

Works From Perception

Paintings by the Midwest Paint Group

Bob Brock



Michael Neary



Megan Williamson



Glen Cebulash



Barbara Lea



Ron Weaver



Timothy King

Essay by Walter King



Philip Hale

Jeremy Long



William Faust

Bob Brock

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Sheldon Swope Museum of Art

Terre Haute, Indiana

February 6 to March 14, 2009

The Albrecht-Kemper Museum of Art

St. Joseph, Missouri

September 12 to November 8, 2009

George A. Spiva Center for the Arts

Joplin, Missouri

January 8 to February 26, 2010

Bob Brock
Glen Cebulash
William Foust
Philip Hale
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Barbara Lea
Jeremy Long
Michael Neary
Ron Weaver
Megan Williamson

Midwest Paint Group

midwest-paint-group.org

The ten painters of the Midwest Paint Group share a commitment to Post Abstract Figuration. They all base their motifs upon either direct or recalled perception of the visible. The work is as personally unique as the membership. They recognize historical precedents in painting by assimilating the most complex and beloved elements achieved by painters they admire.

The Midwest Paint Group is a significant 21st century movement involved with visually intelligent and emotive works of perceptual art.

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the Midwest Paint Group
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Michael Neary, *Wabash Ave at RR Tracks, Afternoon*
oil on canvas, 32 x 44 inches

This traveling exhibition makes its first appearance at the Swope before contining on to the Albrecht-Kemper Museum in St. Joseph, Mo., and The George A. Spiva Center for the Arts in Joplin, Mo. The ten members of the Midwest Paint Group share a commitment to Post Abstract Figuration. Though the ten hail mainly from Missouri, Ohio, and Illinois, some have flung as far as Maine and Canada and include Terre Haute's resident Mike Neary. These artists bring new life to old and favorite genres such as landscape, figure and still life painting by assimilating historical precedents with a contemporary point of view. Because of its strong regional collection, the Swope is particularly suited to host this exhibition of Midwest artists and is proud to support the ongoing artistic endeavors of artists who remain committed to working in and depicting the region.

Elizabeth (Lisa) Petruslis
Curator of collections and exhibits
Sheldon Swope Museum of Art

Exhibition Sponsors



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PERCEPTION: THE EYE OF THE STORM...

By Walter King

It is one of the strange facts of experience that when we try to think about the future, our thoughts jump backwards. It may well be that nature has some fundamental metaphysical law by which opening up what we call the future also opens up the past in equal degree. -Buckminster Fuller

At the beginning of the Florentine Renaissance ancient Greek sculpture began to resurface. It caught the attention of a group of artists who were trying to reinvent a kind of human-oriented realism. I use the word 'realism' for lack of a better term since I do not believe realism in art exists. The only reality that exists on a two dimensional surface is that surface and the shaping and texturing that happens there. Everything else is merely a manipulation of that surface to create an illusion, image or map of perceived reality. The Florentines however were looking for a new less stylized way of perceiving reality. The look over the shoulder they gave the Greeks launched



Bob Brock, *Blue River Meadow*
oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches

500 years of forward movement in the arts. Sometimes a brief glance at where we've been helps us navigate where we must go next.

The first meeting of the Midwest Paint Group took place in my studio. Tim King, Phil Hale and Mike Neary met there to discuss forming a group of painters. All three had studied at the Kansas City Art Institute. It wasn't time shared at KCAI that drew them together since Tim attended during a different period than Mike and Phil. It was the painting ideas garnered from painters with whom they had mutually studied that connected them. Painters like Stanley Lewis, Wilber Niewald and Lester Goldman, to name a few, had opened up new realms to them as students, rich veins that continued to produce new ore.

The group has grown since this initial meeting to include a diversity of painters who embrace similar aesthetic ideas. There are six who studied at KCAI including Bob Brock, William Foust and Jeremy Long. There are several who studied at other institutions. These are Barbara Lea-Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Megan Williamson-Knox College and the New York Studio School, Glen Cebulash-Boston University and



Glen Cebulash, *Untitled-Figure Group*
acrylic on canvas, 64 x 69 inches



Megan Williamson, *Chinese Still Life (Orange)*
oil on canvas, 30 x 22 inches

Ron Weaver, coming from Indiana University and Yale. Amongst them there is a strong common cause. Abstraction is the tension holding this group together while figuration informs and directs their energy.

There is little scholasticism or sophistry here. Each of the artists in this group brings his or her personal interior perception of the world and their individual ideas about vision to the surface where they merge with the common view of reality we all share. It is what humans do. We share our insights. In that process we begin to understand that we all share basic understandings about the world around us while holding unique differences of insight. These painters are neither pretentious nor shrill. Unlike the commonly held idea that an artist must be a kind of god-like giant or alien being, these artists simply accept their human vision and project it forward as honestly as they can.

There are a number of fallacies related to art today. Figuration, abstraction and the old controversy about form versus content have, for all intents and purposes, been ignored by the art world for the last twenty-five years. Post-modernism, the most recent buzzword, has obscured many of the painting ideas that

dominated the last century. For instance it was not until the 1800's that artists regularly had solo shows. Work was shown in groups either on the walls of the Salon or the gallery racks. When the Impressionists first showed together they were shifting the aesthetic vision of their generation away from the Salon and the Academy with its internecine focus and rule-bound influence over individual vision. The realism of the Academy had become so sentimental that there were few tough formal ideas to deal with either visually or intellectually. The Impressionists shifted the discussion to the core ideas of visual art as a form. This recentering changed everything by recognizing that form was as important as content.

Painting today is rarely about seeing. It has become ideological more than aesthetic. It seems more about deconstructing current ideas of gender, place, sexuality, identity and a wide variety of intellectual and political ideas. Whether anyone understands what a painting (or other form used) is actually saying doesn't matter as long as the text is clear. Form is a hidden instrument often discounted as passé. But contrary to the argument that formalism is dead, the same formal aesthetics are usually



Barbara Lea, *108 Degrees*
oil on canvas, 16 x 14 inches



Ron Weaver, *Maillol and Lady Cop*
oil on canvas, 26 x 22 inches

applied, done well or not so well, whether a work is made of paint or fur. This shift of verbiage makes having a conversation about the driving force of any artistic pursuit nearly impossible.

It also allows the most insipid talents to prosper as long as they address the appropriate and socially/politically correct issues. So what you end up with is a discourse on what the artist intended a work to do whether or not the result is any good or actually even achieved. There is a lot of hedging going on. It's called blurring the boundaries.

The results of the MPG artists' work are not just pretty pictures. These paintings are more often about the interplay of form and figuration or content mainly because a figure automatically reads as a metaphor. It is that interplay between the perception of the visual world and the energy that plastic formal elements bring to the picture that is engaging. It is so primal that no matter how much one tries it cannot be ignored. The respected painter Gabriel Laderman calls it "Forming." Call it what you like. The energy of any work is the abstraction. And that abstraction energizes any figurative references the work employs.

Since the term 'post-modern' was embraced by the status quo art world in this country and abroad we have been relentless in shattering old ideas about art while replacing them with open-ended criteria. While postmodernists reject the aesthetics of previous generations they accept almost anything in its place as long as it touches acceptable key issues. This has led us to speak of art in the broadest and most generic way. Anything can be art and anyone can be an artist. And yet while we celebrate the democracy of art we forget that art is by its nature a self-willed process of selected vision and discrimination. The artist chooses what to paint and how to paint it. An anti-aesthetic is still an aesthetic however contrary it may be.

The more I consider post-modernist ideas as related to art the more I find them intellectually curious but ultimately uninteresting. What I like about the MPG group is that it has simply sidestepped the dilemmas and cul-de-sacs of post-modernism. While not completely traditional they pick up the dialog from before Pop Art demoralized a generation.



Jeremy Long, *The Painting Lesson*
oil on canvas, 10 x 16 inches



William Foust, *Weehawken Self portrait*
acrylic, pastel and graphite on paper
30 x 22 inches

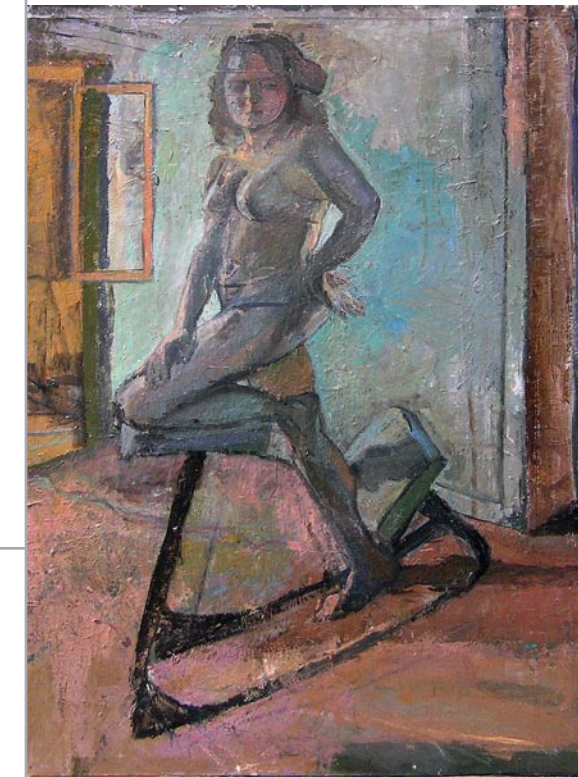
The MPG group has been individually and collectively pushing boundaries. Not blurring lines between the forms it supposedly doesn't accept. Not hedging bets but investing in them and expanding them into deeper and newer dimensions. In many respects the MPG artists seem to be summing up a previous century as a bulwark towards building a bridge into this one. What may have begun as an homage to artists like Soutine, Hopper, David Park, Leland Bell, Wilber Neiwald, or Stanley Lewis begins to move into something original and unique. As a group they have entered the eye of the storm with their ideas about perception both visual and metaphorical.

We see through our own frame. Not only do we see within the framing of our eyes and the physical structure of the face; the brow structure which defines the peripheral edges of sight and the nose separating the view of the eye, not only do we consider the frame of the canvas but also the frame of culture. This is the eye of the storm. This frame is the beginning of the discussion about what constitutes art. It is the very thing that defines the differences between one artist and another. The MPG artists have jettisoned all current prescribed ideas about what art is, is not or more precisely what art should be. They have begun

Phillip Hale, *Copey from Open Lot B4*
oil on paper mounted to canvas, 15 x 24 inches



all over again. It seems to me that the artist that doesn't explore, map and understand his or her own worldview is not worth looking at. The artists of this group explore, map and are coming to understand their own visual frame. The three artists who first met in my studio have grown to become a group of ten mid-career painters whose direction is defined primarily by figuration as well as those individual differences that make any generation of painters interesting and original.



Timothy King, *Elizabeth*
oil on canvas, 48 x 36 inches



Bob Brock, *Cottontail Lake*, oil on canvas, 24 x 24 inches



Glen Cebulash, *Figure Group*, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 72 inches

William Foust
Self Portrait with Headphones
acrylic, pastel and graphite on
paper, 30 x 22 inches



Philip Hale, *Intersection with Tires*, oil on canvas, 20 x 30 inches



16 **Timothy King**, *Tabletop View of Lake Michigan*, oil-pastel on canvas, 30 x 40 inches



Barbara Lea, *Blue Pandora*, oil on canvas, 11 x 15 inches





Ron Weaver, *The Gulf of Maine*, acrylic and oil on canvas, 45 x 40 inches



Megan Williamson
Still Life with Blue Pattern
oil on canvas, 24 x 18 inches

Bob Brock (lives near Kansas City in Lee’s Summit, MO) received his MFA from Boston University (studied with Philip Guston, James Weeks, and George Rose). Received a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute and studied with Wilbur Niewald, Stanley Lewis, and Michael Walling. At KCAI he won a Peter T. Bohan Drawing Award.

Fellowships: Fulbright-Hayes Fellowship which took his studies to Australia | American-Scandinavian Foundation Grant, Landscape Painting at Thingvellir National Park, Iceland | Camargo Fellowship, Artist-in-residence, Camargo Foundation Estate, Cassis, France.
Solo Exhibitions: Camargo Foundation, Cassis, France | Newcastle School of Visual & Performing Arts, Australia | Cottey College, Nevada, MO | Park College, Parkville, MO | Mettier Gallery, Weston, MO | First Gallery, Gladstone, MO.

Group Exhibitions: Central Missouri State University | Lever House Gallery, NYC | International Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition | Phoenix Gallery, San Francisco | Lotos Club, NYC | Federal Hall, NYC | Spiva Art Center, Joplin, MO | West Bend Gallery of Fine Arts, WI | Meadows Museum of Art, Shreveport, LA | Coos Art Museum, Coos Bay, OR | J.D. Ralston Museum, Sidney, MT | Fine Arts Center, Taos, NM | University of South Dakota | Edson Art Center, Logansport, IN | Ogunquit Art Center, Ogunquit, ME
Teaching: Wentworth Military Academy and College, George Caleb Bingham Academy of the Arts, Blue River Community College, Central Missouri State University, University of Missouri-Kansas City, Kansas City Art Institute and Boston University.

Glen Cebulash (Dayton, OH) received his MFA from the American University and his BFA from Boston University.

Solo Exhibitions: Washington Art Association, Washington Depot, CT | Earlham College, Richmond, IN | Missouri Southern State University | Northwest Missouri State University | Edison State College, Piqua, OH | Courtyard Gallery, Washington, DC. | Wright State University, Dayton, OH | Pennsylvania State University | Riverbend Art Center, Dayton, OH.
Group Exhibitions: 2 person exhibition at University of Maryland, College Park, MD | four National Competition exhibitions at Bowery Gallery, NYC, with Jurors Jed Perl and Bernard Chaet | Pittsburgh Art Institute | 55 Mercer Gallery, NYC | Washington and Jefferson College, Washington, PA, Juror: Stanley Lewis | Wayne Art Center, Wayne, PA, Juror: Barbara Grossman | Dayton Art Institute, OH | The Kennedy Center, Washington, DC
Reviews: Jessica Dawson in The Washington Post and Joel Silverstein in NY Arts.
Teaching: Associate Professor of Painting at Wright State University, Dayton, OH and WSU summer program in Tuscany, Italy. Washington Studio School, Pennsylvania State University, the American University, Washington DC, the Chautauqua Institute, Chautauqua, NY.

William Foust (Shaker Heights, OH) received an MFA from Queens College, City University of New York, a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute and has studied at the New York Studio School. He has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions primarily on the east coast and in New York City.

Solo Exhibitions: five shows at the Bowery Gallery, NYC | two shows at Piermont Flywheel Gallery, NY | Gloria Plevin Gallery, Chautauqua, NY.
Group Exhibitions include Kent State University, OH | Contemporary Realist Gallery, San Francisco | The Monmouth Museum, NJ | National Academy of Design, 167th Annual Exhibition, NYC | Wyckoff Gallery, Wyckoff, NJ | Provincetown Art Museum, MA | Ammo Gallery, Brooklyn, NY | Marisa del Rey Gallery, NYC | Hoyu Bussan, Tokyo, Japan | Hobart & William Smith College, Geneva, NY | Queens College, Queens, NY.
Reviews: Jed Perl in The New Criterion, Arts , Antiques and Artifacts.
Collections: Private and corporate collection in New York and Tokyo. New York Studio School and Queens College art collections.
Teaching: Currently at Kent State University and Lakeland Community College. Other teaching includes Lehman College, City University of New York, Rider University, NJ, College of William and Mary, VA, Queens College, NY and the Art Students League, NYC.

Philip Hale (Wilmington, OH and Colima de Tibas, Costa Rica) received BFA in Painting from the Kansas City Art Institute in 1975.

Solo Exhibitions: William J. Harkins Fine Art, Columbus, OH | Ohio State University Faculty Club, Columbus, OH | Christine Gallery, Loveland, OH | The Gourmet Market, Columbus, OH | Wilmington College, Wilmington, OH.
Group Exhibitions: Rose-Hulman Institute, Terre Haute, IN | 33 Collective Gallery, Zhou B. Center, Chicago | Swope Art Museum, Terre Haute, IN | Hammond Harkins Galleries, Bexley, OH | Caldbeck Gallery, Rockland, ME | Columbus College of Art and Design, OH | South Bend Regional Museum of Art, IN | The Columbus Cultural Arts Center, Columbus, OH | Wilmington College, OH | Gloria Plevin Gallery, Chautauqua, NY.
Awards: Swope Art Museum, Annual Wabash Valley Juried Exhibition, 2002; Mr. Hale won first place, The Phyllis Dye Turner Award of Distinction and the Arts Illiana Award of Honor for painting “Between Bridges”.
Featured Artist: Ohio Magazine.

Timothy King (lives near Chicago in Elgin, IL) received his MFA from Northern Illinois University, his MA from The University of Tulsa and a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute where he won the Peter T. Bohan Drawing Award. At KCAI he studied with Wilbur Niewald, Stanley Lewis and Lester Goldman. Additional studies include Columbus College of Art & Design, OH.

Gallery Representation: Kate Hendrickson Works On Paper, Chicago.
Solo and Duo Exhibitions: Kate Hendrickson Works On Paper | Gallery Tom Tomc, Chicago | Bowery Gallery, NYC | Maria Elena Kravetz Galeria de Arte, Cordoba, Argentina | Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL | Zhou B. Center, 33 Collective Gallery, Chicago | 734 Gallery, Columbus, OH | University of Tulsa, OK.
Group Exhibitions: Bowery Gallery, NYC, Juror: Jed Perl | Rose-Hulman Institute, Terre Haute, IN | Loyola University Museum of Art, Chicago | NIU Art Museum, Chicago | Wright State University, Dayton, OH | Zhou B. Center, 33 Collective Gallery, Chicago | The Arkansas Art Center Museum, Little Rock, AR | Philbrook Art Center Museum, Tulsa, OK | Barth Gallery, Columbus, OH.
Teaching: Loyola University of Chicago, Illinois Institute of Art, Schaumburg, IL, Northern Illinois University, Henderson State University, AR, the University of Tulsa, OK.

Barbara Lea (Toronto, Ontario) received her MFA from National University of Ireland/Burren College of Art, Galway, Ireland, a BFA from Minneapolis College of Art and Design (studied painting under David Rich) and a BA in Humanities from Stephen’s University, New Brunswick, Canada.

Solo and Duo Exhibitions: Catherine Murphy Gallery, St. Catherine College, MN | Gage Art Gallery, Augsburg College, MNI Groveland Gallery Annex, Minneapolis | Gallery Reboloso, Minneapolis.
Group Exhibitions: Rose Hulman Institute of Technology, Terre Haute, IN | 33 Collective Gallery, Chicago, IL | University Art Gallery, National University of Ireland-Galway | The Soap Factory, Minneapolis | Normandale Community College, Bloomington, MN | The International Design Center, Minneapolis | Suzanne Kohn Gallery, Minneapolis | Katherine Nash Gallery, University of Minnesota.

Jeremy Long (Chicago native) lives in Ithaca, NY. Received his MFA from the American University where he studied painting and drawing with Stanley Lewis, Deborah Kahn and Don Kimes. He earned his BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute and studied with Wilbur Niewald, Lester Goldman, Michael Walling and Ron Slowinski. In addition he has studied at Chautauqua School of Art.

Gallery Representation: Linda Warren Gallery, Chicago.
Solo Exhibitions include Linda Warren Gallery, Chicago | Knox College, Galesburg, IL | Grotto di Germi, Calcata, Italy.
Group Exhibitions: Bowery Gallery, NYC, Juried by William Bailey | Art Chicago, Artboat incorporation with Bridge Magazine | 645 Gallery, Chicago | Judith Racht on Lake, Chicago | Watkins Gallery, American University, Washington, DC | Kemper Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO.
Collections include Kirkland and Ellis Law Firm, Chicago | Clay Center for the Arts & Sciences, Charleston, WV | Aramark Corporation, Schaumburg, IL.
Teaching: Assistant Professor of Painting at Ithaca College, NY. Assumption College, Worcester, MA, American Academy of Art, Chicago, Chautauqua School of Art, Chautauqua, NY, Knox College, Galesburg, IL and Chicago Academy of the Arts, Chicago. He has lectured at Western Illinois University, Macomb, IL and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Michael Neary (Terre Haute, IN) received his MFA from Indiana University, and a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute. Additional studies include Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan, ME, Art Institute of Chicago, Montgomery College, Rockville, MD.

Solo and Duo Exhibitions: include Halcyon Contemporary Art, Terre Haute, IN | Bicentennial Art Center, Paris, IL | 33 Visual Art, Terre Haute, IN | Rose-Hulman Institute, Terre Haute, IN | Diekhoff Gallery, Indianapolis, IN.
Group Exhibitions: include Bowery Gallery, NYC | Swope Art Museum, Terra Haute, IN | Zhou B. Center, 33 Collective Gallery, Chicago | Vincennes University, IN | Bradley University, Peoria, IL | Indiana State University | Woodburn and Westcott Galley, Indianapolis.
Teaching: Indiana State University, Corrections Education Program and Vincennes University, IN.
Additional: Lecturer, juror and panelist: the Sullivan Art League, Bicentennial Art Center, Fairfield Arts Council, Indiana State University, Swope Art Museum and Indiana Arts Commission.

Ron Weaver is an Indiana native (now residing between Green Valley, AZ and New Harbor, ME) and is an Emeritus Professor of Art at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. He received a BS at Manchester College then an MS in painting from Indiana University where he studied under William Bailey and James McGarrell. He then received a BFA and an MFA from Yale University. At Yale, he studied under Frank Stella, Al Held, Jack Tworkov, Nick Carone, Leland Bell and Lester Johnson. He also studied art in Europe independently in London, Paris, Rome, Florence, Sienna, Madrid and Toledo. Mr. Weaver has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions.

Solo and Duo Exhibitions: Marion College, Fond du Lac, WI | Galerie Etienne de Causans, Paris, France | Franciska Needham Gallery, Damariscotta, ME | Oshkosh Public Museum, Oshkosh, WI | Bergstrom-Mahler Museum, Neenah, WI.

Group Exhibitions: University of Wisconsin-Madison | Maine Gallery of Art, Wiscasset, ME | Paine Art Center, Group Invitational, Oshkosh, WI | Caldbeck Gallery, Rockland, ME | Crannart Art Museum, Champaign-Urbana, IL | Prince Street Gallery, NYC | Milwaukee Art Center.

Teaching: University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, Parsons School of Design, NYC, Montclair State College, NJ, Wright State University, OH, and Yale University, New Haven, CT.

Megan Williamson (Chicago, IL) received a BA, cum laude at Knox College, Galesburg, IL. She studied with Fredrick Ortner. Additional studies include Yale Summer Program for Art, Norfolk, CT, New York Studio School, NYC (studied with Nicolas Carone, Gretna Campbell, Fred Thurz, Don Kimes, Howard Hussey), and Queens College Summer Landscape Painting Program, NY (studied with Gabriel Laderman).

Solo and Duo Exhibitions: Carnegie Gallery, Dundas, Ontario | Thomas Masters Gallery, Chicago | Vicky Tesmer Gallery, Chicago | Laramie College, Cheyenne, WY | Loyola University, Maywood, IL | Eastwick Gallery, Chicago | Galleria Isa, Italy | University of Dallas, TX | Gallery 1616, Chicago | Knox College Gallery, Galesburg, IL

Group Exhibitions: Lohin Geduld Gallery, NYC | Vespine Gallery, Chicago | Lori Bookstein Fine Art, NYC | Nabi Gallery, NYC | Vicky Tesmer Gallery, Chicago | Lisa Boyle Gallery, Chicago | Oxbow Gallery, Northhampton, MA | Three Arts Club, Chicago MA | Vicky Tesmer Gallery, Chicago | Bond Market Association, NYC | New York Studio School, NYC | Blue Rider Gallery, Chicago | Woman Made Gallery, Chicago | Blank Center for the Arts, Michigan City | Davenport Museum of Art | Fiera in Festa - Toscolano, Italy | Finklestein National Competition - Bowery Gallery, NYC | First Street Gallery, NYC.

Articles and Reviews include those written by: Cathy Liebowitz, (Art in America Reviews Editor) John Brunetti (New Art Examiner), Barbara Mahany (Chicago Tribune), Vesela Stretenovic (Brown University), Gabriel Laderman and Don Davis

About the Essayist

Walter King is a painter and illustrator. He is a contributing essayist and art critic on the Absolute Arts website www.absolutearts.com. Mr. King is a Professor of Visual Communication at the Columbus College of Art and Design in Ohio. He received a BFA in Illustration from Columbus College of Art and Design where he studied painting with Nathaniel Larrabee. He received his MFA in Painting from Boston University and studied with James Weeks and Robert D' Arista. Mr. King's paintings, drawings, prints and illustrations have been exhibited across the U.S. from New York City to Chicago and Seattle, and internationally as far as Buenos Aires, Argentina, Dresden, Germany and Hiroshima, Japan.



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