

Choosing a Format - What Does It Mean?

By Judith Ferrara

"My thirty by forty is really swell for me, the rest is miniature."

Marsden Hartley, Letter to Hudson Walker, 8 February 1940, quoted in *Marsden Hartley*, Elizabeth M. Kornhauser, ed.

I recently made a commitment to have a solo exhibit in January-February 2009. Before the meeting, I came up with some talking points. Drafting possible themes or overarching ideas helps me to focus (see Judy's Journals 2006-August; 2005-June). Since most galleries work at least one year ahead, as soon as a proposal is accepted, I can work toward selecting and making paintings.

To begin thinking about this exhibition, I studied albums containing photographs of my paintings, which are arranged in chronological order. I noticed that since 2002, I have had an affinity for working in the square format. The term format means "the proportions and size of a support," according to *Artist's Manual* (Angela Gair, ed.).

Even though dozens of my pieces have been rectangular, square paintings outnumber rectangular. A total of twenty-three paintings measured twelve inches by twelve inches. As I wrote their titles on a list, I knew that I was on to something.

In the chapter, "Marsden Hartley's Materials and Working Methods," Stephen Kornhauser and Ulrich Birkmaier wrote: "Throughout his career, Hartley painted on a variety of supports for reasons of economy, preference, and availability." I understood the first and third reasons; I hunt artist's supply retail stores and catalogs for their sales, and the twelve by twelve format is usually in stock. The middle reason, "preference," was the one that interested me.

Besides feeling that the twelve by twelve format was and is "really swell for me" to quote Marsden Hartley, I asked myself why I panic when I don't have a supply of those canvases? I needed to answer this question because I knew in my gut that I wanted to do an exhibition called "Twelve by Twelve," and that meant I needed to develop an exhibition statement. I opened my journal and used writing to find out what I knew, what I knew I didn't know I knew, and what I needed to learn (I didn't go to UNH for nothing).



Georges Lepape, plate depicting a turban, in his *Les choses de Paul Poiret vues par Georges Lepape* (Paris: Maquet, 1911).

*Come one, come all to sunny,
warm L.A.*

By C.M.Judge

The Southern California chapter is planning wonderful National Conference -- so if you're thinking about wanting to see some new sights, meeting an intriguing array of artists from around the country and being completely inspired by the amazing energy of this dynamic group of women consider joining us in Los Angeles, February 25th - March 2nd. Here's the link for the most updated info: <http://www.nationalwca.org/conference/currentconfer.html>. We're in the process of matching up persons who need roommates; let me know if we can help: cmjudge@mac.com.

**March Newsletter
deadline
February 15, 2009**



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Artist Trading Card News

Louise Parmenter Hammerman

Here we are in the middle of winter and what a winter this is! Thank goodness for the ATC project which keeps me grounded. The Dec. 1, theme cards, *Wrapped* or *All Tied-Up* yielded a whopping 20 traders with the addition of C.M. Judge's 2-D Design class from Franklin Pierce College. It was a lot of fun seeing how the "younger generation" interpreted the theme. In addition to the Dec. exchange, the donated *H2O* cards for the FATV gift totaled 18 from 14 members, thanks ladies. The presentation of the framed ATC grouping to FATV will be in the near future.

As a result of the inquiries from newer members not being acquainted with Artist Trading Cards, I will be holding an ATC workshop in the spring, the time and place TBA.

The next trade theme is *Sneak a Peek* due on March 16. Send me six 2 1/2" x 3 1/2" cards interpreting the theme in anyway you choose in any medium or mix media. Sign, date, and state the theme on the reverse side. Any other information you choose to put on the backs of your cards is optional. I also suggest that you put "not for sale" or "for trade only" on the backs to curtail the possible future sale of your cards. I will sort the cards reserving one of your cards for the chapter's ATC Archives, and return five assorted cards to you in the return mail.

Send these to me L. Parmenter Hammerman, 90 Turnpike Rd., Westminster, MA 01473-1205. Please include a SASE with sufficient postage -usually a total of \$.59 covers the thicker envelopes.

Pat Davis has assumed the role of ATC facilitator for WCA-NH, anyone choosing to exchange with the NH chapter is welcome. Their next trade and theme, *Women Traditional - Nontraditional* is due Jan. 30, 2009. Same rules apply except send those to Pat Davis, 514 Buck St., Pembroke, NH 03275-3054.

Both Pat and I welcome anyone including non members to create and exchange ATCs, the more... the merrier!

Future themes and dates:

WCA-NH "Wings" due Apr. 3

CMWCA "A Breath of Fresh Air" due May 1

WCA-NH "The Ocean" due June 5



**Artist Trading Card by Louise Hammerman
(New granddaughter)**

Editor's Note

Please submit information in Microsoft Word. Only one space after periods. I have made a commitment, in a moment of weakness, to send a newsletter each month.

This means I need lots of input from the members. Let's hear about your activities, hopes, dreams- good stuff.

Alice Struthers

Speaking of books

Ross King's *The Judgment of Paris: The Revolutionary Decade That Gave the World Impressionism* (Walker & Company, New York)

by Judith Ferrara www.paLETTEandpen.com

As soon as I finished reading about Lizzie Siddal, Pre-Raphaelite model and painter (see October 2008 Art News), I felt the urge to stay in the mid-nineteenth century and reached for Ross King's latest book. He is, hands down, my favorite art history writer.

Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling and *Brunelleschi's Dome* made me a devoted fan, and I wasn't disappointed in this thoroughly-researched foray into 1860's Paris. King plays history and politics like fine-tuned instruments and presents a symphony of success, scorn and survival in the art world.

I could hear the art-laden carts grinding through the streets, as hopeful artists traveled to the Salon, where rejection reigned supreme. In fact, King's twin themes are Success and Rejection in the personages of Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier and Édouard Manet. Never heard of the former? How about the latter? Precisely.

The old saying that "fame is fleeting fast away" takes on a life of its own in this book. King made me think about what success is. And isn't. Bravo, Ross King!

Choosing a Format - from page 1

What does my romance with the square format mean? I have concluded that it is a decision based on indecision and exploration. Portrait/landscape rectangles do not support those needs.

The portrait orientation (taller than it is wide), my second most frequent choice, says, "This is a portrait of someone or something. A person feels 'right' framed in that shape and has a presence and demands recognition." Whether it is a portrait of a homeless person or a self portrait, the tradition of portraiture resides within the painting's shape. If I choose that orientation for a landscape, it is as if I am looking out a window at the scene. The landscape registers on my brain as a portrait of a mountain, building, tree or field.

Occasionally, I use the landscape orientation (wider than it is tall). It says to me, "This is a view. It is meant to be read left to right. The brush and eye will travel and explore the story of its composition, whether it is a field or a tabletop."

Because I do not plan ahead when I begin to paint, committing to portrait or landscape format is not always possible. Curiosity and a sense of play are high on my scale of artistic prerequisites. The square suits this state of mind.

Choosing a portrait or landscape sets up expectations. I want to be in the painting and orient myself as I go. I turn the square frequently during the process. Up becomes down. Left becomes right. The weight of colors, lines and shapes play different roles, depending on their orientation.

One more thought: when writing a poem, my decision not to decide on format is just as fluid. I am always in a square frame of mind. Will the poem reside on the page in couplets or quartets, stanzas no stanzas, long lines or short? I try them all. I play because I believe play resides at the heart of creativity.

News & Notes

Paula Rendino Zaentz and C. M. Judge will be exhibiting a collaborative installation in "*Third Person Singular: Does Gender Still Matter? national exhibition*" February 5th -March 6th, juried by Barbara O'Brien featuring work by artists/authors affiliated with the BLAZE feminist anthology which is an outgrowth of the 2007 Boston WCA national conference.

Opening reception: Thursday, February 5th. 700 Beacon Street, Cambridge. A panel discussion will be held on Thursday, March 5th. VMA. www.aiboston.edu

Cathy Rogers led a workshop on mirror-making in December. It's amazing what a creative person can do with a wooden frame, some cardboard shapes and a whole lot of duct tape that isn't duct tape. Also colored inks.



A felting workshop led by Cathy Rogers was a resounding success- participants left with a memorable piece of art in the shape of a hat or bag. Watch for notice of the next felting event.

Something GNU?

By Kathy Freeburn

Alice asked me to write a few paragraphs about selling art. This is very new to me because, as you may know (perhaps because I was jumping around like a lunatic?), I sold my first piece of art at the Intimate Spaces show in Westford. Maybe some people are “so over” selling pieces of art, but I honestly didn’t believe I’d sold “Tambourine 1” until the buyer came in and asked for me the last day of the show! I was still pinching myself days later and I hope I never lose the excitement that selling a piece brings. Other than stuffed dogs, the only thing that had ever sold prior to this was a postcard-size piece I donated to an international call for peace charity show in Georgia.

Working forty plus hours a week, the time I have to create art is limited. When I found myself in a position this past fall of having to choose between showing again at FATV with the Central Massachusetts Chapter of WCA or entering the New Hampshire Chapter’s annual 6 x 6 event, I chose the latter.

WCA-NH’s event was held in Concord, NH at Interior Additions, an interior design store on Main Street. (It’s a FABULOUS place! Everywhere you look there’s something intriguing.) The group received a warm welcome from the proprietors who catered the opening and provided a wonderful display area for the 148 entries, many of which sold. I did the requisite 4 tiles in the theme “Dream State” and was lucky enough to sell all four! I don’t believe the exhibit committee could have chosen a better venue for this type of show and the timing (just before Christmas) was absolutely perfect. Lucky me to benefit!



“Dreamstate”
6x6 tile by Kathy Freeburn

I love the 6 x 6 format. When I see those tiles, my head just starts racing through ideas and I can’t wait to start “playing.” The common thread in the pieces that I’ve sold seems to be that I was free-wheeling – “playing” if you will – when I created them. The things I’ve worked on and reworked and agonized over are still in my closet, while the ones I have fun doing seem to find homes. Needless to say, experimenting and having fun are on the agenda from now on!



For those not familiar with the format, each “tile” is 6 inches square and cut from pressed board with a hole cut in the back which perfectly fits a push pin for hanging. Each artist receives 4 pieces, which may be done as a series or stand-alone works of art. The deal is you can, within reason, exceed the depth of the tile, but cannot go wider or higher than the 6 inch measurement. Challenging, inspiring, and FUN!

Speaking of playing, I’ll soon meet my fiberglass GNU! One of the calls that came through the WCA-NH website was for artists to decorate **life-sized** wildebeests, or gnus -- along the same vein as cows done a few years ago in New York City. New London, New Hampshire (of late known as GNU London, GNU Hampshire) is raising money for a children’s art venue and plans to raffle off the fiberglass creatures next fall to benefit the art center.

Seemed like a worthy cause, so I asked if the organizers had an opening. I had an absolute blast exchanging ideas with my sponsor – an eye doctor – who liked my draft of “Gnear sighted” enough to sign on. The plan is to have some blurred eye tests on the head and sides of the gnu and a few other eye-related surprises as well. I’m looking forward to this next project, which should be completed by the end of April. It will certainly be a challenge!

From the Artists Foundation

Quincy Jones has started a petition to ask President-Elect Obama to appoint a Secretary of the Arts. While many other countries have had Ministers of Art or Culture for centuries, the United States has never created such a position.

We in the arts need this and the country needs the arts--now more than ever. Please take a moment to sign this important petition and then pass it on to your friends and colleagues.

www.petitiononline.com/esnyc/petition.htm

Art Deco

Art Deco, as a style, “a popular international design movement,” is tagged with the dates 1925 - 1939. The term was born from the title of a Paris exhibition, *Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes*.

The lavish and opulent style was considered by some, including F. Scott Fitzgerald, as shaped by “all the nervous energy stored up and expended in the War (I).”

Based on mathematical geometric shapes, it employed trapezoidal, zigzagged, jumbled elements in early pieces.

“*Art Deco*” (the term) was not widely used until popularized by art historian Bevis Hillier’s 1936 book *Art Deco of the 20s and 30s*, according to our friends at Wikipedia.



The Chrysler building in New York City, designed by William Van Alen, is “one of the most notable examples of Art Deco architecture today.”



(Memberships cannot be prorated)

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