**A View From The Top**

**Greg Buscome, TASI Director**

This is a tale of two cultures. One of the perks that goes with having regular public events is the opportunity to observe humans in action. Another is being able to see two separate cultures, generations, micro-gens at two separate times of the month each month — those being art exhibitions and Band Nites. I’ve always been a fan of sociology. I took just enough sociology courses in college to be dangerous. That bit of knowledge is tied with years of watching human beings being human, on two different generational plateaus — war baby/boomer and genX/genZ.

The technological difference is astounding. When I started using a telephone, it had two letters and 5 numbers. TI4-5555. Terrible. An easy way to remember the two new numbers on the phone. In small towns we would pick up and Margie the operator would answer and connect your call. Simple. We are now all “Marge,” routing and connecting the deluge of random calls that may or may not have anything to do with us. Computers, games, iPods, Smartphones. To the genXer, these pieces of Star Trek miracles are as seamless to their lives as breathing. To the boomers, it is an abstract maze of random button sequences that never get you where you want to go fast enough or send it where you want soon enough. Binary hell!

Xers like to stand up during concerts and they don’t dance, but occasionally they will bump forcefully against each other in a wild jumping manner (mosh pit). Boomers like to dance although we do it badly and don’t bump into anyone while dancing because you might get punched. Band Nite participants only listen to the band they came to hear, otherwise they sit in a huddle until their big event begins. The art show folks will look at anybody’s work that hangs on the wall. They loosely divide among smokers, eaters and drinkers, but they are all talkers. What is most interesting is that, over time, it’s not about generations but about culture. And not two different cultures, but different evolutions of the same culture. One cannot easily detect the gradual changes in art and music.
Los Angeles,” he said. “I was known for attracting the ‘maybe even more than my actual skills as an artist.’”

A manifestation of his thought process will be on display in the exhibition “The Road Less Traveled,” on display at the Beaumont Art League, Sept. 11-30.

One decision he made was eschew the idea of a career one-man show. It got me thinking about where I am in my artistic career and how to define it.

To me, my career is not finished. It’s metamorphosing. Being in Southeast Texas is just the latest stopping stone.”

Ledesma picked the show’s title from the Robert Frost poem of the same name.

“The weary traveler is reflecting on not just the road, but also his life,” he said.

For a year I tried to paint with her while she had Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s disease. She is participating in her first and last art exhibition.

She is my first and last love and the only woman I have ever loved. She is my mother, who has Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s disease. She is participating in her first and last art exhibition.

Ledesma said that as a person, and as an art creator, one of his strengths is being a collaborator — that is, doing things a little different. For example, William Roseaux is a self-taught artist who uses markers.

Kimberly Brown is just starting on her artistic journey. I think it will be interesting to see how she evolves as she starts to develop her own voice.

He said he tried to find artists that reflect the variety and quality of work in Southeast Texas.

“By showing all this, it’s showing the health of the local arts scene,” he said. “We have what I call barrel-wire guys. These are people who in the marines will lie on the barrel wire so others can get through. They establish a pre-existing dialog for other artists to work from. All of our art organizations are participating in that.

I also chose those artists because they would be a different choice than what’s normally shown at BAL.”

The artists comprise a broad cross section of ages and Ledesma was keen to get a good gender balance as well.

“I have a variety of people and I also wanted to get a variety of expressive modes,” he said. “I love playing with ideas.”

The Fort Articular native spent much of his career in Los Angeles where he was a muralist and worked with young people to encourage them to find a positive life path through art.

He returned after Hurricane Rita to take care of his mother, who has Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s disease. She is participating in her first and last art exhibition,

“The artist makes it possible to continue to love the subject,” he said. “For a year I tried to paint with her while she had the mental faculties and she got quite good.”

She taught me how to draw and paint. My father was a one-man show. It got me thinking about where I am in my artistic journey. I think it will be interesting to see how she evolves as she starts to develop her own voice.

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“I won the best of show last year and they pre-sold my entire show. This year I didn’t sell a single piece,” he said. “It’s a good opportunity to have a career one-man show. It got me thinking about where I am in my artistic career and how to define it.

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Having exhausted ideas, the group started looking for the label. After all, the third step in the four-step strategy suggests that viewers should consider the factors that motivated the artist, and this information could be available on the label. The text on the label read that the installation “presented in miniature the furnishings of a charity center (such as Goodwill), where clothes are sorted, sized, and sold, then offered for re-use.” Lingo! We were on the right track. In elevated spirits, we returned to the classroom for the closing remarks.

On my way home, I reflected upon the program I attended and the transalts of interpreting contemporary art in general. I liked the four-step strategy. Neatly printed on a business card, it can be easily carried in a pocket or purse and be used as an instant reference whenever the viewer confronts a challenging work. I was also flooded with memories from the time when I worked at Cranbrook Art Museum in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. There, on the lawn in front of the museum, standing sixty feet into the sky, is the sculpture by Mark di Suvero, “For Mother Teresa.” Many di Suvero’s sculptures, it is made of intricately welding steel I-beams which are painted bright red. A silver object of an uncertain origin (although some people swear it looks like Mickey Mouse’s ears) is dangling from one end and swings freely with the wind. At the bottom, a corrugated steel frame is clinging at the foot of the I-beam structure. di Suvero’s sculpture always attracted and baffled visitors. Cranbrook docents were prepared with questions in regards to what it was supposed to represent and what the connection to Mother Teresa was. As Curator of Education, I once organized a docent brainstorming session to discuss possible meanings of this work. One of the suggested interpretations I remember particularly well. It maintained that the sculpture was a conceptual “portrait” of Mother Teresa, in which the craned red I-beams represented her faith, the silver floating part her spirit, and the corrugated steel part her mortal body. Then, in 2005, Mark di Suvero came to Cranbrook for the sculpture dedication ceremony and was asked in what way the sculpture was related to Mother Teresa. Di Suvero’s response was remarkable. He said that wanted to honor the life of this incredible woman. At the same time, he encouraged attempts to interpret the sculpture through its title. He explained that his sculptures were like his children, and he grieve them names, like people give names to their children when they are born. The name of a work is important, but it does not express its meaning, like a person’s name does not express the complexity of his or her character.

This incident made me think of how literal we tend to be in our interpretation of art. We seem to provide us with the key to the work’s meaning and try to identify what we see in familiar terms instead of relying more on our visual experience, free associations and emotional response. If I had to add anything to the four-step strategy of looking at contemporary art suggested by my colleagues at AMSET, it would be step five: experience the work of art as you experience a poem or a musical piece. Once you have a general idea of the work, approach it from every angle, stand back, take a deep breath and let the flow of associations run freely through your mind. After all, if the meaning of an artwork could be fully expressed in words, why would an artist spend time and energy to create it?

Elena Iannone is chief educator at the Stark Museum of Art in Orange, Texas.

**AMSET exhibit HONORS LIFE, WORKS OF BEAUMONT’S WENTZ**

Mark di Suvero. Annotation: 1993

FOR MOTHER TERESA

1998

Collection of Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

Gift of Marco Cohen

Founding patron of Maurice Cohen

Engravograph

© Bathsheba Korab, provided courtesy of the artist and Squareline C.C.


**Joie de Vivre**

**Artists have the gift of being able to capture life’s many feelings, emotions and experiences and interpret them through their work. Few artists have captured the joy of life as beautifully as George Wentz. The Art Museum of Southeast Texas is hosting “Joie de Vivre,” an exhibit celebrating the life and works of the late Beaumont artist, through Sept. 26. The show features a collection of Wentz’s works donated by his friends and family as well as collectors.**

George was born in Beaumont on Sept. 27, 1945. He studied under Herman Blaug (another well-known Beaumont artist), graduated from South Park High School and later from Lamar University.

Sarah Hamilton, curator of exhibitions and collections at AMSET, said she met Wentz last May and had discussed putting a retrospective together. Hamilton said she, and others at AMSET, felt “Joie de Vivre” would be a great way to honor George and his work.

“I thought it would be a way to give him some credit for the art he has done,” she said. “I wanted to show a lot of different aspects of his work. He was a very versatile artist — he also did abstract and drip paintings. A lot of people thought he only did florals, so I wanted to show different phases of his art.”

The collection covers a wide range of Wentz’s life works including pieces from as early as 1969’s “Untitled. Abstract Color Forms.” There are a variety of florals — some realistic, some more impressionistic.

Wentz is a collection of apparently religious-inspired collages that, while somewhat darker than some of the other pieces, have a certain curiosity about them. A collage that involves a drawing of a fox in a few of the drawings is a classical era man — sometimes featured as merely a beast on a table, sometimes as a man engaged in activity. One gets a feeling of George’s interest in the past and its figures.

In addition to paintings and drawings, Wentz was a regular contributor to “Thoughtcrime,” the poet’s corner of ISSUE magazine.

“The writing was really strong, too,” Hamilton said. “…this poetry — people liked it almost as much as his art.”

Hamilton said that Wentz and his works have a spirit that people connect with.

“People enjoyed the quality of his art and the optimism that this art brought to looking at it. And they enjoyed his spirit.”

To open the July 23 reception, artist and ISSUE editor Andy Coughlan said a few words about George and noted Wentz’s love for all things art.

“Poetry, plays, he loved music — if it could be created, if it was an expression of creativity, George was into it,” Coughlan said. “He was just wide open to everything. The recuperative, regenerative powers of art — of the creative process — was really, really important to him.”

Coughlan said that Wentz had a zest for all manner of artists and artistic expression and had a way of making every artist feel like they were the best at their craft.
WHO THE #$%! ARE THESE PEOPLE?

TASI tenants launch 2010-2011 exhibition season with

By Jacqueline Hays

It’s September, and with it comes cooler days, shorter evenings and the annual Tenant Show at The Art Studio Inc., located at 720 Franklin in downtown Beaumont.

“This is the first time in a number of years that we have had this number of tenants,” Elizabeth said. “Especially since Hurricane Rita and Hurricane Ike.” Hurricane Ike doomed the building as well as the the show that was up, which happened to be the 2009 Tenant Show. This year promises to be an exciting show. “It’s a big time,” Elizabeth said. “It is always a pretty popular exhibit. There is a big turn out because there are so many artists participating.”

“IF you have just one artist showing, it’s their friends and then the regular crowd. But when you have so many people, like the membership show, there is usually a large, large crowd because of so many people showing — especially this one because we have so many tenants, although not all the tenants participate.”

“I had an idea this year,” ceramic artist Cyndi Grimes said. “Because we are the only working studio around that I know of. I have asked all the tenants to come in and be in their spaces so the people can come to the show and then go around and visit the tenants in their spaces and they can see what we do.”

“We have eight artists working downstairs, which is mostly sculpture, ceramics — dirty,” Elizabeth said. “If you are going to be a painter or work in mixed media, or wood, there are 10 spaces upstairs.”

“We also have intermediate tenants who partici-

“PATRONS will be able to peruse the gallery at their leisure and engage the artists themselves, engaging them in their own workspaces.”

“We will be in our element,” Cyndi said. “To me that is a huge. I feel like people don’t really know about The Art Studio and what we do — we create here, we rent our spaces here and it is a working art studio.”

Showing off their work once a year is part of being a tenant, Elizabeth said.

“Tenants range from beginners to ‘masters,’” Bean Dumesnil said.

“We have many new tenants, a few post-graduate… and then all the old tenants,” he said. Cynthia has participated in many tenant shows and has been making ceramics for 14 years, but said she was never exposed to art until coming to The Studio.

“ITprovides a location for creative juices to flow freely and an outlet for so many different types of artists and thinkers,” she said. “Even if I never get any work done here, which I do, I’d still be proud just to support the organization.”

For more information, call 409-838-5393 or visit www.artstudio.org.

Tenant Courtney Boles works in her space at The Art Studio. Photo by Andy Coughlan
ROCKIN’ MENTOR
LOCAL GUITAR LEGEND KARL PRIEN REMEMBERED

Anyone who has attended a Band Nite or watched a classic Rock ‘n Roll cover band perform in the past 20 years around Southeast Texas probably heard the musical styling and sound provided by Karl Prien. Described as a perfectionist and master of the guitar, Karl played with his band Maladen for more than 20 years and provided sound to The Art Studio’s music gatherings for 20 years. After being diagnosed with lung cancer in January 2010, Prien died at the age of 49 on Feb. 11, 2010.

Willie McKusker, fellow guitarist and Karl’s friend of 40 years, says that Beaumont lost one of its Art Studio’s music gatherings for 10 years, McKusker said. “He just played guitar, but he did it masterfully. There’s three guys in this area that are really good — Scott McGill, Kenny Sanders, and Karl. If there was a Rock ‘n Roll Museum Hall of Fame for Beaumont musicians, those would be the three guys in it right now.

“You didn’t go out to watch Karl and just leave. When you left you were going, ‘Wow, did you see that dude playing that guitar?’ Pretty soon it was ‘Man, did you see that dude playing that beat up piece of shit?’ Same guitar he’s had since I’ve known that dude playing that guitar?’ Pretty soon it was ‘They’re struggling for PA, and Karl and I didn’t leave. We were there for the first time.

“They were struggling for PA, and Karl and I discussed the fact that we have a small system at home — this is before our system grew,” Carolyn said. “We thought, ‘Why can’t we come out here and do sound for the young adults? We started doing sound, and we fell in love with the Art Studio.”

“Karl was not biased when he did sound. He wanted every band to sound just as good as the next band. Even some bands would say, ‘Is Karl doing sound tonight?’ And we fell in love with the place. We fell in love with different types of music, the shows, the horror shows, the band nights, the Halloween nights — just everything.”

Carolyn said that many of her “kids” from The Studio had no idea her husband played guitar until he did a benefit at The Vortex. She said their jaws dropped the first time they heard him play.

“I am baggage on him,” she said. “My husband started playing guitar at the age of 11 as a rhythm guitar player. His teacher told him, ‘You’ve shown me you can show me you can show me you can show me more.’ So he went from rhythm guitar player to lead guitar player.

“Karl was always about, I love doing sound, but I’m not a sound man — I’m a guitar player,” she said. “He loved it too. Karl will tell you he was a guitar player first and a sound man second. But he thoroughly enjoyed doing sound for those kids, and they fell in love with him because he wasn’t an aggressive sound man.

“He did everything he could for each band so that everyone could have the same quality. In his eyes one band wasn’t more important than another band. Every band was equal.”

Carolyn said that he qualifies as one of the great guitar players because it was his passion. As employee of Ralph’s Industrial Electronic Supplies for 20 years, Karl “not only knew music, but knew how to fix musical parts, build stuff and help musicians with whatever they needed to find,” she said.

When people needed electronic things worked on and couldn’t find that part that was made in 1943, they would call Karl because he could find that part,” McKusker said. “He was an encyclopedia of electronic information. I think he was a borderline genius. This guy had a plethora of part numbers.”

Greg Busceme, founder of The Art Studio, said that Karl was dependable and one of the most loyal friends a person could have.

McKusker agreed.

“I got 10 friends in my life, and Karl was num-
ber three on this list,” McKusker said. “I don’t
know if I can ever replace this person. It took me 40 years to get these 10 people, and we would all have taken a bullet for each other. I grew my bullet that I’m taking is making sure that Carolyn is okay.”

Carolyn said that she, Amber and Karl will remain members of The Studio and continue to support it in any way they can.

“We loved The Art Studio,” Carolyn said. “It’s still a great place. I love it, I’ll always support it. We’ve done galleries, we’ve done everything to support it because I love it, and I miss it, and I miss him being there.

“My wish is to eventually get both my systems up and running and find a good tech to keep providing sound to The Art Studio, because that’s what Karl wanted,” Carolyn said. “We’ve reported all genres of music. Whether he liked it or not he still supported music because that was his number one love, other than us.”

When The Studio gets its new stage, Busceme said that it will be named the Karl Prien Memorial Stage.
At one moment, I am standing on a cliff overlooking the ocean, and at another, I am inside a bustling city. This duality of perception is challenging and exhilarating. The ocean represents my subconscious, where I can go to escape the chaos of daily life. The city, however, symbolizes the conscious mind, where I must face the relentless pace of society. These contrasting environments help me find balance and clarity.

The ocean's vastness provides a sense of freedom, allowing me to express myself without constraints. I can observe the ebb and flow of its tides, the changing of the seasons, and the migration patterns of marine life. These natural cycles inspire me to explore the interplay between form and function, as well as the intricate relationships within ecosystems.

On the other hand, the city is a microcosm of human society. The diversity of people, cultures, and ideas creates a rich tapestry of experiences. I can immerse myself in the energy of a bustling marketplace, the symphony of sounds from different tongues, and the vibrant colors of traditional attire. This exposure to diverse perspectives broadens my understanding of the world and fosters empathy and compassion.

By merging these two worlds, I aim to create a harmonious balance. The ocean serves as a source of inspiration and renewal, while the city provides a platform for innovation and growth. Together, they form a dynamic and evolving journey, allowing me to explore the full spectrum of human experience.

In conclusion, the ocean and the city are not just two separate entities but interconnected realms that enrich each other. By embracing the dualities of nature and culture, I can cultivate a deeper sense of self-awareness and appreciation for the complexities of life. Through this ongoing exploration, I strive to find meaning and purpose in the ever-shifting landscapes of my inner world and the external world. This journey of discovery continues as I navigate the ever-changing tides, both within and beyond my reach.
Thoughtcrime (Continued)

Grieving Again

Part I

Grieve for the red fish and the trout
That he belly up
Near the marsh grasses.
Grieve for the Brown Pelican
That bounders on the riverbank
Instead of gliding gaily over.
Grieve for the Dolphin nearby
That flounders on the riverbank
Without their permission.
Part II

Grieving Again (Continued)

Thoughtcrime

Empire and Port Sulphur
September 2010 Volume 17, No. 1

ILESHA from page 4

a minister and I would go up in church. My mother gave me pencils and paper to keep me occupied.”

As the two painted together, she said she would only do three months — bees and bees, roses, and moons, and a lighthouse. Ledesma is by nature iconoclastic. Much of his work casts a satirical eye on conventions and institutions. He drew on the date of the opening to create an interactive piece.

“When I am creating murals — Bertholdt Brecht said, “Art should not be the mirror of reality, but instead the hammer tapped into when I was creating murals — Bertholdt Brecht said, “Art should not be the mirror of reality, but instead the hammer tapped into when I was creating murals — Bertholdt Brecht said, “Art should not be the mirror of reality, but instead the hammer tapped into when I was creating murals — Bertholdt Brecht said, “Art should not be the mirror of reality, but instead the hammer tapped into when I was creating murals — Bertholdt Brecht said, “Art should not be the mirror of reality, but instead the hammer tapped into when I was creating murals — Bertholdt Brecht said, “Art should not be the mirror of reality, but instead the hammer tapped into when I was creating murals — Bertholdt Brecht said, “Art should not be the mirror of reality, but instead the hammer tapped into when I was creating murals — Bertholdt Brecht said, “Art should not be the mirror of reality, but 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- Latin American Caravan
- Art Museum of Southeast Texas
- The Art Department
- Hair Studio 7
- 123 Muses
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- Tammy's Deli
- Margaret's
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