



# HCAA Newsletter

*This newsletter is supported in part by a grant from the Maryland State Arts Council.*

Please remember to keep your artist profile up to date online at [hcaaonline.org](http://hcaaonline.org)

Visit  
**HCAAonline.org**

for info on

- Installation/deinstallation days/times
- Exhibit registration
- Receptions
- Artwork by Members
- Join/renew HCAA membership
- & more!

## From the President's Desk: Happy Spring!

by HCAA President Denise Brown



For those of you who are new to HCAA, consider having a Solo Wall exhibit. If you haven't had the opportunity to do a solo exhibition, this is one way to put together a body of work with a theme, or a collection.

The space at Prince George's Plaza Community Center (PGPCC) is approximately 8' x 10'. The last exhibit had 12 works ranging from 11" x 14" to 20" x 16". Installations are on display for 1 to 2 months. The next opportunity to participate is May 2, and the reception is scheduled for June 7 at 2pm.

Other dates available are September 12 (reception September 27) and November 7 (reception TBD). A flier of your show will be produced to use for invitations to friends and colleagues and will be on the website. HCAA members will contribute snacks and drinks to your reception table.

If you're interested, please contact me at [denise76marie@gmail.com](mailto:denise76marie@gmail.com).

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**Please make sure you've renewed your \$50.00 membership.**

You can renew at [hcaaonline.org](http://hcaaonline.org) or send a check to

HCAA at PO Box 37 Hyattsville, MD 20781

## A Closer Look

by Peter Guttmacher

We've all heard the trope, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." Easy to shrug agreement without really thinking. It's all about personal perspective. Of course! But is that really how we operate?

It's strange to think that beauty (whatever that actually means) is at once completely subjective yet very much societal/cultural. We like what we like, but things such as balance, proportion, and complementary colors have become inherently pleasing. Look into the perfect face gracing any fashion mag. Lose yourself in a classical landscape. Even the revolutionary, wild style of Hip-Hop tags is predictably and pleasurably full and rounded. And yet, as Poe wrote, "There is no exquisite beauty...without some strangeness in the proportion." Or, as Oscar Wilde less creepily observed, "No object is so beautiful that, under certain conditions, it will not look ugly."

There are things that please the eye. And there are things that arrest us. And they are not necessarily the same. It's not like there's an art gun to our heads or a government mandate around aesthetics (well, not yet, anyway), but think of the firehose of visuals we're soaked with every day, the exemplars of beauty that we've been lapping up since birth. You have to wonder, What is it that we might NOT be seeing and appreciating?

I came to photography later in life. And, while no aesthetic snob, I was not looking to "stick it to the man," either. I loved the human face and all that could be seen there. I loved nature in its ever-changing, manifold glory. I dug the patterns you could find in any environment, natural or built. I was a sucker for symmetry. But there were some subjects that were just not beautiful to me. And while strangeness was okay, it had to look, you know ... nice.

Then a very fortunate thing happened. The most influential person of my youth came back into my life. Michael Everett had been a boon companion across the rugged terrain of 1970s teendom. A wildly creative, funny and irreverent, even obnoxious, spirit, the projects he concocted modeled a freedom that nudged me to try to express myself in the arts. In fact, many of our little town's 1970s sphere of floating kids from checked-out parents became just as game for expressive experimentation.

Cut to adulthood. Michael and I had fallen out not long after high school. The reasons were by now blood under the bridge. So, wanting to go back to sources, I decided to hunt him up, and eventually I found him. To my double delight, he was not only a photographer but it was a breeze to pick up from where we left off with our mind meld.



Photos on this page and next by  
Michael Patriquin Everett

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Our pics—verrrry different. Mine, much more traditional tributes to loveliness. His were intense examinations of what I could only first think of as “ugliness,” Penetrating closeups of pedestrian objects, the details from industrial or abandoned settings. Rusted metal, polluted liquid, broken pavement, decayed wood, rain spatter, the warp of weathered plastic, discarded construction materials, not pretty stuff – and yet you felt them, and they were, well...beautiful.



The images that had first moved my friend were atypical: the high-contrast, feathery, wing spread, of a [fossil Archaeopteryx](#); the tonality of the grays around Buzz Aldrin’s [boot print](#) in the lunar dust; even Matthew Brady’s grim and grainy [images](#) of the Civil War. The subjects themselves didn’t draw him in, but there was meaning and feeling in the images.

Only gradually did Michael become aware that there were adult artists who also had unconventional views of the photographable (some of his first intimations of that were Henri Cartier-Bresson’s 1932 photo [Man Jumping the Puddle](#) , Robert Rauschenberg’s 1950’s assemblage [Monogram](#), and Joseph Cornell’s surrealistically assembled [Shadow Boxes](#)).

And there were other sensory confirmations. John Cage’s 1952 avantgarde composition, “[4’ 33”](#) resonated. The four-plus minute recording of silences between Cage opening and then closing keyboard lid of a piano may have caused a furor in the music world, but to Michael it also sent the message of “what I’m telling you to do here is listen.” It also implied “it was okay to make art that people might not like or get.” Michael realized that “sometimes untypicalness could make you stop and see” like Cage did with sound.



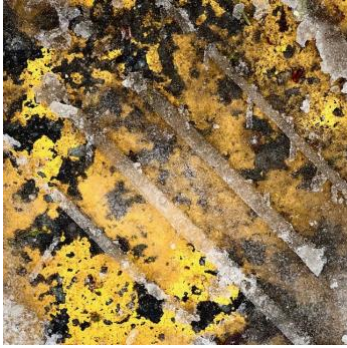
As he grew older, Michael solidified his belief that there was already so much beauty out there that got successfully, repeatedly, incessantly noticed. What about the rest? He wanted to look at the things that you ordinarily passed by. The way field biologists “toss a grid frame onto a meadow and then zoom in to count the life within it and discover.” To be open to images, without plans and expectations – even aesthetics. As photographer Edward Weston said, “Following the rules of composition before making a picture is like consulting the rules of gravitation before going for a walk.”

Michael became that person who others accept will “inevitably stop and take pictures” of things they just don’t get. For him, the outsider identity became comfortable, even spiritual. Our reconnection has been fruitful. We talk about how each other’s images make us feel (not to be confused with feedback). I now let my gaze go down to try to find the compelling that may literally be at my feet. Michael lets his gaze go up to shoot more landscapes and skies, and has returned to portraits (as long as they really show what’s going on with the person). We’ve even tried photo dialogue, with each image a response to the last.

(continued on page 4)

(Closer Look *continued from page 3*)

Beautiful? Arresting? ... Ugliful? There is just so much around us that we have to remind our eyes to stay open and see what they can see. Or, as Michael says, "It's all about expanding the range of what it's okay to photograph. Opening those windows. To keep challenging yourself to infuse, represent, capture what you find compelling in the world. Could be dissonant or calm or harmonious—it's all there."



Photos by Michael Patriquin Everett (left) and Peter Guttmacher (right)

## Re/Generations Exhibit

by Diane Elliott

Each year, Maryland National Capital Parks & Planning sponsors an exhibit of artwork by Prince George's County artists in the Maryland House of Delegates Lowe House Office Building in Annapolis. This year's show runs for three months, January 14 through April 14, and includes a Meet the Artists reception. Artists also receive a small honorarium.

Members of the Prince George's state delegation always drop in to the reception to tell the artists how much they enjoy spending time with the art, and how proud they are of their county's support of the arts and its breadth of talent. Artists meet and mingle, and even exchange information on venues, classes, studios, and techniques.

HCAA members are always well represented. This year, the show, entitled re/generations, includes pieces by Ahmed Alkarkhi, Diane Elliott, Jeffrey Felten-Green, Jan Garland, Monica Lyles, and Delia Mychajluk.



The Three Magi, burned wood, by Jeffrey Felten-Green (left), re/generations reception (center, photo by Rachel Ann Cross), and Garden Blooms, by Monica Lyles (right)



## Computers Are Art, Sorta

by David E. Lovelady

I took my first class on programming computers in 1964, and I built my first computer in the early 1990s. In between, as a test pilot, I was involved in some of the first flight testing of software-controlled systems in the 1970s and instructed a NASA test team on how to plan their upcoming program from the lessons we had learned. As a squadron commander, I saw what computer programming could do with carrier battle group tactics in the 1980s. My love affair with the bottomless pit that is computers covers a lot of territory.

I can't play an instrument or hum in tune, and my stickmen don't even look like sticks, so my equivalent of artistic endeavor is getting a computer to do what I want it to do when I want it done. Like a sassy child, it may make things difficult, but it's fun to overcome the barriers, learn something new, and solve a problem.

More than 10 years ago, Tom LoMacchio, a Naval Academy classmate, asked for my help on the HCAA website. It had been hacked a couple of times, and Tom needed a fresh look to see what could be done. Over the next few years, I got more and more involved until Tom decided, after 12 years, to reduce his webmaster obligations to administrative website duties.

Although I had created many websites dating back to the mid-nineties, I had never built a "Content Management System" (CMS) website before, which is what Wordpress, Joomla, and Drupal are. Those are systems that allow someone to build, manage, edit, and update a website without having to know any computer programming. Tom had inherited a Joomla-based website, so we continued with that. Frankly, I liked it enough to build three other Joomla sites for other clients, along with other types of sites. When I came on board, we were just trying to upgrade from Joomla version 1.0, and now we're operating with Joomla 6. Each iteration introduces new functions, more efficiency, and faster responses.

I've always believed that computers are great tools, so we should use them to make our lives easier and our processes more functional. So, I started suggesting ways we could change some of the functions of HCAA into online activities. At the time I came aboard, we were registering for installations on the morning of the installs at each venue and hand-writing the tags. One of our members had figured out a way of using Google Docs to register online, but not many people were using it, because it required filling in part of a spreadsheet, and some were not comfortable doing that.

I thought it would be easier to fill in a form to register, so we developed that capability. Another member figured out how to make the printing of the tags work somewhat automatically through a Mail Merge feature in Microsoft Word, and Kay Fuller has been doing that for us ever since.

We developed more up-to-date slides for our home page slideshow, created more effective flyers in two sizes to advertise the exhibits, modified and expanded each artist's profile, and provided website sales lists to highlight all the pieces currently being exhibited. As a result, we agreed that the limited space available for pieces to be exhibited meant that we should no longer permit pieces that were not for sale to take up that space.

Last year, we started using the capability to upload pictures of the works that were being exhibited to try to generate more sales interest from our thousands of website visitors. That capability required solving several problems over a couple of years to give us just what we were looking for. All of that occurred because of a suggestion from one of our members, who wondered how a patron could be interested in buying a piece that they hadn't seen.

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Nowadays, we create the flyers and the slideshow features from images that have been uploaded during the registration process, eliminating the need to have someone go through each venue and take pictures of each piece on display, as Delia Mychajluk had been doing. Obviously, if you're not uploading images of your entries, you're missing the opportunity to be a part of all the online attention.

This history lesson demonstrates how reliant we are on the online capabilities. We always wanted/needed a website, but now it is more central to all of our activities in HCAA.

I'm not getting any younger, as much as I'd like to think I am, so we need to plan for the time when I step aside. We need to identify someone who really enjoys the challenge of working with computers. They don't need to know Joomla—I certainly didn't know anything about it when I came along—but they need to be intrigued by learning about new computer systems. They don't need to know how to program a computer, but they needn't be afraid of a little of that, either.

We use Microsoft Office (Excel and Word), Photoshop Elements (or Photoshop), and, on occasion, Adobe Acrobat. The rest of the work is done in a web browser with a Super User account on our system. The "back end" of the system needs updating periodically, which is not hard at all, and we keep track of the automatic backups of the site, which happens every day, just in case we need one to completely restore the site. If something causes the site to be down (which hasn't happened in many years), we'll have to respond and get it back online as soon as possible.

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I suppose we're looking for someone who may not be an artist but, like me, gets the same sort of satisfaction and enjoyment from solving a computer problem as an artist might experience from getting that shadow or reflection just right, while taking pride in a job well done. If you know someone like that, please contact me via the ["Contact Us"](#) button on the HCAA website.

### *HCAA Calendar*

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Apr 26: 2-4 PM</b> | <b>Prince George's Plaza Community Center Reception "Creative Flow"</b> |
| <b>May 2: 9:00 AM</b> | <b>Franklins Installation "Inventive Style"</b>                         |
| <b>May 2: 9:45 AM</b> | <b>Fleisher's Installation "Concepts"</b>                               |
| <b>May 2: 2:30 PM</b> | <b>PGPCC Installation "Community View"</b>                              |
| <b>May 17: 3-5 PM</b> | <b>Franklins Reception "Inventive Style"</b>                            |
| <b>Jun 7: 2-4 PM</b>  | <b>PGPCC Reception "Community View"</b>                                 |

## The Art of Quilting

by Delia Mychajluk

I've become interested in quilts over the past few years. I have several friends who make and show quilts. Fifty-two years ago, as a wedding gift, my husband and I received a quilt made by a college roommate and dear friend. In the border was stitched the date of our wedding; the quilt remains a treasure.

Quilting has a rich history going back to ancient Egypt. In medieval times, quilting techniques emerged in Europe, India, and the Far East. Quilts have always been used as bed covers for warmth, and to mark specific lifetime events such as a birth or wedding. During medieval times, quilts were used both as padding under armor and as protection if a fighter did not have armor.

Quilting as a historic craft has incorporated multiple fabrics, stitching, and applique and, in more modern times, painting and more textural elements. Storytelling is a function of some quilts. The Tristan Quilt is considered one of the oldest extant decorative quilts, having been created in the 14<sup>th</sup> century in Sicily. The quilt portrays the story of Tristan and Isolde. Some of the finest quilts were produced in India in the 17th century using colorful chintz fabric. These quilts were popular and exported around the world. In Europe, scraps of material and fabric were made into patchwork quilts.

The craft of quilting has been passed down through generations within families. There has been and continues to be a communal aspect to the making of quilts within sewing circles and various guilds.

The tradition of quilt making was brought over to America by the early settlers. Women gathered for sewing "bees" to make quilts for community members. Wedding and baby quilts could be created within a day by quilters working together. During the civil war, quilts were sold for fundraising, and some contained political messages, such as anti-slavery stories and poems. It is thought that some of the appliqued panels pertaining to the underground railroad were mounted outside certain safe houses to alert those seeking help.

Personal stories of struggle and survival were woven together into one well-known historical quilt: the Reconciliation Quilt of 1867, made by Lucinda Ward Hostain. This quilt consists of 40 appliqued tales illustrating the quilt artist's experiences after the Civil War.

Following the invention of the sewing machine in the 19th century, there were changes in quilt making in terms of the more complex stories, geometric designs, etc. that could now be executed with more speed and ease. In the 1970s, there was a resurgence in handmaking utilitarian objects, including quilts. This has continued to the present time.

In recent years, the range of makers has included military men, prisoners, and some contemporary artists such as Grayson Perry, who makes large-scale tapestries in addition to working in ceramics, and Tracey Emin, dubbed "the bad girl of British art," who uses found objects and old fabrics in her quilts and installations.



Quilts in the Maryland Quilts exhibit at Greenbelt Federal Courthouse, by, left to right, Patti Bender, Debbie Stanford, and Susan Sienkiewich

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While exploring what is happening currently with quilt making, I stumbled on an article. “Contemporary Quilters Are Piecing Together a New Era of the American Craft,” that discusses the use of old decorative feed bags as well as inherited quilt squares in fabricating other works.

One quote I found particularly poignant was: “The pile of blocks I inherited was obviously constructed out of recycled decorative feed sacks—everyday textiles that she would have had just lying around. This was a very common practice throughout the Southern United States in the 1940s and 1950s. It’s this ingenuity that has not only become a hallmark of the American quilt but in a way made the quilt an apt metaphor for many of the myths of what it means to be ‘American’—to piece together disparate parts, to layer different cultures and time frames, to ‘build something out of nothing.’”

I recently attended a reception for the 23rd Maryland Quilts show at Greenbelt Federal Courthouse. It’s a large show, including work by members of various Maryland quilters guilds and illustrating the variety of contemporary quilting. The show runs through April.

### HCAA Current Exhibits



The next Franklins reception is Sunday, May 17, 3-5 PM

Bring friends!



The next PGPCC reception is Sunday, June 7, 2-4 PM

Bring friends!



Remember to keep your information and images up to date on the HCAA website; it gets a lot of traffic!

**Hyattsville Community Arts Alliance**

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HCAA Newsletter: Diane Elliott, Peter Guttmacher, Delia Mychajluk



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