

OCTOBER, 2015

RETURNING MEMBER

Gus Feissel

FEATURED ARTISTS

Cathy Thomas

Karen Spratt

Jerrie Jerné

Sharon Feissel

MEMBER NEWS

* *

GALLERY OFFERINGS

Paintings

Mixed Media

Photography

Sculpture

Woodcraft

Sculptural Lamps

**FIND US/FRIEND US
ON FACEBOOK**

www.riverfrontartgallery.com

(707) 775-4278

**THE GALLERY'S CURRENT SHOW
THROUGH SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8**

**ART WALK RECEPTION
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 5:00 - 8:00 PM**

WELCOME BACK!

FOUNDING MEMBER GUS FEISSEL

Riverfront is pleased to announce that one of the gallery's founding members, Gus Feissel, has returned to the gallery after an extended "leave of absence." Visitors can again enjoy his colorful landscapes in his opening show which glories in the colors of Autumn.

Gus says, "The Fall season with its unique explosion of color is the theme of my exhibition. Both landscapes and closeups offer distinct ways to enjoy the magic of nature's palette in this season.

"My visit to Kyoto in November 2014 offered me a special opportunity to enjoy and photograph the beauty of Autumn in Japan. I am pleased to share some of the images from that trip with you.



"My image, *Colors of Fall, Shadow of Winter* (above), combines in a dramatic manner the beauty of Autumn and the approaching barren cold, thus capturing the essence of two seasons in a single photograph.

While Fall in Japan is on the wall, the Japan shots as well as images from locations nearer to home are included in my bin."

Also returning to the gallery after a brief absence are two very successful photographers. Jim Coda is back to treat us to more of his wildlife photography from Alaska, Yellowstone, and elsewhere. Jeff G. Allen is back with his diverse photographic subjects, including nature and natural abstracts, as well as city scenes. Undoubtedly we will again see some of his popular black and white San Francisco images. Welcome back Jim and Jeff!

MEMBER NEWS
Riverfront members
Karen Spratt & Lance Kuehne
Art Trails Open Studios
Saturday and Sunday
October 10-11 and 17-18, 10 a.m to 5 p.m.
Old Hatchery Building,
401 7th St., corner with F , Petaluma

CURRENT FEATURED SHOW: *BEYOND THE USUAL*

It always adds a touch of interest and excitement when something is slightly out of kilter with the normal way of things. The Early Fall Show at Riverfront Art Gallery continues through November 8. The show goes beyond the usual in two ways. First, the gallery has never before had four Featured Artists showing works on a single theme. Second, it has never had a show featuring works artists have done in a medium that isn't their usual one. In stepping out and going beyond the usual, these artists--Karen Spratt, Cathy Thomas, Jerrie Jerné, and Sharon Feissel--are willing to risk, willing to challenge themselves, willing to attempt something quite different --and willing to show us where they are at the moment in this other medium and in their evolution as artists. Quite daring, don't you think? Do come, possibly for Art Walk on Saturday, October 10, 5:00 to 8:00, to see this show that truly goes beyond the usual. While we wrote about each artist in the September newsletter, we want to add to that information to give you a fuller sense of the new artistic "persona" seen in this show.

BEYOND THE USUAL: JERRIE JERNÉ

Regular visitors to Riverfront have been pleasantly surprised to see the new direction Jerrie Jerné has taken with her artistic endeavors. Her photographs--scenics, florals, and abstracts--have been supplanted by free-flowing acrylic paintings. It is a stunning transition! In discussing her newfound form of expression, Jerrie says she is releasing all of her energy, love of movement, and sense of color and texture. "I want my paintings to have a lot of movement. Since music has been a huge part of my being, I listen to it when I am painting. I think it helps me bring a kind of rhythm to a piece." She smiles, "As you can see, my dancer soul is continuing to find its way to the canvas. Painting has just let me cut loose!"

Explaining her preparations for beginning a painting, she says, "There are the practical considerations, like what size canvas to use." Jerrie started with a series of smaller pieces, but then plucked up her courage and tried larger canvases. "I really had a feeling of lack of restriction, of freedom, with the large pieces. I enjoyed painting LARGE!"

A big consideration is how to apply the paint. Jerrie says, "finding the right tools is part of the process. I have numerous choices. I've used squeegees and different spreaders, spatulas, steel combs, a fan

brush, poured paint--whatever I come up with to create lots of texture. *Magic Carpet Ride* (right) involved various tools, but also palette knives and stencils."

Then there are the decisions about colors, what combination to use. Some pieces are quite limited in tone and intensity, some almost startling. Jerrie comments that in general "I pick colors and tools and just start. I have no intent, no plan. The piece just happens, just comes from somewhere inside--a feeling that a color should go here and be repeated there, that the colors should float above the background, that the motion of my tools feels right, that above all I get a sense of freedom and of something not possible to express any other way."

Needless to say, Jerrie is fast becoming a prolific abstract painter and enjoying every minute of it.



BEYOND THE USUAL: KAREN SPRATT

Petaluma painter Karen Spratt has photographs, not paintings, in her portion of the *Beyond The Usual* show. She routinely takes photos wherever she is, at home or abroad, compiling them into a resource she draws upon for her paintings. Karen acknowledges that not all subjects that catch her interest have potential as paintings. Yet, to her painter's eye, they do illuminate artistic qualities prevalent in many places. Sometimes the shot is simply pleasing in itself or is some oddity that may generally go unnoticed. She keeps these images, knowing they won't be painted.



An example is the stained glass window (left) in a church in Normandy, France. The window itself has geometric patterns rather than the usual Biblical motif and storytelling purpose. But what makes Karen's shot even more arresting is the way the penetrating light stretches the color inward and across the stone wall, creating an abstract extension, an impression due to disappear quickly as the light alters.

Similarly, in a shot from Disneyland, CA, (top right) she has isolated the repetition of spheres and rings, giving the image a strong diagonal

emphasis. Her effective handling of light from the bright highlights to the background darkness is another well-handled photographic consideration.



In presenting photographs, Karen is quick to point out that "With photography, I am working in a medium where I have very little experience. It is a challenge for me to show these photographs. They are taken with an artist's eyes, but without a professional photographer's skills. I don't know camera settings, f-stops, exposure. I don't get up before sunrise and spend hours waiting in some uncomfortable place for the perfect light. I don't compose the image through the camera lens. I just aim the phone and touch the circle to take the picture."

She continues, "Digital photography requires digital tools to make the image print out as the photographer saw it through the lens. Although I use digital tools as a composition aid in my painting, working digitally with photographs is much more difficult. I have a healthy respect for photography, even though I approach it as a painter."

It has been suggested that Karen does in fact have a photographer's eye for documenting the myriad content of culture and nature in this world--and that's why she keeps these images. Perhaps that is also why she is presenting them in this show.

BEYOND THE USUAL: CATHY THOMAS

In discussing her second medium, *collage*, photographer Cathy Thomas says, "I've done both photography and collage for a long time. Collage is from my mind; photography is sight. The creativity of the two can be interchangeable." She explains that "Many times a collage inspiration comes through my photographic images and also through found objects of interest. Thus far, my work has had a theme or subject that I turn into a creation--for example, *Drum Ensemble* (right), part of a musical

theme. I don't do a design on paper. It's all in my mind, so often I just pick materials and start moving them around on paper until an idea emerges."



Continued on page 4.

Cathy Thomas, continued from page 3.

Cathy continues, “Just now I’m doing a different kind of collage. My previous collages were mostly three-dimensional, including *Tango* (at right).” Cathy has included an amusing text among the pieces in *Tango*. It says, “Tango: A Vertical Expression of a Horizontal Desire.” (We know you are chuckling.)

Cathy’s latest works are two-dimensional and include photo transfers. “This new technique allows me to use actual photography or prints. The technique lifts the inks from their background paper, so just the ink image can be added to the piece, rather than cutting the image out, as is the usual with collage. My series *Musical Instruments* features this technique, which adds new interest but also presents new challenges for me. The lifted

piece is fragile, tears easily, and can be difficult to place and to adhere, but it does add a different textural and visual component. Transfers are hard enough that while I’m working with them, you might just hear me mumbling under my breath!” she says with a grin.



BEYOND THE USUAL: SHARON FEISSEL

As she explained in the September issue of this newsletter, Sharon Feissel tried watercolors, was told her sense of perspective was deficient, and, feeling she couldn’t be an artist, she gave painting no further thought. In retirement she and her husband, Gus, took up photography which became her medium.

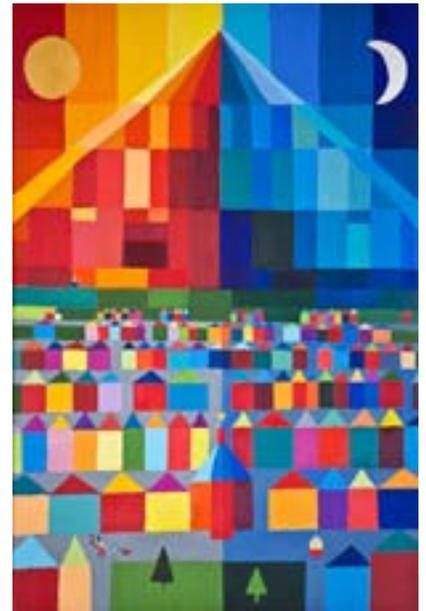
She says, “Photography is truly a giving medium--it teaches you to be more observant, to understand light and its effects, to make selections based on a multitude of considerations. Then learning to digitally develop your own images teaches another set of darkroom-type skills. But you are limited to what is right before your eyes. And that was my problem with it. The image was made for me. I perhaps interpreted but didn’t create the scene.

“Then I discovered photomontage, where I took elements from my photographs and combined them into new works that often didn’t even resemble photography. This was very stimulating. I could express concepts and ideas and feel like I could be a creative person. Of course, I was still relying on photographed objects as a basis, which meant not quite everything was coming from my own imagination. I still needed to push myself further.

It took no small amount of courage to move myself toward painting again and to consider mixed media works, which always seem so inventive when I see them done by others...and which don’t require a

splendid sense of perspective and object size relationships.”

Sharon continues, “Of course, the difficulty now is that it *all* has to come from my head and then proceed with a decision-making process that comes from an unidentified place within me--an undefined sense of what to do next.



“My biggest challenge is with totally abstract works and mixed media, such as pieces in the show with beads, washers, coffee grounds, or egg shells as components. A big remaining question is ‘How do I do freeform along with color and placement and motion and the addition of objects, all based on nothing?’ Starting from nothing--that’s the tricky part! I know I have quite a ways to go to get to the end of this new path. I will undoubtedly stumble and make wrong turns as I move along. At least, I am on my way.”