

Prized Pastels

The Pastel Society of America welcomes another artist into its Hall of Fame.

By Robert K. Carsten

Sally Strand admits she was stunned upon learning that she was selected to be the 2007 inductee into the Pastel Society of America's (PSA) Hall of Fame. "It was particularly meaningful, because I trace my own career along with the birth of PSA in New York 35 years ago," she says. "When I was a young student, pastel wasn't used very much. It was a medium that few people seemed to take seriously. As I started to paint more intently, I became aware of the Pastel Society of America and I just felt a kinship there, and have all these years."

PSA President Rae Smith describes her attraction to Strand's work: "The feeling of light in Sally Strand's work just grabs me; her darks are so colorful," she says. As it happens, "light" is one of the important topics the artist covers in her workshops. "It seems to me that light is created in the value structure as opposed to in the color," says Strand. "Values are the skeleton of a picture." Her own process today includes initial mark-making with vine charcoal, keying the painting with a dark dark, then adding lights to ensure that she's painting in the full value range. "I develop my darks by mixing on the page," she says.

A subscriber to the concept of life-long learning, Strand has allowed her work to evolve and grow. "I don't think



Photo by Robert K. Carsten

Sally Strand stands with her painting, *Eggs Underwater* (pastel and mixed media, 36x49) at the award ceremony for the Pastel Society of America's 35th annual exhibition. "The seeds of this painting started about 20 years ago when I was teaching myself to see color," says the artist. "I went to the refrigerator for about three months, pulled things out and sat by a window and painted them. One day I took these eggs and put them in a bowl of water—I don't know why—and painted it very small. Then, 20 years later, I wondered what would happen if I did that same kind of thing—but large, oversized, to make it contemporary and abstract."

More PSA Notes ...

The PSA celebrated its 35th Annual Exhibition September 7-30 at the National Arts Club in New York City. The festivities, September 14-16, included a number of events: a special gallery tour, an Art of Pastels Materials Fair and an awards ceremony and dinner. In addition to the new Hall of Fame inductee Sally Strand, recognition also went to **Jack Richeson** as a special friend to the PSA; **Richard C. Pionk** (1936-2007), in remembrance; and **Tim Gaydos**, who won the Art Spirit Foundation/Dianne B. Bernhard Gold Medal Award for his painting, *More Coffee?* (featured in the October 2007 issue of *The Pastel Journal*).

Founder, honorary chair and past president **Flora B. Giffuni** spoke eloquently of the society's success over 35 years. She then said she wanted to talk about the failures, and, with a gleam in her eye, and after a well-timed silence, she said, "There were none!" which brought a roar of laughter from the audience. — by Robert K. Carsten



Citrus, Fallen Leaves & Kumquats (16½x24) by Sally Strand

I'll ever feel that I've arrived. I just feel thirsty to always be learning. My mother is like this. She's a voracious learner and she's given me this gift of wanting to keep exploring—that's what keeps it exciting."

Strand enjoys sharing the knowledge she's culled from her experiences, and offers this advice to beginners: draw frequently. "You have to learn how to draw well and from life, not photography, and then during your whole life, continue to practice—go to life drawing sessions to hone your skills and vision. Also, I think that we grasp principles intellectually before we're actually able to create art. Then, eventually, our skill catches up to our knowledge. It takes a while for the light to come on and to bridge the gap between understanding and skill."



Warm Day (34x24) by Sally Strand



Read more about the PSA exhibition on our blog at <http://blog.pasteljournal.com>