

SEPTEMBER, 2013

6th ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION!

FEATURED ARTISTS
Christine Kierstead
Karen Spratt

MEMBER NEWS

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THE GALLERY'S EARLY FALL SHOW
SEPTEMBER 11 THROUGH NOVEMBER 3

SHOW OPENING, ART WALK & 6TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 5:00 - 9:00 PM

You Are Invited

To the big 6th!

Saturday, September 14

5:00 to 9:00

Riverfront Art Gallery

132 Petaluma Blvd.

Do Come!

Help us celebrate our 6 years on Petaluma Boulevard!

The evening will feature:

Musical interludes by Half Bad Neighbor.

Nibbles and wine, plus artwork by our members and guest artists.

Featured Artist shows by Karen Spratt and Christine Kierstead.

A raffle and silent auction of donated artwork, with proceeds to benefit local animal shelters. Raffle tickets \$2 each, 6 for \$10.

Tickets go on sale at the gallery on September 1st. Prizes include a \$200 pet portrait by Christine. (See Christine's story, pages 4 & 5.)



**FEATURED ARTIST: KAREN SPRATT
A RETROSPECTIVE & PHOTOGRAPHS: *INSPIRED IN FRANCE***

Karen Spratt brings great curiosity and considerable discipline to her painting. She would have been right at home in 1800s Paris when new ways of thinking began to redefine *fine art*, experimentation sought new methods, and a vibrant camaraderie among artists found them copying, studying, and learning from each other. Whatever they learned, they expressed through their own artistic vision, as Karen does.

Karen comments, "France has fostered many great artists through the centuries. The French people nurture their art history and make beautiful places for viewing the artwork. They also celebrate the lives of the artists. One of the best examples of this is Monet's Garden at Giverny. We get to see the water lilies and the bridge. But I think I was most moved by the house full of Japanese prints. Now that's a revelation...to see what inspired an artist like Monet!"



Karen's photo of water lilies in Monet's garden



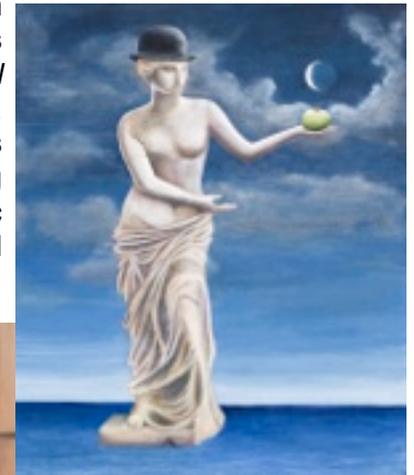
Hokusai on a Starry Night

In her featured show, *Inspired in France*, Karen reveals the links between her paintings and what she has seen in France, whether art, architecture, or ambiance. While the impressionists have been a considerable influence, like the impressionists themselves, Karen has also been inspired by Japanese prints. In *Hokusai on a Starry Night*, we see her witty combination of the Hokusai wave and a Van Gogh sky--drawn from those masters, but pure Karen Spratt!

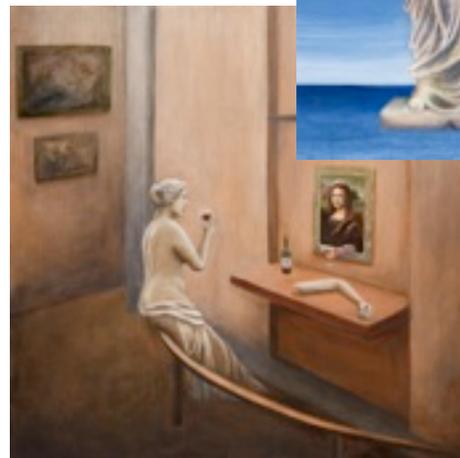
"People do ask where my ideas come from. I'm usually at a loss to answer. I don't really see the ideas coming. They hit me from oblique angles, and there they are. So it was a bit of a revelation to me, during my 4th visit to France in 10 years, to realize how inspiring a trip to France can be for me. While there, I was often reminded of the paintings I have already done and of how I was inspired to do them.

"The Louvre is always very crowded and in the summer even more so. The party I was traveling with was not interested in fighting those crowds. But I *had* to go, just to visit my old friends...artwork I've put in my own paintings and pieces I love. What would Venus think if I went to Paris and didn't pay her a visit?"

Venus Meets Magritte doesn't spoof a specific painting, although the background is from Magritte's *El Vestido de Noche*. Karen has put Venus in the setting, giving her Magritte's iconic green apple and bowler hat.



Venus Meets Magritte



3:00 am. at the Museum

Karen employs her delicious sense of humor and great originality in works paying homage to the Louvre where she has found so much to study and appreciate and where she has gotten much of her high-octane inspiration. Here she gives us Venus de Milo humorously painted with her missing arm lying on the table as she shares some good French wine with Mona Lisa--no doubt discussing the day's mob of tourists.

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Karen likes to tell the story of her pursuit of a particular painting, *Juene Homme Nu Assis au Bord de la Mer*, painted in 1836 by Jean-Hippolyte Flandrin. Karen first saw this image of a naked boy sitting on a rock by the sea, his face buried in his knees, as a poster in her brother's bathroom. The pursuit story goes like this: "I was in Europe for three months while my husband, Steve, worked in Germany. My friend from London met me in Paris. We were in the Louvre gift shop close to closing time when I saw a postcard of *Juene Homme* and suddenly realized it belonged to the Louvre. We asked for directions and rushed to see it. We were too late. That wing was already closed. Luckily, we had museum passes, so we returned the next morning to the spot where the painting was supposed to be. Instead we found a white card saying it was on loan to a museum in Nantes.

Several weeks later, Steve and I were driving from Mont St. Michele to Bergerac. Looking at a map, I noticed that Nantes was only an hour's drive off our route. Steve said, "OK, let's go find that painting." In Nantes, we discovered the museum was closed on Tuesdays. Several days later, as we were driving back up north from Bergerac, I jokingly said, "Only two extra hours of driving to get to Nantes and that painting." My wonderful husband said, "Why not?" And I finally got to see what a gorgeous painting it is. Since then I've seen it in the Louvre three times."

Karen's Flandrin by the Window



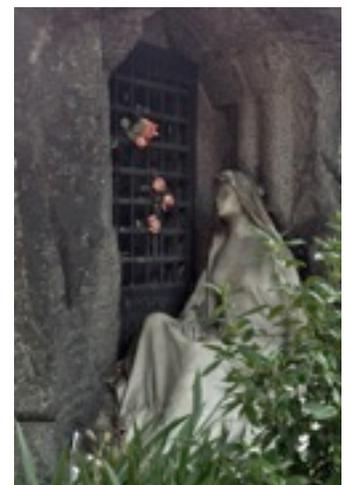
based on a Flandrin painting in the Louvre

Karen incorporated Flandrin's *Juene Homme Nu Assis au Bord de la Mer* by Flandrin into her painting entitled *Flandrin by the Window*. In Karen's painting, "*Jeune Homme*" hangs on the wall by a

window open to the sea. In a beautiful conceptual move, Karen makes the sea and distant rock in the original painting appear to extend into view beyond the open window.

Summarizing, Karen points out that she has no ancestral ties to France that would explain her devotion to the country. "I'm a little reluctant to admit how much France inspires me. It sounds so cliché. And I don't want to diminish that living in the bay area is my biggest inspiration. But the truth is, just about everywhere I go in France makes me think artistically. I'm not moved to paint everything I see. Many images are better as photographs than as paintings. This last trip has inspired me to show some photographs, mostly taken with an iPhone."

You heard right--the painter is showing photographs as well as paintings. "I've only shown a couple of photographs in my whole art career, so the photography is new for me." A favorite place, where Karen has taken numerous photographs, is the cemetery, Pere Lachaise, where many famous people are interred. Although she hasn't painted scenes from Pere Lachaise, photos certainly will be in the show.



Tomb & Statuary in Pere Lachaise Cemetery

So, beyond the photos which are new works, the *Inspired in France* show will be a retrospective of Karen's paintings. Nearly all the originals have sold, so if you missed getting a favorite piece, this is a chance to grab a giclée. In any case, it is an opportunity to appreciate again the artistic excellence of Karen's work and to enjoy the humorous insight that she imparts to many of her paintings. You may just be inspired to hop a plane to France once you have seen her featured show.

RIVERFRONT'S 6TH ANNIVERSARY RAFFLE IN SUPPORT OF LOCAL ANIMAL SHELTERS

Tickets \$2 each, 6 for \$10. On sale at Riverfront beginning September 1st.

Prizes are works of art donated by members and guest artists, including a \$200 pet portrait.

Drawing takes place during the Anniversary Celebration, Sept. 14.

Don't have to be present to win.

FEATURED ARTIST: PAINTER CHRISTINE KIERSTEAD

Just Need A Little Love

With a heart as big as the county is wide, painter Christine Kierstead finds lots of causes to champion --even when she paints. For her Featured Show, *Just Need A Little Love*, Christine decided to focus on rescue animals.

Some animals Christine chose to paint look out at us with soulful eyes, hoping but afraid to hope, their energy sapped by the dullness and uncertainty of their situation. Others seem curious or smiling at their prospects. She found herself falling in love with each subject and wishing she could take every last one of them home to join her dog and chickens. "They just need a little love," she says, "and they're all so loveable".

Using photographs she took herself, as well as drawing inspiration from shelter websites, Christine only chose animals in no-kill shelters. Also, she says, "Puppies and kittens are cute and get snapped up right away, so I am showing mostly hard to place dogs, cats, and horses."

To her surprise she found very few medium-sized dogs in the shelters. Two categories were definitely overrepresented: small 'purse' dogs and pit bull mixes. She explains, "The small 'purse' dog became popular a decade ago and since has multiplied with a variety of breeds all seemingly centered around the Chihuahua, which can be a very shy, skittish dog if not treated properly from the get go. Hence there are many of these animals without homes. But with patience and slow grace one can bring them around to be goofy little love bugs that are happy to be your bundle of joy.

"Then there are the pitbull mixes that are actually a lovely, loyal, sweet breed when mixed. Many folks are frightened of having anything to do with a pit bull, so there are lots of them in the shelters. There they are with their giant smiles of love and loyalty

and/or big sad eyes with 'take me home, and I'll be the best dog ever' expressions.

"Ah...cats. I'm not a cat person," Christine admits, "but there are a ton of them in shelters, and they need homes. I can see how one can become attached. They're easy, because they basically take care of themselves, and then you can sit and pet them all night while you watch tv. In that sense, they are good company and are comforting.

"I was attracted to painting companion horses. They are no longer 'useful.' Many can't be ridden or raced, because they're too old or have had a past in which they have been truly broken in some unfortunate manner. A good home would mean that they become not only a companion to their owner but possibly a companion to another horse. Horses thrive on company and need it to be healthy and well-adjusted. Loving your horse doesn't mean riding on a daily basis. Just walking together around the pasture or adventuring down a trail now and then with a companion horse is a pleasure. The gentle nudge from that big nose, a nicker of recognition as you come with hay, or watching them interact--those are other rewards that many older horses provide for their people."

Always one to live by her principles, Christine got her own pooch, Cooper, at the Milo Foundation. Using Cooper as an example of the value of shelter animals as companions, Christine points out that he has undergone service dog training. Having adult-onset epilepsy, with its unpredictable attacks which make her temporarily lose consciousness, she appreciates having Cooper with her. Sometimes he knows a seizure is coming on and warns her. If she faints, he does his best to nudge and

Continued on page 4.



Left: *Gandalf*

Center: *Nattie*

Right: *Suzy*

Christine Kierstead, *Just Need A Little Love*, continued.

howl her back into awareness.

The "Christine-Cooper Story" gives us insight into how rewarding such relationships can be. Christine explains, "I got Cooper from the Milo Foundation ten years ago. He hardly had hair due to a skin infection that shelter vets couldn't figure out. Nor could four other vets discover the problem--a rare form of mange. Anyway, his hair grew back healthy as ever. We went everywhere together, explored the desert on long camping and driving trips, went for hikes in the Sierra's, and when in Petaluma we would drive out to Dillon beach where he would dig his way to China, one of his very favorite things to do. There is nothing happier and more loving than a rescue dog. They are grateful. They understand where they came from and appreciate their good fortune to have a new loving family.

Six years ago I was life-flighted to the hospital where I remained for a month. I now have epilepsy. I no longer drive. Cooper, my companion, was trained to be a seizure alert and companion animal. We don't go on camping trips or long hikes in the sierras anymore. We don't explore anything but downtown Petaluma. I had a sandbox built for him in our yard so he can still dig to China. When I seize, he sits next to me and howls in an attempt to keep me focused and to alert others. He is what I know when I wake up, laying beside me, looking at me with great concern and love. He is my comfort. He is my companion." You can meet Cooper in person at the gallery, since Christine always brings him with her when she is gallery sitting.

Asked whether she has particular expectations for this featured show, Christine responds, "I am hoping

Cooper digging his way to China



to inspire people to:
-rescue/adopt (maybe even one I have painted),
-donate to a shelter or
-sponsor a particular animal (sponsorship is usually to a horse or a dog with special needs),
-volunteer at your local shelter or rescue center,
-hopefully, to purchase a painting, and
-definitely to buy a raffle ticket at the anniversary reception, since the proceeds will go to a shelter."

Not only does Christine's show promote an interest in rescue animals, but she will, as usual, put her money where her mouth is. She will donate a portion of her profits from any sale to the shelter that cared for the animal in the painting. How caring!

If you already have a much-loved pet, you should know that Christine does marvelous pet portraits! In case you missed the notice, she will have a \$200 pet portrait prize in the raffle!



Right: example of a commissioned pet portrait by Christine.

MEMBER NEWS: STEPHANIE HAMILTON ORAVETZ AT TWO VENUES

Featured Artist at Towers Gallery
240 N. Cloverdale Blvd, Cloverdale, CA
"Hidden Treasures" Show through Oct. 6.
Friday through Monday 11am to 7pm.



Bavarian Sun
at
Towers
Gallery

Participant at Sebastopol Center for the Arts's
National Juried Exhibition "Not Just Landscapes"
through September 7th, 2013
282S High Street, Sebastopol, Ca 95472
(707) 829 4797 Gallery Hours: T-F 10-4; Sat 1-4



The Landscape of Faith at SCA

Shelters Christine drew her subjects from:

- Milo Foundation
- Petaluma Animal Shelter
- Oakland SPCA
- Sonoma Action for Equine Rescue
- Sadie's Haven
- Sonoma County Animal Shelter