

American Masters Show BY NORMAN KOLPAS

New York, NY

For lovers of contemporary American realist art, there are a number of outstanding annual shows that provide opportunities to see and purchase works by today's top painters and sculptors. From Prix de West to Masters of the American West and more, art lovers can enjoy a feast of long-established top events to satisfy their hunger for aesthetic excellence.

So what makes a new show gain attention and respect? The fourth annual American Masters exhibition and sale, on view at the Salmagundi Club in Manhattan May 4-20 (with a gala reception on May 13), boasts many of same benefits as other respected events while also adding its own original flair.

Look up the word "salmagundi," as the club's name may tempt you to do, and you'll find it's an old culinary term for a salad or stew composed of assorted ingredients, the stuff of lavish yet casual entertaining. The word's sound and meaning so delighted American writer Washington Irving, his brother William, and their friend James Kirke Paulding that they decided to bestow it upon a literary magazine they founded in early 19th-century Manhattan.

In turn, some of America's leading artists of the late 19th century borrowed "salmagundi" when they founded an art club in New York in 1871. For the past 140 years, the Salmagundi Club has been an aesthetic home away from home for such greats of art, illustration, design, and architecture as Childe Hassam, William Merritt Chase, Frederick Church, Howard Pyle, Louis Comfort Tiffany, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Stanford White, and N.C. Wyeth—as well as for those who appreciate and collect fine art. Since 1917 it has been based in a lavish mid-19th-century brownstone mansion on Fifth Avenue.

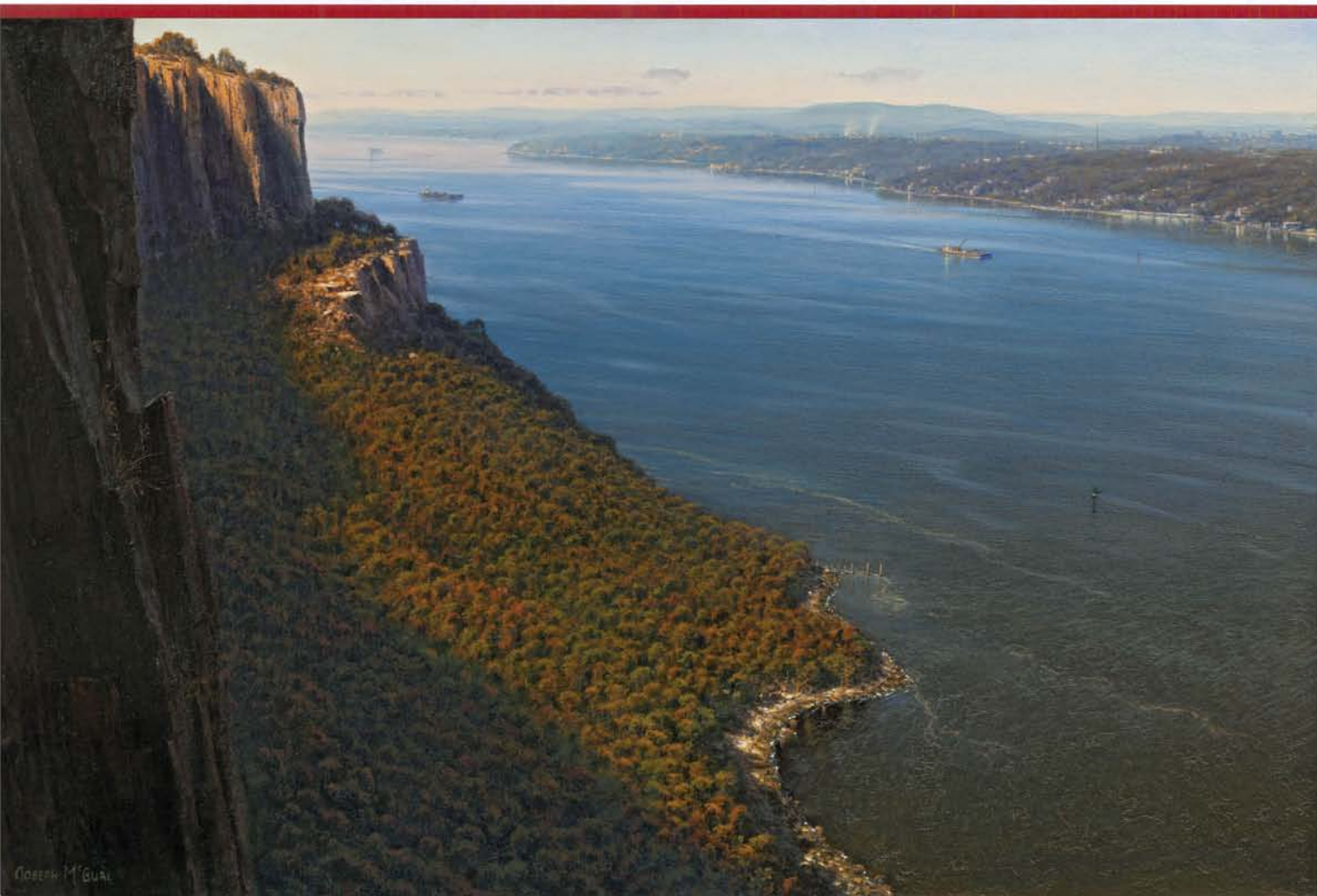
Until recently, the club was without a significant art event of its own. Its walls and gallery rooms would display works by distinguished members of yesterday and today, but it presented no major shows that could call attention to the vital role it



Spring Dance by Nancy Guzik



Packet Oxford Preparing to Take the Pilot by Christopher Blossom



Southbound by Joseph McGurl

had once played, and was still capable of playing, in the nation's artistic life.

Enter a son of the Rocky Mountain West to change all that.

RAISED IN Colorado and Wyoming and now the successful co-owner of a kitchen cabinet and design company based on the south shore of Long Island, Tim Newton has felt a passion for art his entire 59 years. "I give my mom the credit," he says. "She had a wonderful eye for beautiful things. So it's in my blood."

But Newton traces his life as a serious collector back just 20 years. On a trip back west to see an old high school friend living in Montana, Newton visited the studio of successful Cowboy Artists of America member Gary Carter. "I paid six hundred dollars for a large working study of two mountain men on horseback at full gallop into an encampment, with the Tetons in the background," he recalls. "It cost me

more than I should have been spending in 1991. I thought I'd lost my mind. But it had a quality of draftsmanship and wonderful spontaneity."

The Carter drawing still hangs over the fireplace of the home Newton shares with Cathi, his wife of 38 years. "She's not nearly as involved in the arts as I am," he chuckles. "But she is completely supportive and tolerates my addiction."

That addiction led Newton to become a regular on the circuit of western art events. He began buying signed Carter prints, and then prints by other artists. Then, in the mid-1990s, he purchased an original oil at the Western Visions miniatures show held each September at the National Museum of Wildlife Art in Jackson Hole. "That introduced me to a world where I found myself financially able to buy original artworks from top people. I started buying small pieces by the likes of Clyde Aspevig, Bill Acheff, and Christopher Blossom. I never bought prints again."



Determined by Matt Smith

“I’m hoping we’ll make the Salmagundi Club a bastion of American representational art.”

Then, while flying home with Cathi from a visit to Jackson’s Arts for the Parks competition in September 2002, Newton fell into conversation with respected seascape artist Del-Bourree Bach, who invited the couple to dinner at his club in New York. Immediately following his first meal at Salmagundi, Newton applied for membership. By early 2003, he was on its roster.

Newton continued to travel and collect, attending six to eight major shows a year, with regular stops at his new club whenever he was in Manhattan. Gradually, a realization came to him: “There were people who needed to be hanging on the walls of the Salmagundi who weren’t there.” America’s great realist artists had dispersed more widely across the continent in the 140 years since the club’s founding. Although it still had many illustrious members, artists who did not belong could not have their works hung on its walls.

With that fact in mind, in 2005 Newton approached the club’s then-president, accomplished still-life artist Claudia Seymour. “Would you allow me to create a fundraiser and invitational art show?” he asked. The club’s board eventually granted approval, and Newton began planning the first American Masters event, which debuted at the Salmagundi Club in May 2007.

From the beginning, American Masters has been a hit. Although it’s relatively small compared to its longer-standing peers—with exhibition space limited to the club’s 2,000-square-foot main gallery—some four dozen artists participate, showing about 150 pieces. The first year, sales totaled \$410,000. Artists receive 70 percent of the proceeds. After expenses, the remaining monies go directly to the club.

But what to do with that money? The answer may be one of the most inspired aspects of American Masters. “I would like to propose a main gallery renovation proj-

ect,” Newton told the Salmagundi board. They agreed to the plan, and after the May 2012 edition, Newton looks forward to cutting the ribbon on work that will uncover and restore its sky-lit ceiling while also giving it new walls, lighting, heating, and air conditioning—overall, “transforming it into a prestige space” wholly befitting its venerable surroundings.

Although the space itself may rise in prestige, the venue already possesses a history and architectural beauty that bestows an impressive aura on the artists involved in the show. “Walking into the Salmagundi Club and knowing the artists who have shown there before is thrilling,” says Montana-based western landscape painter Josh Elliott. “It’s like witnessing history.” Adds maritime and landscape painter Don Demers of Maine, the show “feels like bringing it home, especially when you consider that it is held in what could be considered the Mecca of representational painters and sculptors in 19th-century America.”

The notion of “bringing it home” has special impact when you consider that most of the other major realist art events are held



Winter on Gillham Road by Dean Mitchell



Into the Unknown by John Coleman



Melange in Orange by Sherrie McGraw

west of the Mississippi and focus largely on artists living in the west. "It's great that Eastern artists have an equal chance in this show," says Elliott. And the show's location in a city generally considered home base to the American fine art establishment holds even greater meaning. "Representational art has become the most vibrant movement in the country at this time," observes Cape Cod landscape painter Joseph McGurl, another participant. "But the phenomenon has occurred without much support from the establishment."

As American Masters demonstrates, all it need take is one passionate and dedicated individual to help turn the tide. Newton continues to give every spare moment to help make the show a success, not only personally selecting the artists and works but also paying attention to every last detail of the event; his commitment is abundantly evident in the results. "Some shows can get watered down" by committee, says Taos-based still-life and figurative painter Sherrie McGraw. "But this is one man's idea, one man's vision of excellence. Tim's enthusiasm transfers to the artists, and they want to give him their best works. Even the artists' name tags are beautiful, and the catered food at the opening reception is superb. Tim cares about every part of it, and his level of interest in beauty and quality becomes a whole philosophy of excellence."



Night in White Satin by Josh Elliott

Ask Newton, elected just last month as board chairman of the club he first joined less than a decade ago, and that philosophy of excellence clearly is the foundation of his vision for American Masters and the Salmagundi Club. "Historically, the Salmagundi has been a Who's Who of American art. The artists in American Masters are the Thomas Morans and Carl Rungiuses and Ernest Blumenscheins of today. I'm hoping we'll make this club the epicenter of the American art world, a

bastion of American representational art, the flagship location of a great movement to restore traditional values of art that is meaningful to the human spirit."

Norman Kolpas is a Los Angeles-based freelancer who writes for *Mountain Living* and *Colorado Homes & Lifestyles* as well as *Southwest Art*.

For more information about the American Masters show: 212.255.7740, www.americanmastersart.com.

LEGENDARY ARTISTS AT A LEGENDARY CLUB



American Masters at SCNY

Friday May 13, 2011

Our fourth annual show and sale
for the benefit of the

SALMAGUNDI CLUB

47 Fifth Avenue | New York City

May 4 – May 19, 2011

FEATURED ARTISTS

Douglas Allen	Leon Loughbridge
Tony Angell	Walter Matia
Bill Anton	Sherrie McGraw
Del-Bourree Bach	Joseph McGurl
Christopher Blossom	Herb Mignery
Tim Cherry	Dean Mitchell
Scott Christensen	James Morgan
John Coleman	John Moyers
Jacob Collins	Terri Kelly Moyers
Jane DeDecker	Dan Ostermiller
Don Demers	Daniel W. Pinkham
Dennis Doheney	Thomas Quinn
Josh Elliott	Laura Robb
John Felting	Richard Schmid
Rose Frantzen	Claudia Seymour
Daniel F. Gerbartz	Tim Shinabarger
Nancy Guzik	Daniel Smith
George Hallmark	Matt Smith
Albert Handell	Tucker Smith
Quang Ho	John Stobart
David Jon Kassin	John Traynor
Steve Kestrel	Bart Walter
David A. Leffel	Curt Walters
Jeremy Lipking	... and others
Richard Loffler	



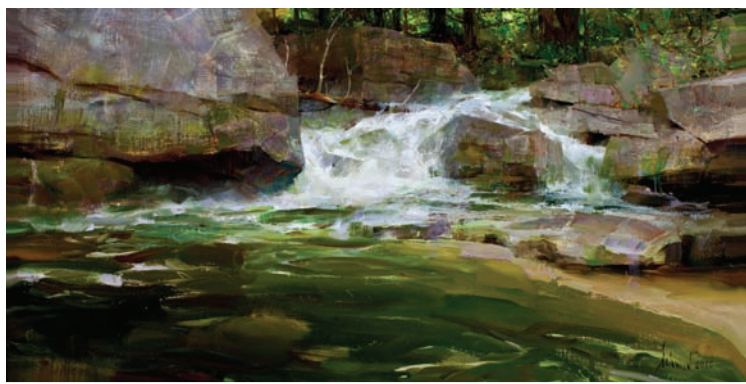
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:

Sherrie McGraw –
"Melange in Orange"

Quang Ho –
"In Whites"

Richard Schmid –
"Buttermilk Falls"

Matt Smith –
"Determined"



www.americanmastersart.com

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