

SEPTEMBER, 2015

FEATURED ARTISTS

Cathy Thomas
Karen Spratt
Jerrie Jerné
Sharon Feissel

MEMBER NEWS

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THE GALLERY'S EARLY FALL SHOW
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9 THROUGH SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8

SHOW OPENING & ART WALK RECEPTION
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 5:00 - 9:00 PM
Musical Interludes by Michael Hantman

EVENT: PETALUMA POETRY WALK, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20
Poets at Riverfront Art Gallery at 12 Noon.

BEYOND THE USUAL

A FOUR-ARTIST FEATURED SHOW

In a kind of topsy-turvy, defying-expectations kind of Featured Show, four long-standing Riverfront artists are addressing a single theme: *Beyond The Usual*. The show title is due to the fact that each one is going beyond her usual medium into something quite different and totally unrelated. In true artistic spirit they have been willing to put themselves on the line, daring to step out of their sphere of expertise, even agreeing to feature the medium that is not their mainstay, and showing us where they currently are with their new endeavors.

Who are these artists who have dared to challenge themselves, evolving as artists by taking on yet another complex set of skills?

- ❖ Painter Karen Spratt put away her canvases and is showing photography.
- ❖ Photographer Cathy Thomas took out her scissors and paste and is showing collage.
- ❖ Photographers Jerrie Jerné and Sharon Feissel have put down the camera and picked up the paint brush.

Ah, yes, you agree. This is a topsy-turvy kind of show--and all the more unusual and interesting for that reason. We celebrate their spirit and creativity and the evolving "persona" each has as an artist. On the following pages, you will see examples of their chosen "other" medium and will read their own thoughts on going beyond the usual.

MEMBER NEWS

Lance Kuehne and Sharon Feissel in Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation's 25th Anniversary juried exhibition *Photographic Journey Through the Laguna de Santa Rosa*.

Show runs from September 4, 2015 through January 4 2016.
Reception 3:00 to 6:00,
Saturday, September 26.
900 Sanford Rd., Santa Rosa.

Through Sept. 27
Karen Spratt has artwork in the *Bird Show* at Aqus Cafe, 189 H Street, Petaluma.

Riverfront Invitational Artists Janet McBeen and Connie Mygatt are also in the show.

FEATURED SHOW: *BEYOND THE USUAL*
WITH PAINTER KAREN SPRATT SHOWING PHOTOGRAPHY

Karen Spratt is a well-known Petaluma painter whose works are collected regionally. She is also appreciated for the delightful sense of humor she imparts to many of her works. However, for this Featured Show, Karen is venturing into the realm of photography where she feels a bit vulnerable, but she says, "Becoming aware of such photographic issues as contrast, color saturation, and focal point encourages me to remember those qualities when I go back to painting. This illustrates that mediums, no matter how different, can inform each other."

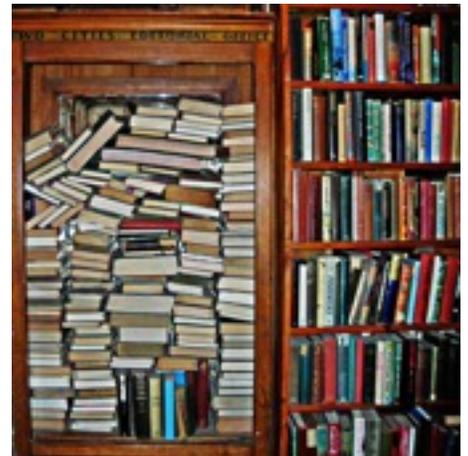
Explaining her connection to photography, Karen says, "I rarely paint straight out of my head. Sometimes I look at the actual object I'm painting, like a teapot or a flower. Most of the time I look at photographs of what I want to paint. I refer to the collection of photographs I have taken or sometimes to images from the Internet. As a painter, I consider my iPhone camera an important tool. When I see something I'm thinking of painting, an interesting object or setting, I start clicking away."



However, you will not see Karen's painted scenes in this show. She has other reasons for these photographic selections. "Every once in a while I get a photo I really like, but I don't think it will translate well into a painting. A really unique object can just look wrong when painted, such as the wonderfully-sculptured gardens at Château Marqueyssac, France (above). It's a place where the real thing is unusual enough. It simply wouldn't look real as a painting. And Pere LaChaise Cemetery in Paris is a place I love to photograph, but it isn't a good subject for painting. Shakespeare

& Company (below) is such a charming Paris bookstore, but none of the many photos I've taken there would make a good painting. Other places I have been to are visually stunning, but a painting can't do the scenery justice. So, I leave them as photographs and am showing some of them here."

Karen has said she sees things with a painter's eye. That trusted eye is, of course, what enables her to find suitable subjects for her paintings. It also enables Karen to recognize the beauty or interest of stacks of books or a jumble of wire fishing baskets, while simultaneously discarding those images as potential paintings. We would suggest that she is also developing a photographer's eye in keeping these images in photographic form, since they all capture exactly the kinds of subjects photographers look for.



At left: Paintings shown in Karen's 26-page softcover book entitled *The Adventures of Venus and Hokusai*. \$12.95 Available at Riverfront Art Gallery and from Amazon and Karen.

FEATURED SHOW: *BEYOND THE USUAL*

WITH PHOTOGRAPHER JERRIE JERNÉ SHOWING ACRYLIC PAINTINGS

Movement, color, and a certain flair are intrinsic to Jerrie Jerné, being natural to her as well as being essential for her. "I love dance. I always have. Color is a close second," she says.

But let us backtrack a bit from the upcoming show. Jerrie has been toting a camera around for a couple of decades. While she has done the usual landscapes and flowers, she has also often sought out patterns and abstracts in such things as architecture, rock formations, and bark patterns. Needing to be a bit more expressive, Jerrie began taking selected photographs and using digital programs to distort, twist, turn, and recolor the image into genuine abstracts. Her digitally-produced series echoed Jerrie's love of movement and color and were definitely done with a certain flair. Often she just started playing with the static form and ended up with something quite unique.

Fast forward to 2015 and we find Jerrie with tubes of paint and a stack of canvases. She says, "Walking into a painter's life has come easy for me. As a photographer I have always used my camera as my brush, searching for the pattern or shape that is usually unseen by most. Creating an abstract using my photography as my palette was my direction for almost 6 years, but somehow starting with an existing image seemed a bit confining. Actually, when it comes to self expression, painting is definitely easier than photography! It isn't hard to let the painting tell me where it wants to go. This has been a great experience."

Referring to specific pieces, Jerrie comments, "I am finding my intent and the outcome are always different. My paintings take on a personality of their

own, which I love! But with *Infinitis* (below left) it was a bit startling. I intended to work in a different direction, but on its own the piece became so dark, angry, and intense that it almost scared me, especially when a screaming face emerged. I actually stopped and left it alone for a while. Adding turquoise seemed to pull it out of the darkness. That piece eventually seemed cathartic. I had a sense of release from some things I had been feeling.

"Then I was cheerful and happy again and was able to pull out bright colors for the next piece, *Evoke* (right). How colors combine is important to me, so I pick out a set of colors and stay with that palette. With *Evoke* I had more control of the piece. I love the way the colors blended and the depth that appeared. I chose to use a painter's spatula and a fan brush for this piece. Just as exhilarating as color and motion are all the possible methods available, from the steel comb used with *Infinitis* to the controlled pouring of paint in *Free Flow 1* (below)."

There is much to see, so do come to appreciate Jerrie's new form of artistic expression--so unplanned, yet so effective.



**FEATURED SHOW: BEYOND THE USUAL
WITH PHOTOGRAPHER CATHY THOMAS SHOWING COLLAGE**

Cathy Thomas is mainly a photographer with collections of photographs on themes that might be termed Social Documentary, such as her series on tattoos adorning Petaluma residents. She does, of course, do more standard subjects, such as gardens and landscapes, especially of Ireland. However, like two other artists in this show, Cathy reached beyond photography to a totally different art form to further express her creativity. She opted for collage.

Although collage was being done for centuries, the Cubists, Picasso, Braque, and Gris, are credited with its use as an abstract art form, with Picasso taking it into three-dimensional forms. Collage is considered abstract work even though the individual objects are generally recognizable. It is their juxtaposition and unique combinations that make the whole image *not* a direct representation of reality. A collage certainly can express political, environmental, or sentimental realities by revealing those messages through the combination of items.

An example is a composition Cathy did for her sister, a docent at the San Francisco Zoo for about 25 years. “When she left, I wanted to present her with a memory and so created *Maizie’s Zoo* (below). Her favorite animals are the big cats & primates. I added the giraffe in honor of our father’s favorite. These were the focal animals. I cut out photos of



animals. On some I added paint to emphasize their markings. I utilized art papers and prints that were indicative of the jungle in color. To make the animals more realistic, I used fur from my Tabby cat, Paris, for the monkey head tufts and fishing line for the lion’s whiskers. Maizie has the original, but a print is in my bin.”

Cathy began with three-dimensional pieces, such as *Peacock Sea* (top right). She says, “I have friends with wild peacocks on their property where an abundance of feathers lie. I love the sea that

offers so many glorious shades of blue and green. The idea of combining those colors with the feathers inspired *Peacock Sea*. This piece took quite a while—possibly a couple of months. I just couldn’t get the ‘right’ effect and moved the feathers and papers around a lot with numerous additions and deletions.”



Cathy has since moved on to two-dimensional works which are her current focus. Of a new series related to music she says her love of music was the inspiration. She continues, “These were a challenge due to the new-to-me process of transferring. I am learning how to remove a photograph or print from its backing paper, leaving just the ink image, and to incorporate the image into the collage. *Musical Instruments* (below) is an example where I transferred the center. In another image I transferred notes from actual sheet music.

“The transfer must not be too dry or wet for it to take hold properly. It’s difficult to judge whether it’s time to rub off the transfer material. If the timing isn’t correct it’s easy to actually rub the transferred photo away. Sometimes an error can be interesting and acceptable even if only parts of the transfer remain.”

With Cathy’s part of the *Beyond The Usual* show, we see that she, like the other artists in the show, is still searching, experimenting, exploring, and evolving in ideas, mediums, and techniques.



FEATURED SHOW: *BEYOND THE USUAL*

PHOTOGRAPHER SHARON FEISSEL SHOWING PAINTINGS & MIXED MEDIA

"I didn't exactly take a flying leap into painting," Sharon Feissel comments about her recent move from photography to acrylics and mixed media. "In fact, I was interested in painting decades before I picked up the camera. When my children were small, I signed up for a watercolor class. During critiquing, the instructor remarked that my sense of proportion was no good. I didn't have things, size-wise, in the proper relationship. I assumed that such a disability was a 'fatal flaw' and that I couldn't be a painter. Then I tried stone carving with reasonable results, but my allergies got much worse from breathing stone dust. That medium also went by the wayside.

"Although I had taken pictures when I spent two years teaching English-as-a-second-language in Germany and Spain, it wasn't until decades later, when my husband, Gus, retired and himself began concentrating on photography, that I finally felt I could try to tackle an artistic medium again. I got so I understood the camera technicalities and could produce acceptable images, but I found myself groping for something more individual than the same kinds of landscapes that everyone else takes. As soon as Photoshop came into my life, I was less restricted and began to develop photomontages where I would take elements out of my photographs and combine them to develop abstract works--some of which were sufficiently complicated that they had up to 460 layers and were an absolute bear to work

with, often taking weeks to finalize. But these photomontages were something exhilarating to attempt. I could express concepts, even force a tool in Photoshop to do things Adobe never intended. Yet I still felt limited. I had to start with an existing photographed element, relying on it to spur creative thought. I was satisfied and dissatisfied all at the same time."

Sharon continues, "You can guess where I'm headed with this explanation. Now I have paint tubes and brushes, canvases and collections of potential "stuff" in my kitchen. I have not found acrylics to be easy exactly, and a blank canvas stares me down and



intimidates me, but I have at least gotten started, having done a few realistic pieces, some geometrics, and some mixed media works and abstracts. This too is simultaneously satisfying and dissatisfying. The satisfaction is considerable; the dissatisfaction due mostly to, at times, being stumped for ideas and to needing to perfect my handling of the paints and figuring out how to incorporate things I want to attach to mixed media pieces, such as the coffee grounds and egg shells in *Meanderings* (below left). But satisfaction leads to complacency. Complacency isn't known to produce art, so I don't mind the dissatisfaction...much."

Meanderings is a four-piece work that will be the center piece of Sharon's show. In addition, she will have geometric pieces, like *Towers of Geometric Complexity I* (above) and pieces with beaded accents. She says, "It isn't exactly a cohesive show, but it represents where I am in this recently adopted medium."

Do come to view this very different kind of Featured Artist show in which four artists have dared to step out beyond their usual medium to embrace quite a different form of artistic expression. They encourage us all to risk doing something different. We applaud their expanding personal dimensions.

