

STANDING OUT IN THE CROWD

Our five distinguished jurors offer behind-the-scenes analysis on the sometimes elusive qualities that make a pastel a winner.

BY ANNE HEVENER



PURSUE YOUR OWN STYLE

Follow your own unique vision. Allow your own style to grow organically. Study and work diligently to constantly improve your painting and drawing technique. —DEBORAH BAYS



Catalepsia
(above; 18x34) by
Deborah Bays

Window (24x34)
by Sally Strand

IN A FIELD OF ENTRIES THAT INCLUDES HUNDREDS upon hundreds of worthy and wonderful pastels, it's always interesting to learn what it is that a juror sees in a particular piece that marks it as special. The jurors of this year's 15th Annual Pastel 100 Competition—Deborah Bays, Jeannette Hayes, Clark Mitchell, Steve Morvell and Sally Strand—all went through similar turns of joy and struggle to select this year's prizewinning pastels. Here's what they had to say about the journey to their final selections, plus some sage advice for creating pastels that stay in the running all the way to the winner's circle.

That Indescribable Something

If there's a common starting point for the task of jurying, it's the understanding that an award-winning painting has to demonstrate a certain level of technical craftsmanship. "A demonstration of fine draftsmanship, composition, design, color and other attributes is paramount," says Portrait & Figure juror Sally Strand. But that isn't where a juror's work ends. Jurors want to encounter qualities that go beyond technical matters; they want to see work that communicates an artist's vision. "I

MAKE IT PERSONAL

"Many paintings demonstrate masterful technique but are lacking in concept and originality. Artists can set themselves apart by entering paintings that carry an emotional impact." —SALLY STRAND

looked for a concept or a point of view," Strand says, "that set a work apart and made it unique—that took it past mere description or likeness."

A strong concept is always compelling. Even if we, as viewers, aren't sure what the concept is, we appreciate that there's motivation behind a painting—a story, opinion or idea that the artist was driven to explore. Paintings with an emotional quality—"those that caused me to stop and ponder deeper meanings," Strand says, "those are the ones I came back to again and again. I looked for that indescribable 'something' that elevated a work of art to a higher level."

A fresh perspective and an element of surprise—these are a few of the qualities that excite Clark Mitchell, juror for the Landscape & Interior category.

TO SEE MORE PASTELS BY OUR ESTEEMED JUROR PANEL, VISIT WWW.ARTISTSNETWORK.COM/MEDIUM/PASTEL/PASTEL-100-JURORS-2014.

MEET THE JURORS



Clark G. Mitchell: Landscape & Interior

Clark Mitchell (<http://cgmitchell.com>) developed his love of nature as a child growing up in Denver. He received a degree in art from Colorado College and continued his studies at the Academy of Art College in San Francisco. He currently lives in Sonoma County, California, a landscape that offers plenty of inspiration for his plein air and studio painting. The

award-winning artist is a Master Pastelist in the Pastel Society of America (PSA) and a Distinguished Pastelist in the Pastel Society of the West Coast. His work is represented by several California galleries.



Sally Strand: Portrait & Figure

Sally Strand (<http://sallystrand.com>) is a Colorado native who has studied at the American Academy of Art in Chicago, the Art Students League and National Academy of Design in New York, and the University of Denver. Now a California resident, she has been exhibiting her still life and figural work, painted in pastel and oil, for more than 30

years. The PSA Hall of Fame honoree has shown her work in solo exhibitions in galleries and museums, including a one-person retrospective at the Bakersfield Museum of Art in California. Her work is represented by Telluride Gallery of Fine Art in Telluride, Colorado.



Deborah Bays: Still Life & Floral

Nashville-born Deborah Bays (<http://deborahbaysstudio.com>) studied music in her early years, but went on to earn degrees in costume design and scenography in college. She designed costumes and sets for Denver-area theater productions for years, but eventually began studies in drawing and painting at the city's Art Students League.

Now a PSA designated Master Pastelist, Bays has had work featured in *Southwest Art*, *Pastel Journal* and other art publications. Her work is represented by galleries in Denver; Carmel, California; Scottsdale, Arizona; and Edgartown, Massachusetts.



Steve Morvell: Animal & Wildlife

Australian artist Steve Morvell (www.stevemorvell.com) is a fine arts graduate of the University of Ballarat, in Victoria, Australia, and a signature member of Artists for Conservation and the Wildlife Art Society of Australasia. His work is represented in public, private and corporate collections around the world, including Halls Gap Art Galleries & Studios in

Australia's Grampians National Park, where he teaches regular workshops, and in Sydney at Veronica Boer International Fine Art. Morvell, who is dedicated to raising awareness of the fragility of wildlife habitats, travels the world to observe and paint animals in their native environments.



Jeannette Hayes: Abstract & Non-Objective

Jeannette Hayes (<http://tonydelacey.wix.com/jeannettehayes>) was born in Sweden and spent her childhood in several European countries before moving to England to train at Kingston University. Her work has been widely exhibited in galleries in London and elsewhere in the United Kingdom. She is a member of the Pastel Society UK and has

participated regularly in its annual shows at the Mall Galleries in London, where she has won a number of awards. Pastel is her favored medium for her dynamic abstracts.



TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE

"Be true to yourself. Submit work that you believe in—not work that you think other people would like."

—JEANNETTE HAYES

PUT YOUR HEART INTO IT

"Never work from secondhand material. Always choose personal experience along with your own photos and sketches. True art comes from the heart, so it must always have that heartfelt connection as the starting point."

—STEVE MORVELL



Winter Orange
(opposite;
43¹/₃x17³/₄) by
Jeannette Hayes

**Morning Lookouts,
Meerkats** (left;
19³/₄x28³/₄) by
Steve Morvell

**Languid
Afternoon** (18x12)
by Clark Mitchell

"I look for a new way of depicting a usual subject," he says. Variety is usually an essential part of this equation. "I look for a nice variation of shapes, values and color temperatures," he says.

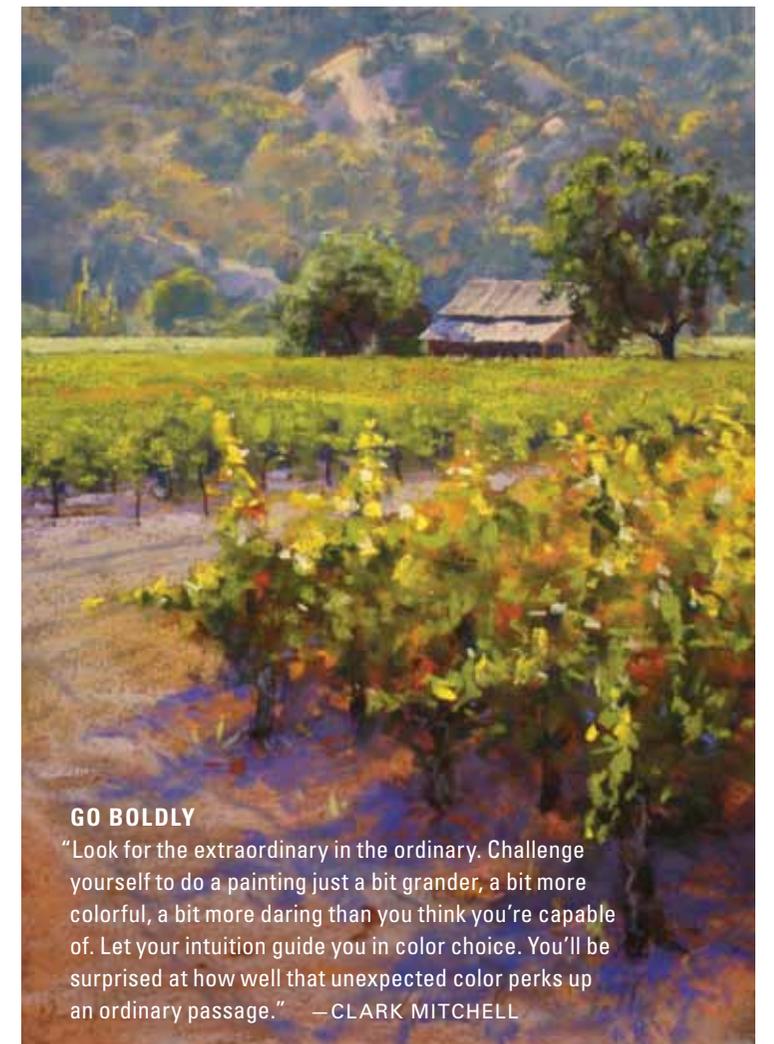
Abstract & Non-Objective juror Jeannette Hayes was also eager to discover an original voice—"an artist's own personal language," she calls it. "I looked for a special mood," she says, "and, in the end, someone who's a risk-taker."

Healthy Competition

Although it made their jobs more difficult, jurors were pleased with the overall level of quality in this year's entries. Steve Morvell, Animal & Wildlife juror, thought his category entries demonstrated "a very high standard overall with top award winners showing truly remarkable talents." And this opinion was shared by jurors across all categories. A high level of competition—although it may be somewhat daunting to contestants—is certainly a testament to the health of the medium, and that's good for everyone working in pastel, whether they be an emerging or established artist.

"Pastel technique seems to be growing to an extraordinary level," says Still Life & Floral juror Deborah Bays. "It can rival the best in any other medium. It was a great pleasure to see so many artists creating work that's conceptually sophisticated and in many cases technically complex and demanding. The bar has once again been raised."

And everyone who participated in this year's Pastel 100, winner or not, contributed to that. 🍷



GO BOLDLY

"Look for the extraordinary in the ordinary. Challenge yourself to do a painting just a bit grander, a bit more colorful, a bit more daring than you think you're capable of. Let your intuition guide you in color choice. You'll be surprised at how well that unexpected color perks up an ordinary passage." —CLARK MITCHELL