

# Highlights



Baltimore Watercolor Society: A Mid-Atlantic Organization of Watermedia Artists

October 2020



## President's Palette

Note: This was a column I wrote for a Spring newsletter but it was supplanted by more critical information. I think that now is a good time to just kick back and read something about painting that brings a smile.

Every once in a while, you end up “down the (proverbial) rabbit hole.” I recently read an excellent article about artist Jessie Willcox Smith by Michael Williams in the Erickson Tribune. Smith was the foremost woman illustrator of the early 20th century and her name was synonymous with beautiful paintings of mothers and children, her work often gracing the covers of major magazines. At her peak, “she was raking in \$1500 per magazine cover, a vast sum for the early 1900s” and the equivalent to \$19,000 each today. She didn’t start out to be an artist, however, but an elementary school teacher. Born into a wealthy family she had the very best of educations and when a chronic back problem derailed her plans, “she enrolled in the Philadelphia School of Design for women (as she loved painting) and then in 1885 transferred to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts where she studied with Thomas Eakins, a noted photographer and re-

alist painter.” She went on later to study with Howard Pyle at Drexel. Wait just a minute! *The* Thomas Eakins was her mentor?! I had always heard that women were not allowed in his life drawing classes at the Academy, because it wasn’t “appropriate” for a woman. As a matter of fact, in the Victorian era, even the artistic style of realism was labeled “unladylike.” But her figure drawings were always perfectly proportioned and her paintings were always realistic. What goes on here? So I did a lot of “Googling” and down the rabbit hole I slid.

Almost everything I had heard was upside down. Shades of Alice herself! It wasn’t that the Academy didn’t allow women in life drawing classes, since it was the first U.S. school to do that in 1868. It was that the classes were segregated – male or female – with the women’s classes being slightly less “nude,” shall we say, to protect the women’s “sensibilities.” Instead of banning women from his life drawing class, Eakins actually demanded (and took shocking steps to make sure) that women be given exactly the same art education as their male counterparts – from co-ed classes doing life drawing of both male and female nude models to the anatomy dissection class. No difference. This liberality and politics, along with the fact that the students and Eakins himself occasionally posed for those life drawing classes, eventually led to his dismissal from the Academy. And here I thought homework for Life Drawing at MICA in 1970 (100 years later) was challenging!

But back to Ms Smith – Eakins also taught her photography and under his tutelage, her photorealistic portraits became so good that, just before graduation in 1888, her work was published in a popular children’s magazine. While working, she continued to develop her craft and enrolled at Drexel in 1894 to study under the top illustrator of the time, Howard Pyle (who eventually founded the “Brandywine School” and mentored

## Upcoming Events

**Remaining 2020 Workshops are postponed.**

**Signature Member Exhibit**  
Delaplaine Center for the Arts  
Frederick, MD  
**Oct. 3 - Nov. 1, 2020**

**Fall Signature Member Jurying**  
Online only  
**Deadline: October 21, 2020**

**Associate Member Exhibit**  
Slayton House Gallery  
Columbia, MD  
**February 11, 2021**

**Rescheduled Signature Exhibit**  
Strathmore  
Bethesda, MD  
**TBA (Tentatively Dec. 2020 - Jan. 2021)**

N. C. Wyeth in 1904, who in turn, taught his son Andrew, who taught his son Jamie). Pyle was “well known for encouraging his female students to press hard for their right to illustrate at the top publishing houses.” Smith persevered and rose to the top, sought after as a magazine and book series illustrator, working until her death in 1935 and leaving a legacy as a pioneering woman artist and a trail of heartwarming paintings of childhood behind her.

I learned a lot about Jessie Willcox Smith from the article and my research but, moreover, I came away from my journey with a fresh appreciation for the many male artists who have pushed hard for the education and training of women artists and who have mentored them to become some of the best in their fields. Yes, Smith was amazingly mentored by giants Thomas Eakins and Howard Pyle, but they both also mentored many other women who became accomplished artists too. All of this brought to my mind how fortunate we have been here in Baltimore to have had such excellent watercolorists and teachers as **James Drake Iams** and **Frederic “Fritz” Schuler Briggs** (both BWS Life members and Fritz, a Past President) who have shared their talent, wisdom and humor with hundreds, if not thousands, of “would-be artists” and have taught us to paint and to love the watercolor medium as much as they do. Thank you for your generous spirits, gentlemen – we are beholden to you.



Sherry

## Signature Member Jurying

The deadline to apply and upload digital images for the semi-annual BWS Signature Artist Jurying is Wednesday, October 21, 2020. This year due to COVID this event WILL BE ONLINE ONLY.

[Click here to register](#), or find the event listing under “Upcoming Events” at [baltimorewatercolorsociety.org](http://baltimorewatercolorsociety.org).

Please register and upload 4 digital images of your work. All Associate and non-BWS artists are welcome! The jury will review the submissions on September 29, 2020 and decision letters will be mailed within 2 weeks of that date. Please review full instructions [here](#) or via the link in the event listing.

If you have any questions contact Stacy Lund Levy at [BWS.Signaturejurying@gmail.com](mailto:BWS.Signaturejurying@gmail.com). We are looking forward to seeing your latest work.

“I cannot rest, I must draw, however poor the result, and when I have a bad time come over me it is a stronger desire than ever.”

Beatrix Potter

## Welcome New Signature Artists

*Additional new BWS Signature Artist members will be announced next month. These announcements are made only after payment is received and the member is considered in good standing.*

**Connie Clutter of Washington, PA** achieved her new Signature Artist status after being selected for the BWS Mid-Atlantic Regional Exhibition three times.

## Welcome New Associates

**Katharine Brainard of College Park, MD**

### In Memoriam

Judith Wengrovitz

# The Saga of the People's Choice Award(s)

Oh, the diversity of opinion! After eliminating a few duplicate votes that we'll chalk up to "computer problems," there were 229 selections posted for our first ever "Virtual" People's Choice Award. They came in two flavors. One was clearly made by BWS members who looked critically at the images, weighing the elements and principles of design as well as the emotional connection of the work. The other flavor was more of a public reaction and selection, more akin to what would be expected from those who might visit the exhibit at a gallery like BlackRock Center for the Arts, a group which also includes students, friends and family voting for their favorite artist.

After careful deliberation, Sherry Morell and I have concluded that two awards are appropriate this year. One generated by the selections of BWS members, and a second one based on the more public viewing.

We are pleased to present the awards to:

## BWS Choice:

**Jinnie May, "To Dance With My Father Again" (below)**



## Public Choice:

**David Drown, "Susie's View" (top right)**

Further analysis of the votes revealed that there were **six** artists who tied for second place in the BWS-member-only tally. The conclusion to all of this needs to be that this was an extraordinary display of creativity and skill. Well done!

*Sharon Green, Mid-Atlantic Chair*



*David Drown, "Susie's View"*

## Member News

**Catherine Hillis** has a watercolor demo article in the new "Artists Weekly" e-mail newsletter from Artists Magazine/Artists Network.

**April Rimpo's** painting "The Perfect Ride" was selected for Philadelphia Water Color Society's 120th Anniversary International Works on Paper.

**Joan Lok** is offering new virtual workshops in sumi-e techniques at [joanlok.com](http://joanlok.com).

**Ardythe Jolliff's** painting "Under the Cecropia Tree" was displayed in the Watercolor Society of Alabama 79th Annual Juried Show, "Sea Sculptures in Glass" was a part of the Southern Watercolor Society 43rd Annual Show, and "Collection Reflections" won an Award of Excellence in the West Virginia Watercolor Society Aqueous 2020 Exhibition.

**Annie Strack** won Second Place in the Alaska Watercolor Society 46th National Juried Show for her painting "Portrait of Chris." She juried the Salem County Art League Show in NJ and the American Artists Professional League Members Show in NYC.

**Dennis Clarke** was recently awarded an Award of Merit for his painting "Adagio" (below) in the Aqueous exhibit held at Arts Monongahela in Morgantown, WV.





Baltimore Watercolor Society  
 April Rimpo  
 14032 Howard Road  
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Dated Material

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**Baltimore Watercolor Society, a 501c3 Nonprofit Organization  
 Board of Governors and Committee Chairs**

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Annie Strack	Social Media	610-925-2815

Visit the BWS website at [www.baltimorewatercolorssociety.org](http://www.baltimorewatercolorssociety.org)  
 For member event registration and directory, go to [bws.wildapricot.org](http://bws.wildapricot.org)

**Member News**

BWS members may submit a 60-word announcement gratis to be listed under the heading "Member News." Images will be included as space allows. Submissions are due by the 15th of the month preceding publication date, and may be edited for length or clarity. Please e-mail (preferred) your submissions to the Editor at [joanna@joannabarnum.com](mailto:joanna@joannabarnum.com) or mail to Joanna Barnum, 21 Haven Ave., Abingdon, MD 21009

**Advertising Rates**

Display ads are published for the benefit of the BWS member or business who is placing the ad at the rates below, content & fee due by the 15th of the month preceding publication date.  
 Quarter Page (3 1/2w x 4 3/4h) \$50  
 Business Card (3 1/2w x 2 1/4h) \$25  
 Contact the Newsletter Editor at [joanna@joannabarnum.com](mailto:joanna@joannabarnum.com) for details.

*Member Discount Codes*

**Airfloat: [airfloatsys.com](http://airfloatsys.com)**  
 20% discount with code BWCS at checkout

**American Frame: [americanframe.com](http://americanframe.com)**  
 5% discount with code Alliance2018 OR  
 free shipping on orders over \$99 with code Alliance99 (may not be combined)