oil on panel 40" × 30"





Peter Adams

**Alberich's Vision –
Rhine Maidens**

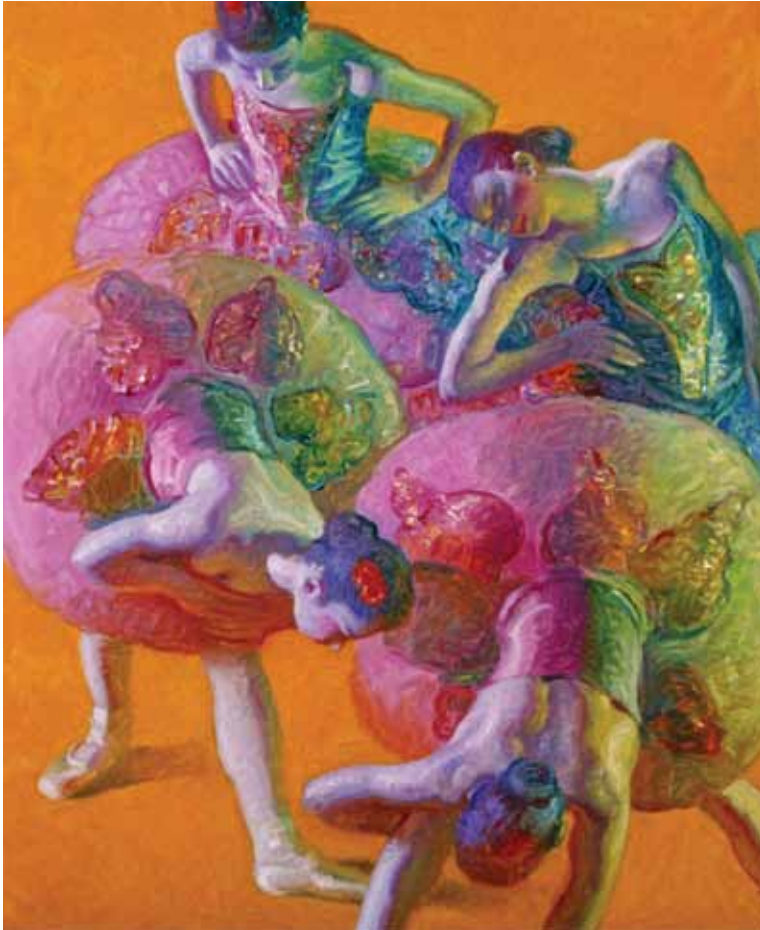
Oil on panel 72" × 48"

John Asaro

Spartacus, Red Sash

Oil on canvas 20" × 40"





John Asaro

Orange Quartet

Oil on canvas 50" × 40"

Béla Bácsi

Buzz

Italian Statuary marble

21" × 7" × 8"





Brian Blood

**Morning Glare,
Point Lobos**

Oil on board 11" × 14"

Cathey Cadieux

Genesis 2:6

Oil on linen 16" × 20"





Karl Dempwolf

**Green Valley with
Sycamores**

Oil on canvas 40" × 50"

Dennis Doheny

New Dawn

Oil on board 30" × 40"

Collection of
California Art Club



David C. Gallup



**Copulating Sharks with
Blood and Sperm**

Oil on mounted linen
60" × 52"

Lynn Gertenbach

New Dawn

Oil on board 30" × 40"





Carolyn Lord

Vernal Equinox Navels

Watercolor on paper

15" × 11"

Private Collection

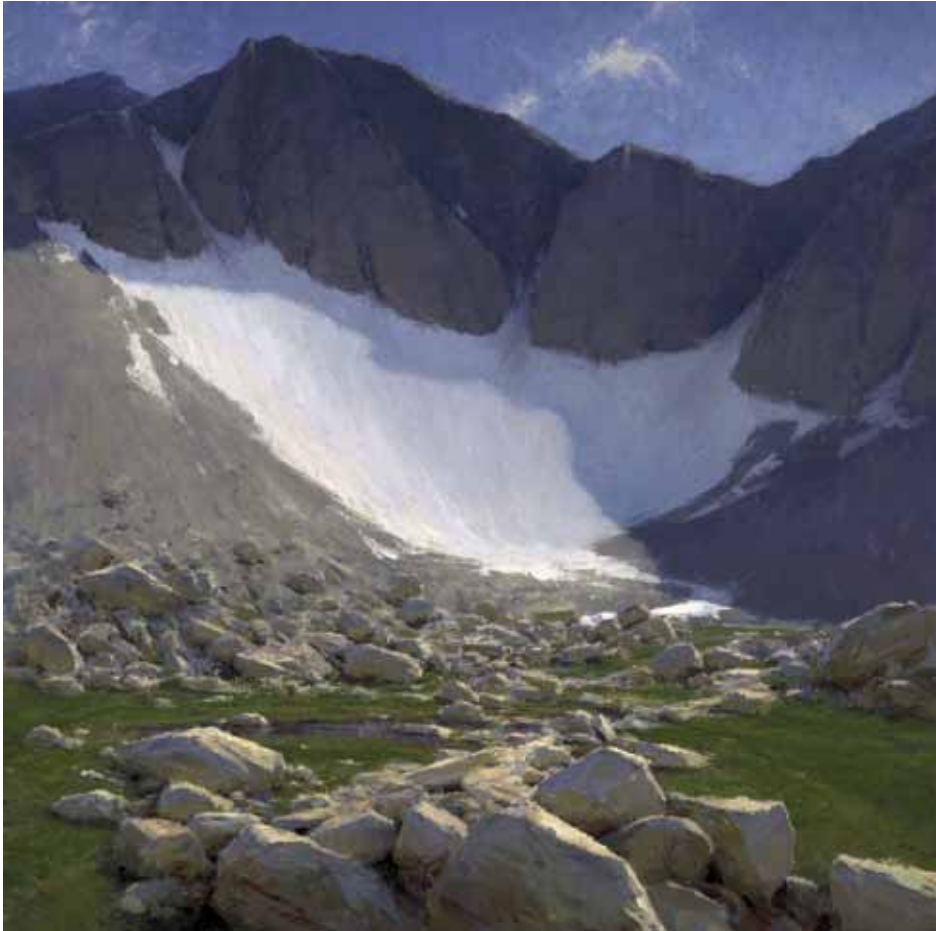
Jeremy Lipking

Danielle

Oil on linen 44" × 24"

Private Collection





Jeremy Lipking

Sierra Cirque

Oil on linen 30" × 30"

Private Collection

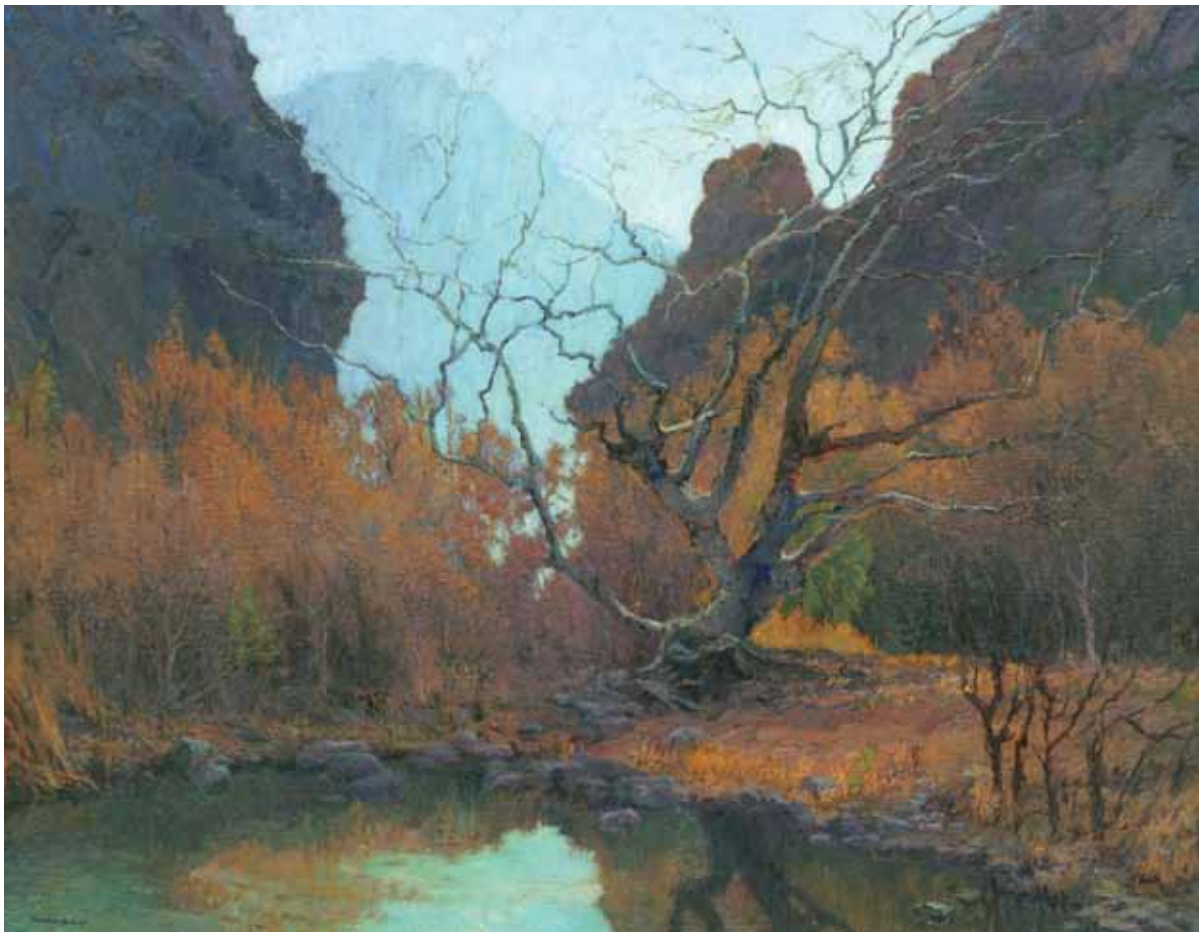
Eric Merrell

Amidst the Slowness

Oil on canvas panel

24" × 28"





Stephen Mirich

Tranquil Afternoon

Oil on canvas 32" × 40"

Private Collection

Jennifer Moses

**Old Veteran,
Point Lobos**

Oil on canvas panel
20" × 22"





Jennifer Moses

Ocean Reflections

Oil on canvas panel

8" × 10"

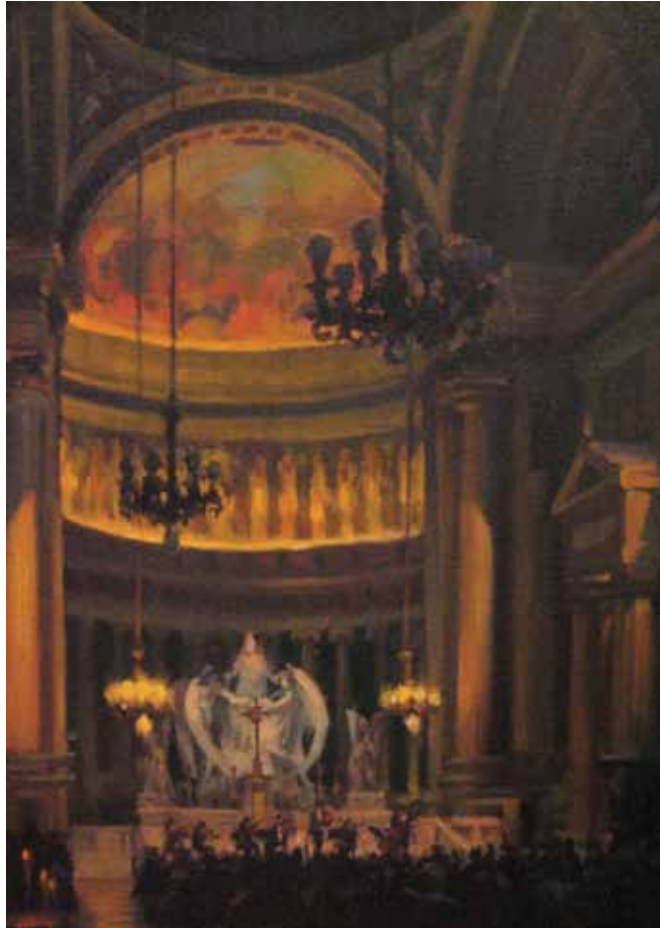
Charles Muench

Oak Arrangement

Oil on linen 20" × 30"



Michael Obermeyer



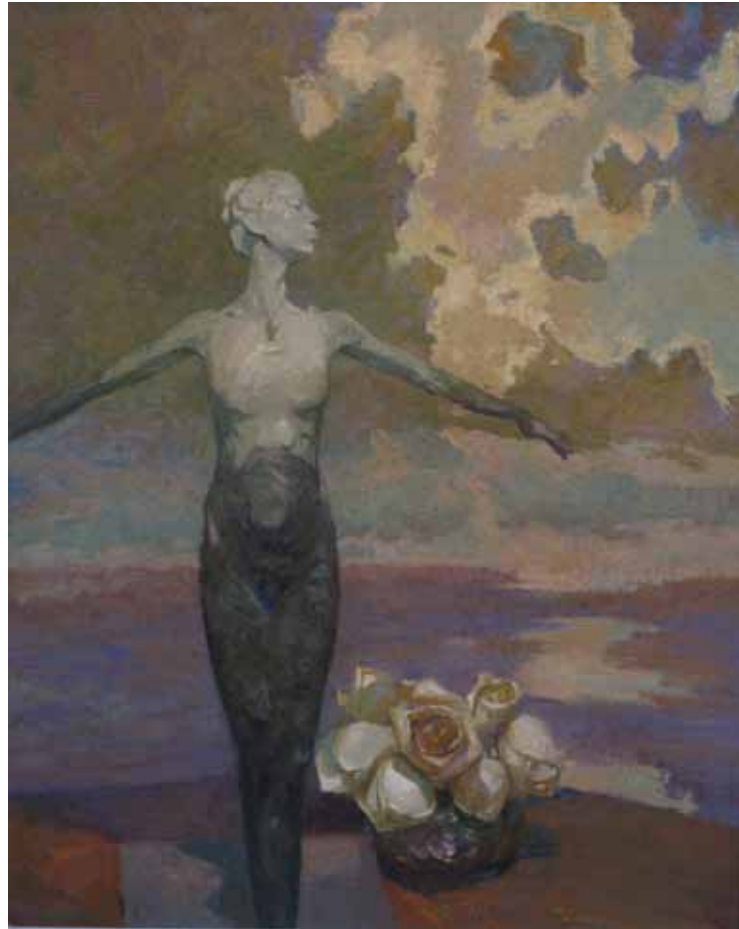
**Vivaldi in
Ste. Madeleine**
Oil 20" × 14"

Daniel W. Pinkham

The Pursuit

Oil on canvas 30" × 24"

Private Collection



Daniel W. Pinkham

Old Coast Highway

Oil on canvas 40" × 48"

Private Collection



Tony Pro

Self Portrait at 40

Oil on linen 30" × 24"





Tony Pro

Day at the Beach

Oil on linen 12" x 9"

Gerald Rahm

Bungalows

Pastel on museum board
25" × 30"





Junn Roca

Callejon Santee
Oil on canvas panel
9" × 12"

*Gayle
Garner Roski*

**Hot Fudge
Ice Cream Cone**

Watercolor on paper
18" × 18"





*Gayle
Garner Roski*

**Triple Decker
Ice Cream Cone**

Watercolor on paper
18" × 18"

Mian Situ

Pacific Coastline

Oil on canvas 12" × 16"



Michael Situ



Living Desert

Oil on canvas 12" × 24"

Christopher Slatoff

Paradiso

Cast stone

37" × 8" × 8"





Tim Solliday

Penny Whistle

Oil on canvas 28" × 22"

Alexey Steele

Malibu Seagull

Oil on canvas 26" × 64"





William Stout

Destiny in the Depths
Oil on canvas 48" × 36"
Private Collection

Joseph Todorovitch

Up Keep

Oil 36" x 32"





Joseph Todorovitch

Easter

Oil 22" × 15"

William Wray

Rex

Oil 32" × 24"

