

# ISSUE

THE ARTS MAGAZINE OF THE ART STUDIO, INC.

NOVEMBER 2011



## THOUGHTFUL ILLUSIONS

PAGE 8

INSIDE:  
THE ART OF  
18TH-CENTURY DINING,  
REMEMBERING  
STEVE JOBS,  
OBSESSION AT AMSET,  
AND MORE





From: @arcimboldo\_1

apparently U really R what U eat  
glad I cut out haggis

must renew studio membership



SEE MEMBERSHIP FORM ON PAGE 3.



## ISSUE Vol. 18, No. 3

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The ISSUE is a monthly publication of The Art Studio, Inc. Its mission is to publicize The Art Studio and its tenants, and to promote the growth of the arts in Southeast Texas. ISSUE is also charged with informing TASI members of projects, progress, achievements and setbacks in TASI's well-being. Further, ISSUE strives to promote and distribute the writings of local authors in its "Thoughtcrime" feature.

ISSUE is provided free of charge to members of TASI and is also available, free of charge, at more than 30 locations in Southeast Texas.

Regular features include local artists of note and reputation who are not currently exhibiting at TASI; artists currently or soon to be exhibiting at TASI; Instructional articles for artists; news stories regarding the state of TASI's organization; and arts news features dealing with general philosophical issues of interest to artists.

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Cover photo of Cynthia Perkins  
by Andy Coughlan

# A View From The Top

Greg Busceme, TASI Director



THIS IS THE TIME of year the air outside cools off, but inside The Studio, production heats up in preparation for December's Shop-O-Rama Extravaganza.

Along with Studio residents and other participants, we are extremely excited to host the next generation of artists, artisans and craftspeople personified by the nomadic Merchant Soirée.

I have to say I am thrilled by the involvement and dedication I've seen in the "Gen Xers" — young and upcoming members of our community. Not only their enthusiasm for their craft, but the willingness to step up and invest in their community.

The event with the "Yeast Priests" on Oct. 15 points to that involvement. As of press time the event hasn't occurred yet, but I look forward to learning about the production of beer and the focus on the artisans themselves and their techniques. The beer's not bad either!

SAVE THIS DATE! THE BEAUX  
ARTS BALL PRESENTS: THE ABOM-  
INABLE SNOW BALL – JANUARY 28,  
2012.

A study in white and blue, we are looking for clear glass vases and white lights. We also are searching for items for the

silent auction, sponsors, underwriters, volunteers and PARTIERS!! Start looking for your glad rags and show us what you got! Who cares if they say you don't wear white after Labor Day. We're artists, we're crazy that way!!

Thanks to all the new and renewed members who took the time to continue (or start) investing in the arts. You will find a new and more efficient organization that will make the maximum use of your donations, grants and contributions.

If you haven't received an exhibition notice or ISSUE, you might need to send a membership. We are learning to do more with less and that's starting with very little. Nonetheless, The Art Studio has never missed a show or canceled an event and that is mainly through determination, perseverance and your contributions. Take the time to help The Art Studio preserve the legacy of creativity in our community and to provide that gift to subsequent generations.

We are looking for contractors who would be interested in helping us rebuild

See VIEW on page 15

## UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS AT THE ART STUDIO

### NOVEMBER

Cynthia Perkins — "Immersed in Illusions"

Opening . . . . . November 5

### DECEMBER

Holiday Shop-O-Rama Extravaganza

Opening . . . . . December 3

## BECOME A MEMBER OF THE ART STUDIO

Membership in The Art Studio, Inc., provides invitations to all exhibitions and one year of ISSUE, the monthly arts magazine of The Art Studio. It also gives free eligibility for members to enter the annual membership art exhibition (TASIMJAE) and participate in various exhibitions throughout the year.



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## CALL TO ARTISTS

### HOLIDAY SHOP-O-RAMA EXTRAVAGANZA

soon will be upon us!

Open to all artists!

This is your opportunity to present your work for sale during this Holiday season event. All work must be hand made and original by the presenting artist, no kits allowed and work must be constructed with quality and integrity.

Paintings, illustrations and photographs must be the work of presenting artist and must be appropriately matted and placed in cradles or other retaining stands as there is not enough room to hang all flat work. Limited editions of prints will be accepted but photocopy reproduced work will not be allowed.

Tables and displays are the presenting artists' responsibility.

All work must be listed on an inventory form provided by TASI. The artist will assign each work a unique number and description with a corresponding number and initials on the price tag on the item being sold.

The Art Studio, Inc. will handle all sales and tax collection and requests a 25 percent donation from the artist on

all sales of their work; in this regard, price accordingly.

All artists must be members in good standing with The Art Studio, Inc. All unsold work must remain on display for the duration of the show. New work will be accepted throughout the month.

This year's sale will coincide with the **MERCHANT SOIREE** which will be set up only for the opening date, Dec. 3.

#### DATES TO REMEMBER:

**Nov. 28-Dec. 2:**  
Bring work and set up displays.

**Dec. 3:**  
Sale open noon to 5 p.m.  
Reception from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.  
(Feel free to bring a tasty treat for the food table.)

**Dec. 19-21:**  
Unsold work to be picked up by artist.

For more information, call  
**THE ART STUDIO, INC.**  
**409-838-5393**

**SEE YOU IN DECEMBER!**



## SAVE THE DATE

# THE ABOMINABLE SNOW BALL

**THE ART STUDIO, INC.**  
**BEAUX ARTS BALL**  
**JANUARY 28, 2012**

*See full details in next month's ISSUE*



# iPortrait of an artist

## APPLE CO-FOUNDER STEVE JOBS CHANGED WAY SOCIETY LOOKS AT DESIGN

Commentary  
by  
Andy  
Coughlan

WHEN STEVE JOBS DIED Oct. 5, the Apple co-founder was rightly lauded as a visionary who affected the way technology was integrated into popular culture.

But to pigeonhole Jobs as merely a digital entrepreneur is to seriously undervalue his contribution to the way we literally “see” the world. He successfully married

technology and aesthetics in a manner that proved good design can be cost efficient.

And just as importantly, the product was good. Jobs said, “Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works.” The complaint about Apple was that they were more expensive than other computers. Apple disciples, of whom I am one, would argue that they did so much more than a cheap PC, and you get what you pay for. Jobs said, “Be a yardstick of quality. Some people aren’t used to an environment where excellence is expected.”

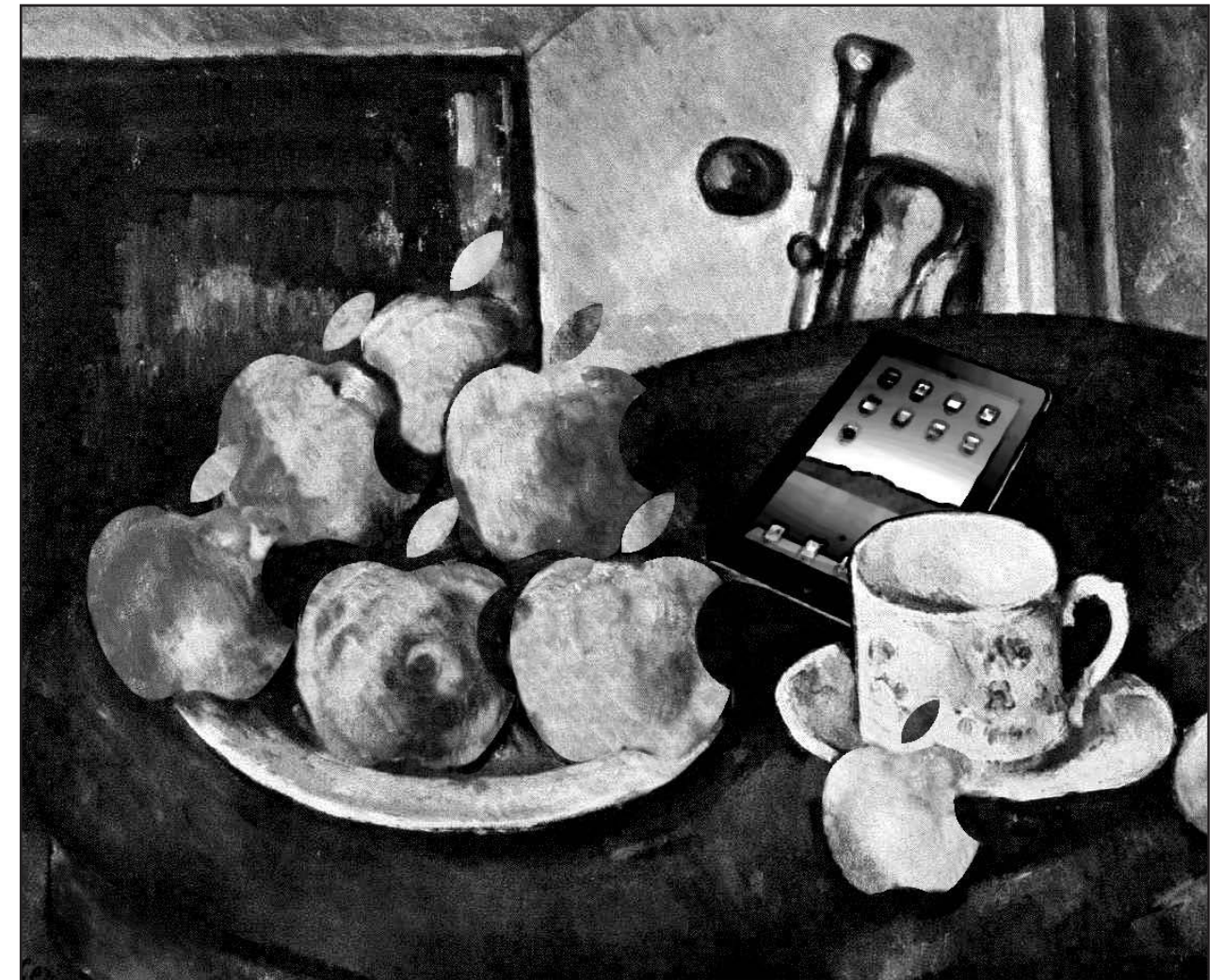
So much of the focus of consumerism is price. Who cares whether things look good? They won’t last anyway. But Apple makes products that look cool — and people want them because they look cool. The blue plastic iMac looks dated and “so ’90s” now. But when it arrived on the scene, it shook the computer world. Before long, other companies were producing blue transparent boxes. But they were transparent knock offs — accept no substitutes.

Jobs said, “I think we’re having fun. I think our customers really like our products. And we’re always trying to do better.” Apple products are cool, hip, fun — all the things that computers were not expected to be. They make being a techno geek a cool thing to be. Even the commercials played on that idea. PC users filled the blogosphere with bile about the pretentious Mac guy one-upping the shlubby PC user. But, as with all things Apple, the commercials’ concept was soon copied by other companies.

Jobs had vision. Designer Jonathan Ives was languishing unappreciated at Apple before Jobs returned to the company in 1997. Once he saw what Ives was doing, Jobs moved him to the forefront. Jobs once said, “The people who are doing the work are the moving force behind the Macintosh. My job is to create a space for them, to clear out the rest of the organization and keep it at bay.” He was the ideas man. He saw the possibilities and created an environment where creative types could be free to create.

Jobs argued that if a company gives people what they want, in a short time, they will just want something else. The key is to give people what they didn’t know they wanted. I love music, but I didn’t know I wanted a small device that I could just carry around with me with a thousand songs on it. Before the iPod, my passenger seat was a giant CD container (and before that, tapes). No one could ever expect to sit in that seat. MP3 players existed before, but the iPod’s mix of function and style made it a must have.

The iPad is sleek and elegant — and, of course, we can’t forget functional. I was at an art opening one day when I ran into photographer Richard Tallent. I asked him what he was working on and he simply flicked the



Still Life with Apples (With apologies to Cezanne)

ISSUE illustration by Andy Coughlan

screen of his iPad and showed me his current portfolio. Simple, efficient and very cool — and the device looked like an artist should own it.

Jobs insisted that all of the individual components were integrated, both in function and design. Jonathan Jones, the arts writer for the Guardian newspaper, wrote, “The exquisite luxury of the iPad grows out of a tradition of Apple design that has repeatedly reshaped modern culture. This is one reason why Apple products are favoured by those who work in the arts and humanities — they look great. The other reason, of course, is that they are damn easy to use. But it is the aesthetic originality of Apple that has reshaped the way we live in the modern world.”

Don’t underestimate the easy-to-use aspect. As an artist, my priority is to make things. I don’t need to know how the “things I use to make things” work. I use a paintbrush all the time but I don’t need to know how the paintbrush is made. I just want to pick it up and paint. Apple products are easy to use. I don’t really know what RAM is — I just know I should have a lot of it. But my iMac doesn’t require me to know anything. I just need to be intuitive and it does what I want.

The easy curves and warmth of Apple’s designs can be contrasted with the old sci-fi vision of the future as hard and cold, angular and frightening. Jones writes that, “In the 19th century, radical critics of industry such as John Ruskin and William Morris denounced the grim, turgid, pretentious objects that cluttered

Victorian homes. Good design, they argued, was a moral duty, and a world in which ugliness ruled must be profoundly wrong in its social order.” Apple products are good design. They are artistic, beautiful — even sexy. They make us feel that they belong with us.

Jobs’ influence extends further than just the computer world. He was a co-founder of Pixar, which has revolutionized the animation industry — it is also no coincidence that Pixar has a reputation for artistic quality and all its films have been critical and box office successes.

There is one more, small innovation that almost stands above the rest. When Jobs took a calligraphy class at Reed College, he returned to his Apple colleagues with a radical idea — how about including a variety of fonts? Prior to that, computers had one typeface and it wasn’t something that anyone had even bothered about. After all, the computer was about the information, not how that information looked. As I type this on an iMac that has more than 300 display fonts alone, I can’t imagine a world without that choice.

That is Steve Jobs’ legacy. He imagined a world where the unimaginable was a reality. His wide inventiveness was on a par with Thomas Edison. His influence on design is up there with Walter Gropius. And his impact on the way we disseminate information is as important as Gutenberg.

He was a visionary artist for a world that didn’t even realize it was screaming out for one.



# pass the hare's ears, please

## The theater of 18th-century dining



“You look happy as a man who thought a cat had done its business on his pie but then it turned out to be an extra big blackberry.”

Story by  
Elena  
Ivanova

Layout by  
Andy  
Coughlan

— “Blackadder III,”  
Dish and Dishonesty

IF YOU WERE INVITED to a dinner party at a manor in 18th-century England, what would you see on the table? This is, of course, a rhetorical question, unless you have a time machine hidden in your garage. However, it touches upon a serious subject. When we look at history, we find far more facts about political, ideological, economic and social life of the past generations than information about their everyday life.

Charles Dickens described the decade preceding the French Revolution in the following unforgettable words in the opening paragraph of “A Tale of Two Cities”: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair...” The same description that takes us on a linguistic rollercoaster ride may be used as a fitting metaphor for the dining experience of the time.

The exhibition “English Taste: The Art of Dining in the Eighteenth Century” at Rienzi introduces us to the theater of the dinner table around the year 1775. Curated by Christine Gervais, associate curator of Rienzi and Decorative Arts at MFAH, and British food historian Ivan Day, it showcases dishes typically served as the second course at a dinner party in an upper class English home.

All food items are trompe-l’oeil masterpieces and may be easily mistaken for the real food, which, of course, is neither admissible in the museum setting nor would last long even if it were. The cherries, blackberries and apricots sparkle as if lightly touched by frost, the sweet peas and samphire (later described by Victorians as the poor man’s asparagus) look green and crisp, and the roasted hare and pheasants titillate our senses with their nicely browned skin.

Each item is masterfully fabricated after the real dish, which had been made from the same ingredients and using the same cooking methods and utensils that would have been used in an 18th-century kitchen. The spectacular food is complemented by plates and platters from the splendid “Möllendorf” service, ornate sil-



ver sauceboats, and the epergne, a large elaborate centerpiece with containers that display mouth-watering fruit and desserts. Both the porcelain service and the silverware date back to the mid-18th-century.

So if we, people of the 21st century, were able to attend an 18th-century dinner party, what would we find similar and what would be different from our usual experience?

Unlike a formal dinner today, with the dishes served one at a time, all dishes — savory foods and desserts — would be placed on the table at the same time. The servants would stay to refill the glasses, but the guests would help themselves to the food. To make it easier for the guests to try dishes of every kind, the table would be laid in a symmetrical fashion, with the meats on both ends of the table and vegetables, pies and desserts evenly distributed throughout.

Many of our contemporaries may be squeamish about the custom of serving the heads of the cooked birds and animals along with the rest of their bodies. We are so distanced from the chain of events that ultimately enable us to buy nicely-packaged meat at the supermarket that we may lose our appetite at the sight of a roasted hare with its glassy eyes and furry ears on a dinner table. By contrast, 18th-century diners were excited by this spectacle: crunchy hare ears were considered a delicacy in which only men were supposed to partake because chewing them produced a loud noise inappropriate for ladies.

The heads of fowl, such as pheasants or snipes, were a part of the dish presentation as well. The dinner table at Rienzi features a sumptuous pheasant trio, complete with their regal heads and long feathers which create an illusion of a tail. One of them is studded with small pieces of lard, which also were artfully inserted deep into the meat

to make it juicier.

However, the most surprising items on the table would probably be flummuries made with molds from gelatin, for which almonds, rosewater, sugar and calf’s foot stock would be used. Although edible, these items typically were appreciated not so much for their taste as for their look. The dinner party was an entertainment and fun items that made people laugh, joke or admire the confectioner’s skill were as important as delicious food.

The wide assortment of molds used by confectioners testifies to the popularity of flummuries in the theater of the 18th-century dining. The Rienzi exhibition features one flummury shaped like Solomon’s Temple and decorated with live carnations; another one looks like gilded fish in the pond; yet another one amazingly imitates playing cards. Such trompe-l’oeil flummuries looked so convincing that a naive guest could mistake them for the objects they imitated. Some of them were shaped as a familiar dish, thus acting as a culinary “double entendre,” for example, a flummury disguised as bacon and eggs. The “extra big blackberry” on the pie in the quote from “Blackadder III,” which is used as the epigraph to this story, may be interpreted as an allusion to a particularly ribald trompe l’oeil.

While the guests laugh, talk and indulge their senses, let’s turn our gaze toward the kitchen. Who were the people toiling behind the scenes to create this abundance of savory meats, exquisite desserts and cleverly designed flummuries? There is little historical record of their lives and personalities. We can glean some information about their work from the utensils they used which are now preserved in museum collections. It seems inconceivable that 18th-century cooks and confectioners were able to serve a staggering number of dishes without such modern appliances as the gas stove, running water or refrig-



Elizabeth Raffald (née Whitaker) after P. McMorland  
line engraving, published 1782. NPG D8256  
© National Portrait Gallery, London

Rienzi exhibition photos © MFAH; Photo: Thomas R. DuBrock.

erator. Just keeping the roasted meats from getting cold or the ice-cream from melting must have required a formidable ingenuity.

Thankfully, one of the voices of the thousands of nameless chefs of the past comes to us crisp and clear through her book, “The Experienced English Housekeeper,” the bestseller published in 1769. It was written by Mrs. Elizabeth Raffald (1733-1781), who is sometimes called the “Martha Stewart of the 18th century.” Before starting her own business, she was employed as a housekeeper in several stately homes, the most notable of which was Arley Hall in Cheshire, the estate of Lady Warburton.

It was at Arley Hall that Elizabeth met her future

See HARE on page 14



# THOUGHTFUL ILLUSIONS



Cynthia Perkins at home in her studio. Her exhibition, “Immersed in Illusions” is on display at TASI in November.

## PERKINS IMMERSSES TASI WITH PAINTINGS IN NOVEMBER SHOW

Story and  
photos by  
Andy  
Coughlan

CYNTHIA B. PERKINS DOESN’T like to over think her work. It seems like a simple statement, but it is tinged with irony. Cynthia is a member of MENSA. And not only that, her work has a depth that begs to be examined and analyzed. She also goes with the flow, yet she also talks about recognizing the direction of the

piece and assuming control.

Her work is on display in the exhibition “Immersed in Illusions” at The Art Studio in November. The show opens with a free reception, 7-10 p.m., Nov. 5, and runs through Nov. 22.

Like many artists, Cynthia’s day job is not in the arts. She is an executive associate in the finance office at Lamar University.

“When I graduated, I had to do something in the creative field,” she said. “You know you are one in a million if you can land something in the art field, but I thought, you know, at least something in the creative field. So I started doing studio photography, which meant chasing down two year olds every single day. Although I got some really good artistic photographs and had fun with that, you can only take so much of that.”

She said she came home exhausted every day and was not in the mood to create the art she wanted. So when she moved to Beaumont with her husband Chris, two and a half years ago, she looked for a job that didn’t drain her creative energies.

“It lets me be free and stay in my head all day long, and then I can come home and be as weird and crazy and creative as I want to be,” she said. “It works.”

Cynthia’s initial goal was to be a fashion designer. But after two years of college she realized the only classes she really liked were the actual art design classes. So she transferred from Western Kentucky to the University of Kentucky.

“I wanted something that I felt challenged me more,” she said.

She said college presented her with some challenges and the art classes acted as a sort of therapy.

“It helped lift me up and express the thoughts — figure out what was going on in my head — because I couldn’t recognize the issues I was dealing with at the time except through art.”

Cynthia refuses to limit herself by working in one particular genre.

“I jump around from realistic to some level of abstraction, and surrealist — a little bit of everything,” she said. “I’m more influenced by types of art that are either emotional or intellectual. I need something that makes me think and draws me in.”

German Expressionism was the first art style that she really bonded with, she says.



ALIMENTAL TRIPTYCH by Cynthia Perkins

“I couldn’t imagine living in Germany at that time, and you really see that in the paintings,” she says. “There’s something about that specific timeframe that just gets you.”

Surrealism is also an obvious influence on her work. She said that stylistically the surrealists are an influence, but she is not as drawn to them automatically. She pauses for a moment.

“I honestly try not to over think it,” she says. “I feel that if I were to focus and say I am painting in this style, then I am painting 100 years, 50 years in the past. I want to stay painting whatever feels current and speaks to me instead of trying to name it and define it.”

Cynthia tries to allow her work to develop around a vague idea.

“It’s very random, typically,” she says. She points to some pictures on the wall of her apartment depicting books.

“Sometimes I will have a general idea in mind,” she says, “Like those three in the corner. I wanted to do something studious that could go in a library-type setting. That was my starting inspiration and it just sort of organically grew from there.”

“I was looking for influences from day to day so it just grew. Sometimes, a picture I photographed keeps coming back. It can be any influence at all. I combine them all. I have a bulletin board where I keep sticking random stuff up and they kind of find pairings.”

The show’s title alludes to the fact that each individual piece is its own illusion of a world that Cynthia sees or a part of the world she is trying to come to

terms with, she says.

“They are all different — all their own little separate illusions — but they come together throughout the cohesion of my warped mind,” she says, breaking into laughter.

One part of the show will feature self-portraits. “I’m constantly doing self portraits,” she says. “You see a progression of my art stylistically and as I’m technically improving as well. The one common (element) is that it’s a picture of me, but it’s a constantly changing format.”

She had an idea that at the end of her career she could have an entire show consisting of 50 self-portraits.

“I thought that would be a fantastic idea and that’s what really got it going,” she says. “After that, it’s more about what it shows about myself — things that I don’t necessarily think or acknowledge about who I am as an artist and a person. It all seems to come out as I come up with new ideas about how I want to paint myself or what I think I look like or what colors I am drawn to using that particular month. Right now, it’s a lot more about self reflection and understanding.”

Of course, Cynthia’s works are all self-portraits to some extent.

“There’s the portion that’s me as a subject, then the rest of them are self-portraits just of my mind,” she says. “That’s really the case because almost every one is an altered reality of some sort.”

Cynthia says she just goes with the flow and sees where the creative stream takes her. But the 29-year-

old is not just floating along with the current. She ruminates on ideas for sometime, digesting the influences and connecting the sketches, writings and ideas that surround her until they are ready to be committed to canvas.

“I just keep letting it eat away at me until I just have to start on it,” she says. “I don’t like overthinking them too much. I usually wait and see what it starts saying to me about half way, two-thirds of the way done, then I start seeing more meaning and I kind of control what I’m trying to say.”

“I take it back and forth between what I want to do and then what it comes back and says about me and what I’m trying to say in the piece.”

While her paintings are “old-school” oils on canvas for the most part, she is not averse to technology. She often will make a digital collage of images she has taken in order to “sketch” a composition. She is quick to point out that her photography is only for her own use — “No one else is going to see it,” she says.

The process is an important part of Cynthia’s work.

“My paintings have layer upon layer upon layer,” she says. “I have multiple under-painting layers, and then, oh goodness, glaze upon glaze upon glaze. I want you to be able to see the depth and see that there was a history before that you can’t quite make out what it was, but you know it was there.”



# Obsessive Aesthetic

## AMSET SHOW SHINES SPOTLIGHT ON DETAILS

**Story and photo by Peyton Ritter**

THE ART MUSEUM OF Southeast Texas’ “Obsessive Worlds” exhibition highlights 15 artists and their meticulous approaches to their work.

The show, which runs until Jan. 8, features contemporary artists such as Lauren Levy, Charlotte Smith and Paul Booker.

Sarah Hamilton, AMSET curator of exhibitions and collections, says the show conveys an obsessive aesthetic to art.

“I ended up seeing some of these artists in our permanent collection and I started developing the idea based off of those artists,” Hamilton says. “It’s an interesting way of working and the outcome, the visual quality, is really interesting as well.”

The exhibition of nearly 50 works relishes and reveals obsession in a multitude of media.

Gabriel de la Mora’s obsession shows up in the materials the Mexico City artist utilizes.

“He uses human hair he collects from himself, all family members, friends and any acquaintances,” Hamilton says. “He keeps them all in jars. He’s one of these artists where you can actually see the overlap in life and art.”

One of his pieces, “412P,” applies hair as a non-conventional artistic medium to question the traditional forms of painting and drawing. The name derives from the amount of knots in which the hair is tied and the first letter of the Spanish word for hair, “pelo.” In another piece, Mora uses hair as a sign of identity, since it carries DNA in it.

Mary McCleary, 2011 Texas Artist of the Year, makes pieces that frequently allude to historical or literary themes. “The Prodigal Son” focuses on the biblical story using likenesses of people she knows.

“She is a collagist who uses all these different found materials in her work,” Hamilton says. “She doesn’t claim to be obsessive in any way, just maybe in how she’s putting these together.”

The found material includes beads,

googly eyes, paper, pieces of wood and numerous other materials combined to present a 3-D collage.

Beili Liu’s work is centered on her Chinese-American heritage.

“She looks at the cultural similarities and differences she’s seen growing up in different places,” Hamilton says.

Her piece incorporates spirit money, which is used as an offering to the deceased, to create an installation. She has taken portions of the spirit money, charred them and then placed them next to unmodified pieces to create a yin-yang, which in Taoism shows that opposites exist in relation to each other.

John Adelman’s piece shows his obsessive approach to art with the piece he composed by tracing nails — 47,000 of them. The work, made with gel ink on a wood panel, shows that captivating designs and aesthetic effects can be achieved with an idea, patience and a nail. When viewed from across the room, the piece looks like little more than a black blob. However, it morphs into something different when you see its extensive detail close up. The obsessive drive required to produce this work makes one feel that the artist must be slightly unhinged. Yet one is impressed and enamored with the attention to detail it took to create the piece.

Vincent Falsetta, a Texas native, has two paintings in the show and although they don’t specifically reveal obsession, the process the artist works with is nothing sort of obsessive.

“He documents every single thing that he’s done, exactly the time he started — every single step is documented until he finishes,” Hamilton says. “He works in a grid. He works in sections. He uses different kind of brushes and loads them with different kinds of paint.”

The paintings represent movement and impulses. They pull the eye across the canvas even though they are purely abstract images.

“They’re almost kind of a vibrating type of piece,” Hamilton says. “He’s referencing sound waves. It definitely has an electric feel.”

Even the way he titles his work is very methodical. “DG11-5” is the fifth painting in the eleventh year, Hamilton

says.

“Obsessive Worlds” features 10 other artists whose works typify obsession in their work or life.

AMSET is located at 500 Main in downtown Beaumont.

For more information, call 409-832-3432 or visit [www.amset.org](http://www.amset.org).



**ANOTHER BIG WAVE** by Houston artist H.J. Bott is on display in the exhibition “Obsessive Worlds” at AMET through Jan. 8.

# Lyrical Fantasy

## DISHMAN ART MUSEUM EXHIBITION, LECTURE TO FOCUS ON INDIAN ARTIST RAFFIC

**Story by Andy Coughlan**

Visitors to the Dishman Art Museum through Nov. 23 will find themselves immersed in a world of blissful magical realism. “Anandam,” an exhibition of work by M.G. Raffic Ahamed, opens with a free reception Oct. 28.

Amy Allocco, assistant professor of religious studies at Elon University, will discuss the works at a lecture titled, “Visual Language, Architecture, and Memory in the Collages of a Contemporary Tamil Muslim Artist,” 6-8 p.m., Nov. 4 in the Rothwell Recital Hall on the Lamar campus.

Allocco will explore Raffic’s themes, particularly religion, and also the tensions between tradition and modernity in contemporary India.

Jessica Dandona, Dishman director, said her goal is for the exhibition and lecture to serve as a community event that brings together all different elements of the Beaumont community.

“We are very honored to have work by an Indian artist,” she said. “He is a Tamil-speaking artist living in a very religiously diverse country who happens to be a muslim. It is not something people think of when they think of the Indian subcontinent, but, in fact, India has the second-largest muslim population in the world.

“It is a very diverse, very rich nation and he represents that diversity in his art.”

The word “anandam,” or bliss, refers to the creative process, Dandona said.

“He creates collages that are based on photographs, many of which he takes himself, and he assembles these collages and intersperses them with painting,” she said. “He creates these kind of imaginary scenes, very lyrical, very fantastical, that bring together the past and the present into a single, mysteriously poignant scene. He uses layer upon layer of paint until the work becomes incredibly rich with an almost jewel-like encrusted surface.”

Raffic explores contemporary gender in modern India and he explores the relationship of religion to identity.

In a 2009 interview with T. Saravanan in “The Hindu,” Raffic said, “I use art as a tool to nurture aesthetic sense of the spectator. It is my belief that sustained exposure to such art will one day change the mindset of people and lead them to contribute their might to the society.”

As well as a lot of temple imagery, Dandona said Raffic uses images of Indian women as a way to suggest the paradoxical status of women in his country. India had a woman prime minister and women have made great strides there, but there are many restrictions on their freedom as well.

In a 2008 article in “The Hindu,” Ashrafu S. Bhagatt writes that through the medium of collage and mixed media Raffic brings to life events, a rich culture and a place long lost.

“Passionate about theme and content in his art,



**WOMAN CLOCK FACE** by M.G. Raffic Ahamed

Raffic literally lives through printed and photographic images and configures in his mind architectural landscapes, spatial illusion, human forms, artefacts, monuments and sculpture,” Bhagatt writes. “These images transformed through his emotional energies take on a life of their own and become individuated signifiers that narrate their own iconic tales.

“The process for Raffic begins with his intense search for appropriate images in the print media or from his collection of photographs that connect to his theme and concept. After sorting out the images, he places them on the canvas as a design formatted to convey a surrealist ambience, constructing, in the process, a story that will live to tell its tale. Undeniably, it is a time-consuming effort requiring the right detailing and placement on the canvas. Once the images are collaged to his narrative requirement, he initiates a play of connectivity by threading them through colors that bind the images tightly.”

Saravanan writes that Raffic frames his painting style as “Magical Realism.”

“It is all in the stream of consciousness,” he quotes Raffic as saying. “I have read a lot of Latin American stories. It will be realism basically and deviates into the world of fantasy at one point of

time. It is mostly figurative and symbolic. Only those who can delve deep into it can understand. I wanted to leave such works for the next generation.”

Although Raffic is a respected artist in India, he is not familiar to American audiences. Dandona said that Allocco, who has been doing field work in India for the past 15 years, has made it one of her goals to introduce Raffic to the American public and to help him find the recognition she thinks his work deserves.

In 2008, with Allocco’s assistance, Raffic received a grant from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation. The grant was the first recognition of his work from an American perspective, Dandona said, and enabled him to open a studio for the first time.

Dandona hopes local groups will have tables with information about related subjects during the lecture.

The Dishman Art Museum is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and is located at 1030 E. Lavaca in Beaumont.

Free museum-dedicated parking is available during museum hours.

For more, call 409-880-8959 or visit [lamar.edu/dishman](http://lamar.edu/dishman).







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husband, John Raffald, a gardener and a botanist. After the couple got married, they left their employment, as was customary in those days, and settled down in Manchester. In the 1760s, Manchester was a small place which still fit the description of “the greatest mere village in England” given to it by Daniel Defoe about forty years earlier. At the same time, this “market town with no local form of government to speak of” was on the brink of becoming Cottonopolis, the country’s major textile center. Cotton, a new commodity, was imported through the port of Liverpool and delivered to Manchester by the Mersey and Irwell rivers. The newly built Duke of Bridgewater’s canal connected the town with small nearby valleys where water-powered cotton mills were springing like mushrooms.

As a result, Manchester had a rapidly growing middle-class, who had the money and desire to model themselves after the upper class in every style and fashion, including dining. Mrs. Raffald’s reputation as an experienced caterer grew as fast as the city’s economy. She was an educated woman, which gave her an edge at the time when the majority of middle-class women were illiterate. Having started with one confectioner’s shop, she soon got involved in selling ceramic ware and imported foods and spirits. Eventually, her empire expanded to comprise the Bull’s Head Inn at the Market Place, the post office, the first registry office for servants and a cookery school.

In the introduction to “The Experienced English Housekeeper,” which was written as a summation of her catering and teaching experience, Mrs. Raffald explained the reasons that compelled her to study the art of cookery “more than perhaps I otherwise should have done.” She observed that during her fifteen years of serving as a housekeeper in “great and worthy families,” she found that servants were “generally ignorant in dressing meats” and a good cook was “hard to be met with.” At her school, inexperienced cooks acquired culinary skills necessary to provide the fine dining experience for their newly rich employers. They also learned how to stay within the budget and “to join economy with neatness and elegance.”<sup>3</sup>

“The Experienced English Housekeeper” endured 13 genuine editions (from 1769 to 1806) and at least 23 pirated editions. It was compiled in three parts: a section on savory foods (soups, meats, pies and puddings); a section on confectionary (desserts) with “Directions to set out a Table in the most elegant Manner and in the modern Taste”; and the section on preserves, malts and liquors. It is believed that the first known recipe for a wedding cake (called the bride’s cake) was published in this book.

“The Experienced English Housekeeper” was not Mrs. Raffald’s only experience in the world of letters. She wrote the book on midwifery, although she did not live to see it printed. She actively participated in publishing two local periodicals, “Harrop’s Manchester Mercury” and “Prescott’s Journal.” Prompted by her shrewd business sense, she compiled and published the first “Directory of Manchester and Salford,” which listed all merchants and tradesmen of the area.

However, her own name does not appear in this directory. Her business was listed under the name of her husband, John Raffald. This is a testimony to the times when women

could not be regarded as business owners “de jure” even if they were “de facto.” In the case of Mrs. Raffald, there were additional circumstances which made the routine listing of her business under her husband’s name look like a cruel paradox. Far from being a business partner and a supportive husband, John Raffald was prone to drunken bouts and to gambling. Despite her hard work and ingenuity, Mrs. Raffald could not save her vast empire from ruin. She died destitute at the age of forty-seven.

It seems appropriate to conclude our vicarious experience of the 18th-century dining with a quote from “The Experienced English Housekeeper”:

“The whole work being now completed to my wishes, I think it my duty to render my most sincere and grateful thanks to my most noble and worthy friends, who have already shown their good opinion of my endeavors...I have at last arrived to the happiness of completing [this laborious undertaking], though at the expense of my health, by being too studious, and giving too close application...I am not afraid of being called extravagant, if my reader does not think that I have erred on the frugal hand. I have made it my study to please both the eye and the palate, without using pernicious things for the sake of beauty.”

“English Taste: The Art of Dining in the Eighteenth Century.” is on view at Rienzi, the MFAH house museum for European decorative arts and paintings, through Jan. 29. For more information, visit [www.mfah.org/visit/rienzi](http://www.mfah.org/visit/rienzi).

<sup>1</sup> *Trompe l’oeil (French): literally, “deceives the eye”; something that misleads or deceives the senses, an illusion.*

<sup>2</sup> *Daniel Defoe, “A tour thro’ the whole island of Great Britain,” 1724–27.*

<sup>3</sup> *“The Experienced English Housekeeper,” Preface to the fifth edition.*



Rienzi exhibition photo © MFAH; Photo: Thomas R. DuBrock.



Mission Statement

Founded in 1983, The Art Studio, Inc. is devoted to: providing opportunities for interaction between the public and the Southeast Texas community of artists; furnishing affordable studio space to originating artists of every medium; promoting cultural growth and diversity of all art forms in Southeast Texas; and providing art educational opportunities to everyone, of every age, regardless of income level, race, national origin, sex or religion.

PURPOSE

The purpose of The Art Studio, Inc. is to (1) provide educational opportunities between the general public and the community of artists and (2) to offer sustained support for the artist by operating a non-profit cooperative to provide studio space and exhibition space to working artists and crafts people, and to provide an area for group work sessions for those artists and crafts people to jointly offer their labor, ideas, and enthusiasm to each other.

GOALS

- 1. To present public exhibitions
- 2. To provide educational opportunities
- 3. To provide accessible equipment for artists
- 4. To provide peer feedback through association with other artists and crafts people

OBJECTIVES

- 1. To present 10 art exhibitions per year
- 2. To maintain equipment for artists in a safe working environment
- 3. To provide better access to artists for the public
- 4. To offer regularly scheduled adult and children’s classes
- 5. To develop and maintain public activities with all sectors of the community
- 6. To develop and maintain equipment to aid artists in their work
- 7. To provide a display retail outlet for artists
- 8. To expand programming and activities with increased facility space

SOUTHEAST TEXAS  
*Arts*  
COUNCIL

This project is funded in part by the Texas Commission on the Arts, Dishman Trust, Entergy, HEB, and the Vic Rogers Foundation through the Southeast Texas Arts Council

VIEW from page 3

our overhead door, leaky roof and other assorted repairs and improvements. This is an “in-kind” project. We are “in” need and you are “kind” to help! Just joking! Those in-kind hours help to show community involvement and that can translate to funding from other foundations.

Classes are starting again. Saturdays, beginning Nov. 2 from 1-3 p.m., we will have two hours of basics in clay glazes and firing for six weeks. Cost is for \$120 members, \$155 for non-members.

Alli Gillette teaches hoola hoop classes Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. These aren’t your mother’s hula hoops. Lovely Alli instructs a great class for balance, exercise and muscle control. Most importantly it is fun!! Try it!

Young people classes, instructed by Andy Ledesma or Sheila Busceme, are non-holiday Saturdays from 1 to 3 p.m. Cost is \$15 per class. They cover all forms of visual art. New classes are just developing. Ages 10-18.

Tai Chi classes are 6 to 7 p.m. Wednesdays, Nov. 2 and Nov. 16. Cost is \$5 and they are instructed by yours truly. Relax, refresh, regenerate.

I look forward to Cynthia Perkins’ show in November. An artist I consider to be a neosurrealist, Cynthia combines sharp imagery with insightful content. A must-see show.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Art Studio is looking for energetic people who have a few hours a month to help us in the following areas:

- OFFICE SUPPORT • BUILDINGS & GROUNDS
- SPECIAL EVENTS • MAILOUTS

If you are interested in one or more of these opportunities or if you know of anyone who might be, give us a call at 409-838-5393



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INSIDE

- PERKINS' 'IMMERSED IN ILLUSIONS'
- THOUGHTCRIME: MUSINGS FROM AREA POETS
- THEATER OF 18TH-CENTURY DINING
- THE DESIGN OF STEVE JOBS

ISSUE

When you support The Art Studio with your membership, you receive ISSUE,  
Southeast Texas' and Southwest Louisiana's alternative press as well as class schedules, invitations to opening receptions and various Studio functions.

Volunteers

These people are  
the life blood  
of our organization.  
WE COULDN'T DO IT  
WITHOUT YOU!  
To volunteer, drop by  
The Art Studio, Inc.,  
or call 409-838-5393.

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April Ringland  
Heather & Adam Butler  
Andy Ledesma  
Rhonda Rodman  
Sue Wright  
Cyndi Grimes  
Rhonda McNally  
Andy Coughlan  
Olivia Busceme  
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JOIN US  
FOR ART OPENINGS ON  
THE FIRST SATURDAY  
OF THE MONTH  
THIS MONTH:  
IMMERSED  
IN ILLUSIONS  
PAINTINGS BY CYNTHIA B. PERKINS  
NOVEMBER 5  
GALLERY RECEPTION IS 7-10 P.M.



SOUTHEAST  
T E X A S



COUNCIL

This project is funded in part by  
the Texas Commision on the  
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THE ART STUDIO INC. ISSUE DISTRIBUTION POINTS

**DOWNTOWN**

THE ART STUDIO, INC.	720 FRANKLIN
ART MUSEUM OF SOUTHEAST TEXAS	500 MAIN
BABE DIDRIKSON ZAHARIAS MUSEUM	1750 IH-10E
BEAUMONT CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU	801 MAIN
(IN CITY HALL)	
BEAUMONT ART LEAGUE (FAIRGROUNDS)	2675 GULF ST
BOOK BAZAAR	1445 CALDER
THE CAFE	730 LIBERTY
CAVE INTERIORS	1425 CALDER
JERUSALEM HOOKAH CAFE	3035 COLLEGE
NEW YORK PIZZA & PASTA	790 NECHES
ONLY ONE VASES	1455 CALDER
SETAC	701 NORTH STREET, STE. 1
TEXAS ENERGY MUSEUM	600 MAIN

**SOUTH END/LAMAR UNIVERSITY**

CARLITO'S RESTAURANT	890 AMARILLO @ COLLEGE
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LU ART DEPARTMENT	DISHMAN ART MUSEUM

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SWICEGOOD MUSIC CO.	3685 COLLEGE
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LOGON CAFE	3805 CALDER
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	(@ DELAWARE)
NORTH END CYCLE	HWY 105
PACESSETTER	COLONNADE CENTER
QUIZNOS	3939 SUITE 9 DOWLEN
RED B4 BOOKS	4495 CALDER
REED'S LAUNDRY	6025A PHELAN @ PEYTON
STUDIO 77	6372 COLONNADE CENTER
TRENDY'S	5905 PHELAN, STE. E
WEST END MEDICAL PLAZA	2010 DOWLEN
WILSON CHIROPRACTIC	7060 PHELAN BLVD.

**PARKDALE**

RAO'S BAKERY	4440 DOWLEN
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**ORANGE**

STARK MUSEUM OF ART	712 GREEN AVE.
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