

OCTOBER, 2013

**CURRENT FEATURED
SHOWS**

Karen Spratt
Christine Kierstead

**FOCUS ON:
HOW AN ARTIST WORKS**
Christine Kierstead

MEMBER NEWS

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**THE CURRENT SHOW
THROUGH NOVEMBER 3**

ART WALK RECEPTION SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 5:00 - 9:00 PM

**SIX YEARS ON PETALUMA BOULEVARD!
Petaluma Animal Shelter to Benefit from the Anniversary Fundraiser**

At the reception on September 14, Riverfront Art Gallery celebrated its sixth anniversary. It's **Sixth!**

To get the kinks out before facing the public with a big open-for-business announcement, Riverfront's owners, Lance Kuehne and Jerrie Jerné, had decided on a "soft opening" the last week of September in 2007, with the official opening to come two or three weeks later in October.

Before the OPEN sign went on the door, the preparations were fairly hectic. Lance recalls, "It took Gus Feissel and myself nearly a week to get the track lights installed on the ceiling! The paint was barely dry on the wood walls when we opened."

Jerrie adds, "Yes, and I recall that people kept coming in while we were still working on the setup. We didn't have all the art up on the walls. 'We don't mind,' people said, 'we just want to see.'" Jerrie chuckles, as Jerrie is known to do. "In fact, the first sale came even before our opening."

At each anniversary celebration, Riverfront has held a raffle, silent auction, or both to raise funds for a designated local charity. This anniversary the beneficiary was to be a local animal shelter as a tie-in to Christine Kierstead's featured show with paintings of animals from no-kill shelters. This time our celebrants helped Riverfront raise \$800 which will go to the Petaluma Animal Shelter. Our thanks to everyone who participated!

And thank you, Petaluma, for continuing to support and appreciate Riverfront Art Gallery for the community resource it has become as it continually finds new artists and gathers quality art for your viewing pleasure and for the beautification of your dwelling. Please visit often!

Photograph taken on the official opening night, October, 2007, by gallery member, Gus Feissel



THE CURRENT FEATURED ARTIST SHOWS WHERE ANIMAL LOVERS AND FRANCOPHILES MEET...

Who wudda thunk it? Animal lovers and francophiles. Among others, that's who's been converging on Riverfront to enjoy the two current Featured Artist shows with painters Karen Spratt and Christine Kierstead.

Karen's show, *Inspired in France*, pays tribute to the country, its art, and its ambiance, which have all been a vital influence on her development as an artist, as well as on her actual paintings. It was with her fourth trip to France that Karen herself came to realize the depth of her connection to France, "Odd," she says, "because I have no ancestral or other ties to the county. I just love it for what I find there. Everything about the place, its art, its reverence for its artistic and cultural achievements, its grand museum collections, even its small local towns and rural scenery brings out the creative urge in me, whether I end up painting it all or not."

In this show Karen has included photographs which help viewers sense the link between Karen and France. But it is her paintings which show how her own originality interacts with the iconic themes and symbols employed by the masters.

Karen's work is so popular that, for the most part, the original paintings have long since sold. Thus the show is a retrospective using high-quality giclée prints. But for those enamored of Karen's artistry, it is a welcome opportunity to own a bit of her work with all its humor and uniqueness.



Flandrin by the Window (for Karen's story of this painting see the September newsletter)

The second Featured Artist in this Early Fall Show is Christine Kierstead. Her show title, *Just Need a Little Love*, introduces us to a favorite topic for Christine: animals languishing in shelters.

To raise awareness, Christine has done portraits of actual dogs, cats, and horses currently in area no-kill centers. She hopes to encourage people to adopt older pets instead of going through a "puppy mill." She also wants to raise donor awareness that at local animal shelters the need always goes beyond the resources.

Christine herself owns a rescue dog. Their association is mutually beneficial. Cooper had a rare form of mange that no one identified. Christine brought him back to health and gave him a good home.

After Christine began to experience adult-onset epilepsy, Cooper trained as a service dog. He watches over Christine and can sometimes sense when she is about to experience a seizure. When she loses consciousness, he nudges her and howls to draw her back into awareness and to alert others to her situation. The two benefit each other. She says, "He is my constant companion and my comfort."

This is a lovely, emotional show with every bit of Christine's magnanimous heart put into each piece. If you haven't seen it already, come with kids and other animal lovers in tow. You'll all love it!



Antonio can be adopted from the Milo Foundation

HOW AN ARTIST WORKS: CHRISTINE KIERSTEAD PREPARES HER FEATURED SHOW

As a special feature, we are presenting this article on how Christine works. Christine Kierstead is a seasoned painter with such a sense of self and her medium that she confidently mixes her paints right on the canvas--sometimes even in the palm of her hand, or "I often dip a brush directly into my tube of paint....very few of my colors are pure anymore."

In tune with her expansive personality, Christine often employs broad, bold brush strokes that lend themselves to an impasto style of painting. The thick application of paints gives great texture and dimension to the final image. "But I don't always do impasto," she points out.

"Recently, I have taken up painting on the floor. I have no idea why. I sit with paints and brushes and water jugs and coffee cups all around me, canvas in front of me on the floor, propped up against the wall or on my lap. I have a great easel, but I'm just not using it. Go figure."

Asked to talk about a specific work and how it came into being, Christine chose the nuzzling horses entitled *Companions*. In the following running narrative, Christine describes the progression of the work. Look carefully, and you can see how each step moves toward the finished painting.

"I start with a photograph that demonstrates to me a *feeling*. In this case, it's the friendship between two animals. I first chalk it in on the canvas.



"Sometimes I'll measure things out, but that usually gets too complicated. Generally I can see how things work, especially just by looking at them. Anyway, I chalk it on the canvas, making some general corrections here and there. Then I will draw it in in acrylic paint. Usually a deep gray or red.



mix the average color of the most dominant feature and color it in...or, rather, paint it in. Just like a coloring book. I do that with each image if there is more than one

large image in the painting. From that point, I begin with different colors and narrowing it down to details working on each subject at a time.



"Sometimes I work from back to front, other times front to back. By that I mean background first and slowly working to the foreground and vice versa. It kinda depends on--what I don't know exactly. In this example, I worked front to back, as you can see.

"Oh...I used just about every technique I like to do on this. I threw paint on the canvas and blended it. I used a knife. I used a spray bottle. I painted with my hands and yes, I did paint with a brush. I'm having fun. I hope it turns out."

Does it always go smoothly? No. Clearly this description was done during her show preparations and before the painting was completed. At this point Christine wasn't satisfied. She emailed: "Please know that what you see here is not the painting in completion (last above). I'm not happy with the white horse, and I'm not entirely sold on the background. I think it just might be too green." She continued working. The final rendition of *Companions* is below.

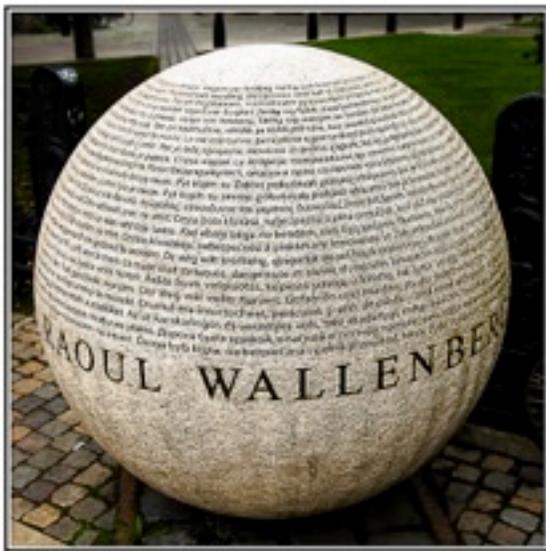




Above: Gandalf

Above: Nattie

Above left: Christine's studio showing paintings of shelter animals in preparation for her featured show, *Just Need A Little Love*. Cooper, her own rescue dog, lies in his bed nearby. Above center and right: Mixing paint in her hand while painting on the floor, surrounded by paint pots and coffee cups.



MEMBER NEWS

Stephanie Hamilton-Oravetz & Frank Oravetz
 in the Sebastopol Center for the Arts Show
 "ABZ etcetera" through October 19
 282 S. High Street, Sebastopol
 Tues-Fri 10-4; Sat 1-4; closed Sun & Mon

Frank's piece, entitled *His Actions Spoke Louder than Words* (left), is from the Raoul Wallenberg memorial in Stockholm, Sweden. It carries two sentences presented in 47 languages: "The road was straight when Jews were deported to death. The road was winding, dangerous, and full of obstacles when Jews were trying to escape from their murderers."

Stephanie's piece, *The Calligrapher's Studio (The Art of Correspondence)*, was photographed at a little store on the Ile St Louis in Paris. She says, "It is, indeed, a calligrapher's studio and store. He sells the most lovely handmade papers and books and inks and pens and all the most beautiful accoutrements to writing. He has, all over one wall, the lovely envelopes that his customers have created and sent to him, and this image shows a part of that. It was from our trip to Paris earlier in this year which was such a special trip for us."

As we go to press, Stephanie reports that the piece has already sold. She says, "It felt particularly special that the piece was accepted into this show, and then that someone was touched enough to want to live with it." Congrats, Stephanie!

