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New Arts Group Brings Pro NoVa Artists Together

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By *Leslie Poster*



The debut exhibition of Fine Art Professionals of Northern Virginia featured the work of 26 artists, including two from Falls Church.
(Photo: Donna Clark)

Fine Art Professionals of Northern Virginia began as a group of friends and artists gathering to critique each other's work and to discuss their shared vocation. But to address the need they saw for a comprehensive and easy-to-use database to find professional painters, their new group's mission expanded. Now, at 26 artists in all, Fine Art Professionals of Northern Virginia is closing its inaugural exhibition and developing more ways for art lovers to find local artists.

Painter Jill Poyerd said her group invited artists with well-designed websites and professional experience in the arts, but those artists were selected in a heavily juried process. Databases of artists can be overwhelming, Poyerd said, thus her group chose to invite only a select few artists whose work represented a range of styles and subjects to create an easily navigated catalog of local artists.

Artists in the group were required to meet three from a list of eight criteria named to establish professional status. Some specifications on the list are membership in professional art associations, having received multiple art awards, and earning a significant amount of one's income from selling art.

The group also considered variety when selecting artists. On the Fine Art Professionals of Northern Virginia website, visitors can view artists organized by their painting medium – such as oils, watercolors, or pastels – and by the subjects they paint – such as landscapes, portraits and figures, and still life. The artists also demonstrate widely varying styles, from photorealism to abstract, and from the whimsical to the serious.

Chica Brunsvold's work falls on the whimsical end of that particular spectrum. The longtime Lake Barcroft resident, winner of the American Watercolor Society's Harrison Cady Award among other honors, is a member of the group whose work was included in the 68-piece exhibition that closed this week in Warrenton's Berkley Gallery.

"There are wonderful artists in that group," Brunsvold said. "I'm very happy to be a part of it."

Watercolorist Carolyn Grossé Gawarecki, also from Falls Church, an art teacher in the City and winner of the Grumbacher Gold Medal, is a member of the group as well.

Nearly 100 visitors attended the opening reception of the show earlier this month. While each piece was quite different from the next, Poyerd believes that the high quality of the pieces was a unifying factor in the exhibition.

While the group's original focus was its website, which continues to grow its audience with currently more than 300 new visits monthly, Poyerd says the group looks to host fall and spring shows while continuing to build its online presence and enhance its website. Another show is planned in Frederick's Delaplaine Visual Arts Education Center in April, and Poyerd hopes that the group can exhibit beyond the region, to showcase for art lovers outside of the D.C. area the talent found in Northern Virginia.

For more information on the Fine Art Professionals of Northern Virginia, visit fineartvirginia.com.