

WEST HILLS ART LEAGUE

Minutes for Meeting of April 19, 2018

Ashley Robles Presiding

Treasurer's Report - Audra Zampogna reported a current balance of \$4,114.06.

Annual Show at Robin Hill – Ashley reconfirmed the drop-off date for our annual show as Tuesday, May 1, from 9:00 a.m. till Noon. The opening reception will be Mother's Day, May 13, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. when prizes will be awarded. You must be a paid up member to participate. Fees are \$5 per work, with a maximum of two works. Pickup will be at our final meeting for the season on May 17, when the judge, Christine Swann, will explain her choices. For the reception, participants are asked to bring food or beverages, and Ashley has asked for volunteers to help serve the food & drink.

Artists are invited to create bookmarks which will be given to mothers attending the show as in past years. Submissions may be brought to Gilberti Fine Art Gallery in Coraopolis before the show.

Russell Recchion Class in Portrait Painting – Gilberti Fine Art will host a 3-day oil painting session with portrait artist Russell Recchion on May 8, 9 and 10, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fee is \$325.

Hiland Presbyterian Church Fine Art Show and Sale The Hiland Church at 845 Perry Highway, PGH 15229 is inviting artists to participate in its first annual fine art show and sale. Fees are \$10 per piece with a maximum of three pieces. Kim Friethaler, Executive Director of the North Hills Art Center, will jury the show. Drop off: 5/1 and 5/2 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. The opening reception is a ticketed event with wine tasting on 5/4. Pickup: 5/6 and 5/7 from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. Details at 412-364-9000 or hilandartshow@gmail.com

Demonstrator: Our guest presenter was Marianne Hilke. Her early art education was begun in Pittsburgh at The Ivy School of Art and then continued at the Rhode Island School of Photography and in Rome, Italy, where she studied art and developed a passion for painting. With her photography background, she started the restoration department for a photographic company in California and was a computerized color artist for a large fabric and design company. In the mid 90's Marianne was asked to establish an art department for a private school in North Palm Springs, California. Marianne later earned a license in geriatric studies at Trumbull Memorial Hospital, with the goal of art with the elderly as well as those with Alzheimer's. She continues to teach all ages and is affiliated with The Butler Institute of American Art, Phipps Conservatory, The Hoyt, St John's Episcopal Church and other organizations, in Pennsylvania, Ohio and California.

Introduction – Marianne started with a discussion of principles she has learned over the years, including the importance of defining for yourself the reason(s) that you want to create art – noting the subjects you like to paint and the style you'd like to develop

Demonstration – Along with samples of her finished art, she showed the group two canvasses that she had treated with an undercoat and demonstrated how she began her paintings, first by blocking in main elements of the picture and then developing the painting by filling in major shapes.

Reference - Marianne uses photos as reference, either pictures she has found or ones she has taken herself. When copying an image onto a canvas, she urges students to resist relying on grids with many squares and instead to divide an image into as few as four quarters. “Otherwise, you’ll never learn to draw,” she explained. In fact, with one picture she showed how she identified important points in the image and then gauged the relationship between them, to lay out a basic blueprint for the finished work.

Layering – With her initial blocking of her picture, she uses a thin mix of pigment and turpentine. This allows her to refine an image over and over again without an excessive buildup. She said that one finished picture had 10 layers.

Paints – Marianne paints almost exclusively in oils. She once tried water-based oils but didn’t like them, although she might try them again since she suspects they have improved significantly in the interim.

Canvas – She likes stretched canvas far better than canvas panels, although she sometimes paints on the latter. She says that stretched canvass “breathes” and holds the paint better.

Underpainting – As noted, she usually starts a painting by covering her canvas with an underpainting, often a compliment of the main color of her subject. She likes the effect of the final showthrough.

Liquin – Liquin is a quick-drying medium with many uses. Marianne mixes it with pigments in her painting but cautions that too much in the mix can result in a surface like “glass,” which will not take additional layers of paint. She does, however, like to finish her paintings with a thin coating of Liquin.

Recycling – If you have paintings lying around that you’ve grown tired of, don’t discard them, says Marianne. There are many ways to recycle them. She demonstrated one way with a painting of green vegetation she’d done many years ago: she applied new and different colors to it, turning it into a different picture. With another, she did a new version, “modernizing” it with new colors, the elimination of competing elements and giving it a more impressionistic feeling. She also pointed out that a painting can be recycled by saving just a portion of it or by adding collage elements like string or rice paper or even pieces of old unwanted paintings.

Our final meeting for the season will be on Thursday, May 17.

Respectfully submitted,

Will White