

OCTOBER 2016

FEATURED ARTISTS

Georgianne Fastaia
Gus Feissel

NEW MEMBERS

Laura Tovar Dietrick
Melia Lott

MEMBER NEWS

MISSING TERRY SMITH

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- Paintings
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**THE GALLERY'S EARLY FALL SHOW
THROUGH SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6**

ART WALK RECEPTION
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8, 5:00 - 9:00 PM

HIGHLY PLEASING CURRENT FEATURED SHOWS

Painter Georgianne Fastaia & Photographer Gus Feissel

Riverfront's Early Fall Show runs through November 6. The two featured artists could not be more different. Painter Georgianne Fastaia presents her unique style of painting in oils, giving us something midway between figuration and abstraction, while photographer Gus Feissel lays out a documentary exposé that steeps us in views of the stunning isolation of Monument Valley. Let's take a closer look at both shows.

Georgianne has titled her featured show *Togetherness*. She demonstrates this social need through a series of contrasting subjects: ballerinas and farm animals...social creatures not so dissimilar as we might wish to think.

Amid the *Togetherness* symbols are paintings of one of Georgianne's favorite subjects, little girls dreaming of becoming ballerinas, as in *Shadow Dancers* (below). In these paintings, she says, "You will discover the sense of awkward beauty of young girls coming into their first awareness of the concept of beauty and of the feminine mystique, twirling around in their tutus and thinking, 'I'm pretty!'. While Degas's rendering of this time-honored subject is widely appreciated, I am offering a fresh interpretation of the ballerina theme. I am drawn to the innocence, mystery, and grace of these tiny dancers—and their *togetherness* in this stage of their lives.

Neither they nor their skills are polished. They are the proverbial diamonds in the rough, and thus I have applied my "distressed aesthetic" approach which renders more texture and a greater sense of imperfection and mystery. This unique distressing process gives each painting an antiqued texture, serving as a bittersweet visual reminder of a moment in time passing."



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CURRENT FEATURED SHOWS

Feissel's featured show, *Monument Valley Magic*, was photographed earlier this year. Teased and taunted by photographs of the area, Gus finally got there for a three-day visit amid those iconic formations. This show is the result.

Gus tells us, "My Navajo guide, Fred Cly, steered me unerringly through the unmarked dirt tracks that crisscross the immense Navajo reservation. Without a guide, one might imagine ending up as dried bones along a stage route, as Western movies liked to show. With knowledge of the light requirements for good photography, Fred made sure we were where we wanted to be at the right time. Then it was up to me to calculate the light and depth of field, and decide on what to include or exclude. In that regard, panoramas were a challenge. In the distance, blowing sand sometimes obscured the horizon, but luckily the circumstances were perfect for me at each mesmerizing location. The piece I am calling *Spirit Window* (below) isn't exactly iconic, but was just as fascinating."

Gus continues, It is stunning to stand there and to remember that ground level was once where the tops of today's formations are. For some, it is a drop



of 2000 feet down to the desert floor. This actually means that most of the land was washed or blown away, leaving only remnants that had harder components and thus were more resistant to erosion, although the process does continue. East and West Mittens will someday lose their thumbs. The literature says the process of wearing down the sandstone into today's formations has taken 25 million years. The Mitten formations and Merrick Butte seen in *Iconic Monument Valley* (above) are the remnants of a former mesa, itself the remains of a former plateau."

His final thoughts on the show, "I so appreciate the stark beauty of this landscape and the colors that play across it, especially at dawn and dusk as with *Silhouettes At Sunrise* (below). I am pleased to put this extraordinary scenery on display at the gallery."



THE GALLERY'S NEW MEMBERS

PAINTER MELIA LOTT

Painter Melia Lott is a self-taught artist, working in oil on canvas. She says, "I paint from my imagination and my heart. I take time to meditate before applying paint to canvas, since it grounds me and helps me feel clear. It's rare that I plan the subject of my paintings. I go with what I feel. I love being in the moment and moving in that time frame, sometimes even mixing paint directly on the canvas."

In the Early Fall Show, Melia is presenting her stylized urbanscapes and row houses, as well as another favorite topic: hearts. Melia's urban pieces are joyful in color and playful in aspect, such as *Blue Bird* (below). Some of her paintings are large enough to serve as a focal point for a room. Melia comments, "My urbanscapes and row houses are fun for me, because I jump in and create spaces that I want to become part of. They are bright and whimsical and make me happy. Hopefully they affect the viewer that way as well, since my goal is to touch others and bring them joy."

She continues, "One of my long-time favorite subjects has been hearts. They're all different, all unique, like snowflakes. Everyone can relate to love. I actually did heart paintings for every victim of the Sandy Hook killings. Each family owns one of my hearts painted especially for them in memory of the one they lost. I know that hearts will continue to be a favorite of mine throughout my lifetime."

Whether in multiples or singly, in a large space or small, as a focal point or in an intimate setting, Melia's paintings bring a welcome touch of sunshine into any room.



PAINTER LAURA TOVAR DIETRICK

Whether creating abstract or figurative works, florals or landscapes, painter Laura Tovar Dietrick uses the same approach. She explains, "I am trying to 'distill' things down to their most basic elements, to capture only the mere essence of the stuff of our lives and to keep at bay the chaos in which we are all surrounded on a daily basis. I am trying to use less, not more, and to leave the mystery hidden in each subject without telling too much. Through my work, I hope that the kind of ordered beauty that is inherent in nature and in man's work comes through."

Laura adds, "I LOVE to paint. I like the feel of the creamy paint as I mix it, the vibrancy of the colors, the brush as it digs into the canvas, the endless possibilities of it all. I like the challenge of making something that is in my head appear on a canvas, something uniquely mine. As far as what I like to paint, I like beautiful things like sunsets, and people and mountains and oceans and just about everything that God has made. (Maybe not snakes.) I like simple with complexity in small places. I like clean and clear, as well as misty and foggy and ambiguous. I like big and huge, as well as small and tiny."

She continues, "The construction of a painting is a journey, and along the way dozens of choices are made with each one becoming more critical to the final product as the work evolves. Sometimes

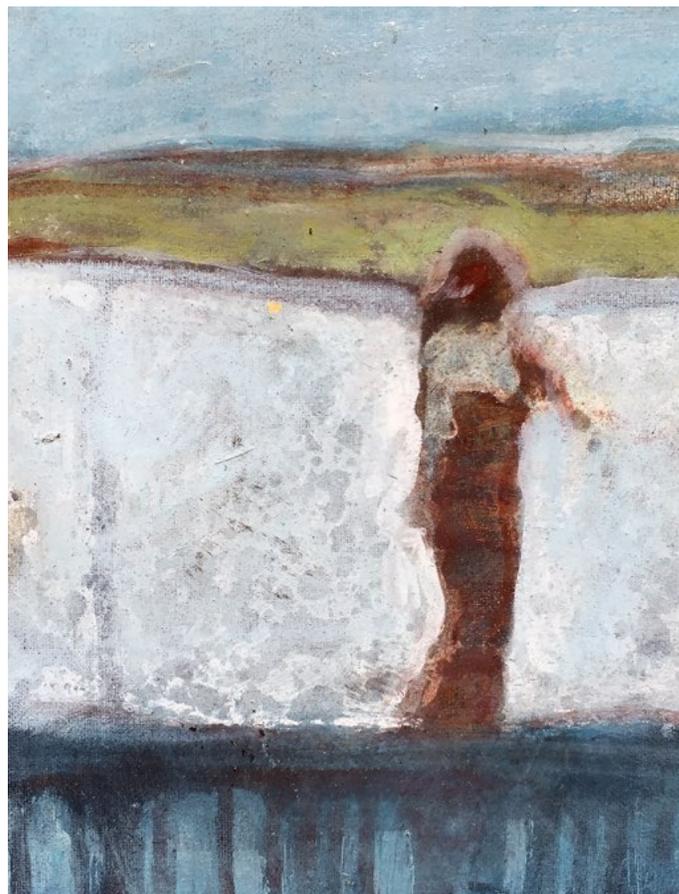


you turn in a particular direction and it can either be a brilliant choice or a huge mistake. It is about taking risks, however small or large they may be."

Laura is showing her collection of florals during the Early Fall Show.

Georgianne continues, "The approach also works to imply the unpolished, rustic associations we have with rural settings. Groups of farm animals we see from the car window are also examples of togetherness, as with *Big And Little* (below). Normally clustered in pastures or beneath trees, farm animals demonstrate the need for relationships and the interdependence of life itself. The lone horse or cow always reminds me of our ultimate aloneness. Thus I have included in the show the lone individual, like the woman in *By The Bay* (below right) as a counterpoint to the overall theme, *Togetherness*.

Speaking of her general approach, Georgianne says, "I strive for emotional honesty in my work and rely on an intuitive sense of color and an immediacy of gesture to achieve it. One collector told me, "Your paintings remind me that I don't have to be perfect." That comment tells me my work can inspire someone to reconsider their beliefs and expand their concept of what a piece of art can give them. Perhaps in this show, I can give viewers a sense of togetherness with me in how I look at life."



MEMBER NEWS

**KAREN SPRATT, HENRY WHITE &
LANCE KUEHNE**

Showing in Art Trails

Oct. 8 & 9 and 15 & 16, 10 am to 5 pm

Please meet Karen and Lance at their studios in the Hatchery Building, 401 7th Street, and Henry at 5 Haven Drive, both in Petaluma.

PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

Riverfront co-owner Lance Kuehne has his fall schedule of classes and workshops on a new website: <http://www.lkphotoworkshops.com>.

The schedule includes a mid November class he will teach at Point Reyes under the auspices of the Point Reyes National Seashore Assn. Register through the Point Reyes website for it. For his remaining offerings, register at Lance's new workshop website.

MISSING TERRY

When the final issue of the Petaluma Post came out in June, Riverfront Art Gallery opened its own June newsletter with a tribute to Terry Smith, Editor and Publisher of that marvelous monthly reminder of how busy and vibrant a place Petaluma is. We expressed our gratitude for the exposure the paper gave the fledgling gallery as soon as it opened in the Fall of 2007 and the space it continued to give the gallery over the ensuing years. Terry has had an enduring place in the community fabric of Petaluma for 30 years. We are saddened that not even four months elapsed from the final issue of the Petaluma Post to Terry's final days as the chronicler of Petaluma. We know he is missed by many, including by Riverfront Art Gallery.



A Celebration of the Life of Terry C. Smith will be held on Saturday, October 15, from 2 to 5 PM at Sunrise of Petaluma, 815 Wood Sorrel Drive in Petaluma.

Terry died peacefully on Thursday, September 22, 2016, with his wife Karen Phillips at his side. Terry was Editor and Publisher of *The Petaluma Post* from 2004 until its final issue in June 2016. He was active in the Petaluma Downtown Association, edited Petaluma's Sesquicentennial Celebration book, and was a devoted patron of the arts and community events.

The family has established the Terry C. Smith Memorial Scholarship Fund through which an annual scholarship will be awarded to a student who shows talent in photography or writing. In lieu of flowers, donations to the scholarship fund may be sent to: Bank of the West, 20 Petaluma Blvd South, Petaluma 94952, Attention: Terry C. Smith Memorial Scholarship Fund.