

MONTGOMERY ART ASSOCIATION

# MAA News

## The Ecstasy and the Agony

(or My First Solo Exhibition and This May Help When You Have Yours)

By Sharon Doran Callagy

**F**ifteen months ago my husband and I were walking around Bethesda and passed an art gallery where we had purchased a painting years ago. We decided to go in and ask an important question. We were carrying with us a small digital photo viewer filled with jpeg images of my limited portfolio. Would the gallery owners be interested in showing my art work? The husband and wife owners remembered us and our previous purchase. I told them I had been painting seriously for the past eight years and asked if they would they be willing to look at the images? Each owner clicked through the images and finally announced "Bring us ten of your paintings".

### THE AGONY 1:

Two days later we lugged ten works of art into the gallery that we had taken from the walls of



*The Road to Hana*  
Sharon Doran Callagy

our condo. We nervously lined them up against a wall for the owners to view. They said nothing as they looked closely at each piece of work. "Which is your favorite?" my husband piped up as the silence lengthened. The gallery owners began choosing favorites and I cautiously asked if I was good enough to have a show in their gallery.

— see page 2

## MAA MEETINGS

November 11, 2009 7 P.M

We have a special presentation planned that will contain "must know" information for art enthusiasts and artists today. Learn what well-regarded artists have been doing and how recent (past) artists have contributed to today's visual arts. Our very knowledgeable presenter is, Vidya Vijayasekharan, Professor of Art History, Montgomery College. She will be presenting a talk on "The past 50 years of art, trends and techniques focusing on sculpture and painting."

Vidya Vijayasekharan is an artist and art historian. She has graduate degrees in Asian Art, and Western Art and Architectural History with a diverse background that includes research, writing and teaching. She has been teaching Art History at Montgomery College since 1993 and has worked at premier museums in the US and India, including the Freer and Sackler Galleries in Washington DC and the National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi, India.

We meet at Plaza Arts on Rockville Pike (Route 355), across from Congressional Plaza. There is plenty of parking for those who drive. The shop is also a very short walk from the Twinbrook Metro station. Remember that, unless otherwise noted, all meetings start promptly at 7:00 PM and last until 8:00 PM.

# The Ecstasy and the Agony

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## THE ECSTASY 1: THEY SAID YES!!!!

The first order of business was setting a date for *my (wow) show*. I naively thought that I could choose the date. *Wrong*. The gallery already had shows lined up for an entire year! They offered me a date of three weeks in the following August—thirteen months away (and one in which almost everyone is out of town on vacation!). I took it. The next and most important order of business is signing the contract between the artist and gallery. Here are highlights from my agreement:

- The show must be a solo exhibition with a minimum of thirty paintings.
- The gallery commission (which can range from 40%-60%) on each painting sold is established.
- All publicity is the responsibility of the artist (including postcard announcements and mailing costs).
- Framing is to be done by the gallery at a discount.
- The artist's business cards, web site, phone numbers, email address, etc. are not allowed at the gallery at anytime.
- The gallery will continue to collect their commission on paintings sold for 60 days after the show closes.

We carried the ten paintings out of the gallery and headed home. I was on cloud nine filled with disbelief, happiness and excitement. After a few days I calmed down to the harsh reality that I had a little over a year to create 30 paintings for the show.

## THE AGONY 2:

Pressure, stress, critical decisions and of course painting for

hours and hours on any given day was the routine for a year.

One can't force creative ideas but once an art work was started I began planning the next step to improve or enhance the painting. My mind began to think details and color *all the time*. Happily, the creativity kept flowing. The countdown on 30 paintings began—only 21 more to go, 15, then 10. This continued, of course, until I reached 30 a full year later. Meantime I had to work on the publicity. A publication called *Galleries* and every metropolitan area newspaper had to have jpeg images, the artist statement and biography; also I learned all local publications in the gallery's vicinity should be included. The opening reception date had to be included with the show's dates. I learned that you need to leave *at least three to four months* before the show to select a printer for the postcard invitation/announcements. *Be aware that this is a very crucial step*. Request samples. Chose the text and font. Select the postcard image(s) (from the exhibit portfolio) that will attract the widest audience and will represent or preview the show. Decide on the amount and number needed. *This is the public's first impression of the artist*. Remember to send cards to everyone you know and place a stack of cards at *every venue that will allow you to leave them*—doctor and dentist's offices, for example—and every art supply store in the metro area. You will want your name and art circulated as widely as possible.

Now is the time to let you know that an exhibition is expensive. Everything costs and costs mount. Framing is the largest expense, followed by postcards,

postage and the cost of the opening reception itself. Pricing the artwork takes time, careful consideration and thought. A prominent DC artist told me to not price too high because I was not a well known artist, so I priced my work on the low side. I was not at all interested in making money (and I didn't!).

## THE ECSTASY 2:

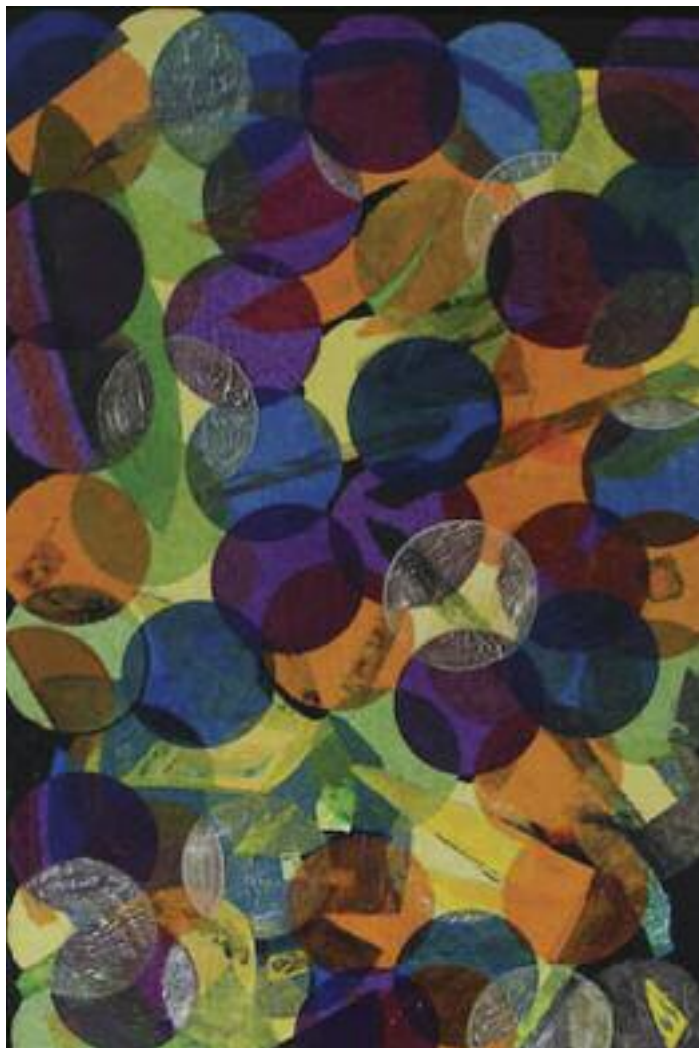
Fifteen paintings were sold. One commission work is yet to be completed.

The opening reception is an ego boosting experience. It's an incredibly enjoyable describing the how's and why's of your work. By the way, your art work

looks even better hanging in an art gallery! *Each sale was an affirmation that others loved and appreciated my work*. The closing of the show and removing the unsold artwork is a bit of a sad occasion. It's the end of a marvelous and stressful journey. However, as the gallery owners assured me; it is not the end—it's just the beginning. ***I'M FEELING ECSTATIC AGAIN! I can't wait to do it all over again.***

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*Sharon is a former by-line columnist for the old Washington Star. She has two certificates from Le Cordon Bleu cooking school and has been painting for 30 years*



*Circles Cascade*  
Sharon Doran Callagy

# 'Sargent and The Sea'

CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART  
SEPTEMBER 12, 2009 -  
JANUARY 3, 2010  
REVIEWED BY GLEN KESSLER

Those who are already familiar with the work of John Singer Sargent undoubtedly revel in the virtuoso's painterly realism—his ability to capture with a terrific economy of expressive marks the precise qualities of light, color, and accuracy of form. We are familiar with his high society portraits that exude elegance. And we know that his influence was to be felt internationally for generations to follow.

What we perhaps do not know is how a few early life experiences may have had a transformative effect on the development of his trademark—and often imitated—style. In 'Sargent And The Sea,' we see Sargent aged 18-23 capturing as his subjects sea, clouds, and motion. That he was endowed with tremendous drawing ability at an early age is not up for debate (Images in the Rotunda room, prior to entrance into the main exhibition, show pencil drawings done from age 12-15 that are as facile as any master draughtsman). What is astounding is how we see the young artist's work changing from those early patient, highly resolved studies to the more energetic, aggressive mark-making that has come to define his mature work.

We can look to his experiences on two Trans-Atlantic voyages—ten days apiece in 1876 for the early indications of his style. Sargent was clearly impressed, if not profoundly awed, by the vastness and power of the ocean. Its rhythms, its changeability, and its energy become his focus in a number of studies painted on and immediately after his first journeys. A rather clumsy painting of the wake of the ship he travels on nevertheless shows the artist's interest in capturing the awesome power of the water, its energy, and its fury. To achieve an accurate portrayal of water (as those of you who've tried it will know), one must let go of strict mimesis and rather attempt to 'understand' the patterns and rhythms of the colors the water contains. Its ever-changing, yet repetitious, form can only be truly captured through a loose



*Setting Out to Fish*  
John Singer Sargent

network of sewn-together marks. Sargent's attempts to capture this subject create a language of mark-and-picture-making is altogether new for him. Out of this transformative experience, his work is never to be the same.

The smart and savvy Sargent realized this looser style's beauty. Additionally, he surely saw its power as a metaphor for life's chaotic nature. In the years that were to come, as helpfully evidenced by the room-to-room organization of the exhibition, Sargent cultivated this style while bringing his subjects back onto land... if only slowly.

His first post-voyage Salon piece depicts waders at water's edge. In 'Setting Out to Fish' (1878), women and children stand amongst tide pools on their way to the water's edge. The brushwork is vigorous whether it depicts sky, water, sand, or the tattered clothing of our lead actors. The colors are those of the sea—blues, grays, whites, and blacks. The next year's Salon piece, 'Neapolitan Children Bathing' (1879), depicts four nude children on a dry sand beach. They are preoccupied with their own daydreams or childish wanderings to be concerned with the sliver of background waters. The colors are lush oranges and reds. The mark-making is more restrained, though the artist's virtuosity has lost none of its power.

Finally, after exiting the show entirely, we must stop at the two portraits in the Rotunda: With two portraits, 'Mme Edouard Pailleron' (1879) and 'Margaret Stuyvesant Rutherford White (Mrs. Henry White)' (1883), Sargent's journey inland is complete. He has digested that which was powerful and beautiful about the sea to arrive at a style he can revel in. He has cultivated its rhythm, its energy, its elegant expressiveness. It is no wonder that people of privilege and artists alike have been so attracted to his work. It was truly borne of one of nature's most elemental forces. 'Sargent And The Sea,' with an assist from a few other of his works in the Corcoran's collection, paints a picture of the young prodigy's maturation through nascent talent to an individual voice. This show of seemingly modest early works may in fact represent the stylistic primer of one of the greatest and most imitated artists of the modern era.

## 'Sargent and The Sea'

Corcoran Gallery of Art  
500 Seventeenth Street NW  
Washington, DC 20006  
(202) 639-1700  
www.corcoran.org

### Hours:

Wednesday, Friday, Saturday  
and Sunday 10am- 5pm  
Thursday 10am-9pm  
CLOSED Monday and Tuesday

### Admission:

Adults \$10.00  
Seniors (62+), Students (with  
valid ID) \$8.00

Public Transportation (strongly  
suggested, parking is severely  
restricted in this area):

Farragut West - on the  
Orange/Blue lines (take the  
17th street exit)

-or-

Farragut North - on the Red  
line (take the K Street exit)

## Nods to Newcomers

On behalf of the Board and our current members, we would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest artists. Having you as part of our association will most certainly enrich Montgomery Art Association.

### Michele Zugrav

18722 Barn Swallow Terrace  
Gaithersburg, MD. 20879  
301-977-5604  
miazug@verizon.net  
Willing to help with shows.

### Emily Gould

2901 Stanton Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD. 20910  
301-244-1218  
sierramadres@hotmail.com  
Painting, ceramics  
Volunteer: Other

### Pattie Curtiss

10216 Conover Drive  
Silver Spring, MD. 20902  
pattie@pattiecurtissarts.com  
301-681-8120  
Mosaics, Illuminated letters  
(decorative calligraphy), drawing, painting  
Willing to help with shows

## Exhibition Opportunity

We have an offer from Melvin L. Bazensky, owner of Table & Chairs, at White Flint Mall to exhibit paintings or prints on his store walls on a consignment basis. Requirements are that artwork be of large size, 20 or 24 inches on the shortest side and not priced over \$700.00. There is a contract each artist must sign and his commission will be 25%. If you are interested in this opportunity, contact Sara Becker at thebeckers6400@verizon.net or 301-216-0861. We will be hanging the exhibit on a weeknight, most likely late in November.

*Tables & Chairs is located at  
11301 Rockville Pike  
White Flint Shopping Center  
North Bethesda, MD, 20895*

## MAA Board for 2009-2010

### President:

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thebeckers6400@verizon.net

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edelweiss101@yahoo.com

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hirscathy@aol.com

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### Hospitality Committee:

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### Telephone Committee:

Dorothy McIntyre  
301-530-0001

### President Elect:

OPEN

### MONTGOMERY ART ASSOCIATION



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## Exhibits & Member News

**Tricia Tice** will be showing for her first time with MAPAPA at the Towson ARTS Collective in November. The Mid-Atlantic Plein Air Painters Association (MAPAPA) is presenting the show and the judge is Linda Dellandre, an award-winning Plein Air artist from Sedona, Arizona. The reception is scheduled for Nov. 6 from 6 - 8 PM. Exhibit Ends: December 19, 2009.  
Towson ARTS Collective  
406 York Rd., Lower Level  
Towson, MD 21204  
[www.towsonartscollective.org](http://www.towsonartscollective.org)

**Sara Becker, Dan Ranhart and Marian MacKerer** will be exhibiting at the Woodlawn Manor as part of the Olney Art Assn. Annual Show, November 7-11, 2009. Artist's Reception Sunday, Nov. 8th, 12-4 P.M. at the Woodlawn Manor Museum in Sandy Spring MD  
Woodlawn Manor Museum  
16501 Norwood Rd  
Sandy Spring, MD 20860

The Miniature Painters, Sculptors & Gravers Society of Washington D.C. Cordially Invites You to the 76th Annual

International Exhibition of Fine Art in Miniature. Opening Reception, Sunday November 22, 2009, 3-5 P.M. at the Mansion at Strathmore. Several MAA artists are participating in this exhibition including, **Nar Steele, Sara Becker, Elizabeth Stecher, Gale Bell, and Connie Woolard**  
The Mansion at Strathmore  
10701 Rockville Pike,  
North Bethesda, MD 20852