

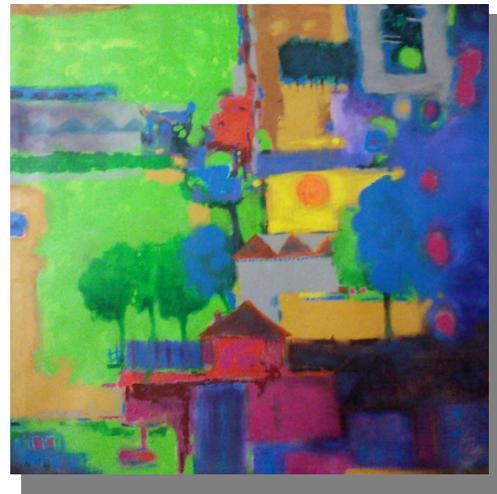


HCAA Newsletter

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

Ahmed Alkarkhi Brings International Perspective to His Art

by Pete Pichaske



Green Farm, 40 x 40, acrylic on canvas

One of the Hyattsville Community Art Alliance’s newest members also has one of the group’s most intriguing backgrounds – a colorful, sometimes precarious history that has taken him from Iraq to Syria to Maryland.

Ahmed Alkarkhi was born in Iraq and was captivated by the thought of being an artist from the age of six, when he first saw a painting. He earned his Bachelor in Fine Arts from the University of Baghdad in 2001 and, in a short time, also earned a reputation as a talented artist in his home country.

But Iraq at that time was not a safe place to be an artist, successful or not.

“Those who live there have no guarantee they’ll be alive after a week,” Alkarkhi told East City Art, a Washington, D.C. arts group, in an interview several years ago. “The government is not stable, everybody carries weapons, militias do what they want and people steal from each other.” Many artists he knew in Iraq, he said, were killed.

“We heard through news reports on the radio that there was targeting of artists including actors and actresses, because extremists think that what we’re doing is prohibited by Islam,” he told National Public Radio in a separate interview.

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Ahmed Alkarkhi

Visit

HCAAonline.org
for info on

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

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In 2006, Alkarkhi, his wife, and his young son left Iraq for Damascus, Syria. In short order, his artwork won acclaim in that country as well. He had several exhibitions at the French Cultural Center in Damascus, and, in three years, sold some 240 pieces, many in the city's finest galleries.

But living in Syria presented problems of its own, as he had to repeatedly renew his residency permit. In 2009, after three years in Syria, Alkarkhi was allowed into the United States as a refugee and an artist.

Since his arrival in this country, Alkarkhi has exhibited his artwork at the Foundry Gallery in Washington, Gallery Five, in Richmond, Va., and the Middle East Institute Art Gallery, also in Washington, among other venues.

In 2018, he was one of six artists featured in "Uprooted: The Art of Refugees" at the Sandy Spring Museum, in Montgomery County. He also has exhibited regularly at the Hyattsville Community Art Alliance's many venues, including two solo shows in 2018 at the Prince George's Plaza Community Center, in Hyattsville.

Alkarkhi is trained in a variety of art styles, and enjoys working in all of them. "I love working with real art, meaning all art schools," he said. He is equally adept at portraits and landscapes, and equally at home with oils, acrylics, and watercolors.

"He uses all kinds of media, and he also uses different styles and techniques," said HCAA President Denise Brown, who recruited Alkarkhi for the organization after seeing his work in an exhibition of refugee art. "He can do something abstract, he can do something very representative, or he can do things more impressionistically. And sometimes he combines all those in a painting. That's an exceptional talent."

Alkarkhi brings an international perspective to the group that is beneficial, she added. "We have a lot of members who do work from their traveling, but he lived as an artist in these places," she said.

Since joining last year, Alkarkhi has been an enthusiastic member, Brown noted, participating in fairs and festivals and bringing his artwork to the various regular venues, where he also helps with the installations. "Once he joined, he got very involved," she said.

That involvement is likely to continue. "I am now holding American citizenship, and I am happy in my new country," Alkarkhi said. "I appreciate and work with the Hyattsville Art Alliance, (which) has been a great help with my art."



The Old House, 23 x 27, oil on canvas

HCAA 2019 3rd Quarter Venue Sales Report

from Monna Kauppinen

HCAA had 10 completed sales during the third quarter, July 1 through September 30, 2019: Franklin's, 6; Doctors Hospital, 3; other, 1. Sales totaled \$2,130.75.

Congratulations to Roxanne Ando, Marie Erb, Kay Fuller, Jan Garland, Barbara LoMacchio, Delia Mychajluk, Joe Rogers, and Maureen Wheatley.

Artist Statements: The Good, the Bad, and the Necessary

by Diane Elliott

In the beginning, there was art. Then, there was a request from publishers of various sorts, who needed text to publish, to established artists of various sorts: We want your incendiary thoughts, your manifestos. As noted by Jennifer Liese in her essay “Toward a History (and Future) of the Artist Statement,” these manifestos frequently began with a disclaimer. Artist Louise Bourgeois wrote, in 1954 in *Design Quarterly*, “The artist who discusses the so-called meaning of his work is usually describing a literary side-issue. The core of his original impulse is to be found, if at all, in the work itself.” This attitude didn’t put an end to the practice. Sometime in the 1990s, curators, jurists, and gallery owners began asking artists for a written statement describing the artist’s vision.

Jump to the 2000s, and the county fair wants an Artist Statement for anyone entering the art competition, kindergarten division. Okay, this is an exaggeration. But not by much. For the most part, according to Daniel Grant in “Are Artists’ Statements Really Necessary” (HuffPost), critics revile them, gallerists avoid reading them, and collectors ignore them. But any juried show or competition is certain to require an Artist Statement as part of any submission, so we seem to be stuck with them for now. In fact, most art schools currently teach the writing of Artist Statements as part of their curriculum.

So what goes into an Artist Statement, and what is the least painful method of constructing one?

Kickstarter’s “The Creative Independent” has a piece by Sara Hotchkiss, “How to Write an Artist Statement,” in which she begins with the negatives: “Here are a few things an artist statement is not: a manifesto, an art history lecture, a story about discovering art, short fiction, self-psychoanalysis, a string of adjectives, a grand theory of everything you’ve ever made, or a list of your career accomplishments.” That narrows it down considerably. So what should a good Artist Statement contain? Hotchkiss suggests you think in classic journalistic terms: Your statement should express

- What (the medium you work in)
- Why (concept and subject matter)
- How (how your medium and subject matter relate to each other)

So, after a survey of online advice, here’s the takeaway:

- Shorter is better: Your statement should be 100 to 300 words.
- Give the what, why, and how.
- Only bring in your personal biography if it has a very strong and/or unique relation to your work.
- Mention one or two influences if they’re very important to you.
- Describe what is unique about your work.
- Think about the emotions and reactions you want your audience to come away with.
- Look over your body of work: What commonalities and differences do you see? Use this information in crafting your statement.
- Avoid clichés and jargon: “finding the extraordinary in the ordinary” or “problematizes individuality and displaces contemporary norms” will have most viewers thinking “Huh?”

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- Imagine that you're speaking directly to someone; use active words (not "I attempt to show" but "My color palette reflects...").
- Get other people to read and respond to your drafts, for content and style/grammar.
- You may need different statements for different settings; be ready to tweak your statement each time you send it out.

Or you may want to emulate a woodworker at the American Crafts Council show in Baltimore a few years back: The show required each artist to post their Artist Statement in their booth. His statement was a collage of his favorite visuals. Not a single word.

Hanging and Displaying Art with HCAA: Things to Consider

by Delia Mychajluk

HCAA artists have many opportunities to display their art on an ongoing basis at multiple venues. Artists can hang up to 3 pieces at Franklins and at Old Line Fine Wine, Spirits & Bistro in Beltsville, up to 2 pieces at Fleisher's and at Prince George's Plaza Community Center, and up to 5 pieces at Doctors Community Hospital. When preparing art to be displayed in public spaces, one of the important things to consider is safety for both the people in the spaces and the art itself. The art needs to have a wire in order to hang at HCAA venues. The screw eyes or D-rings for securing the wire and the wire itself need to be strong enough for the weight of the piece. If framed with glass, it is important that the glass is undamaged and secure within the frame. The art piece should have identifying information, such as the artist's name and the title of the piece, clearly indicated on the back. Political or religious images or inappropriate language is not acceptable in any of our venues.

When considering which venue might be the best match for the art piece, there are some practical things to consider, such as size, color, and content. For example, Doctors Community Hospital, Franklins Restaurant, and Old Line Fine Wine, Spirits & Bistro can easily handle multiple art pieces up to 36" x 48" and perhaps larger, and sizes near the 24" x 36" range fit well over the booths at Franklins. If the art piece is in particular need of good strong lighting, Doctor's is a good choice. Fleisher's is a particularly good venue for artists who do nudes, and Fleisher's does carry some sculpture and jewelry made by HCAA artists. Old Line will also display nudes. If you're interested in selling your work, it's good to have an idea of the price range of past sales at the particular venue, to gain a sense of what the market will bear, although there are always surprises. The ranges of recent sales at our top-selling venues are as follows: Franklin's, \$70 to \$375; Doctors, \$100 to \$335, and Old Line, \$50 to \$110.

There are themes for each of the shows that HCAA hangs. Some artists adhere closely to the theme, some ignore the theme, and some fall somewhere in between. The theme can be a unifying element for the show and can help with curating the show. Adhering to the theme for the shows at Prince George's Plaza Community Center is of importance to advance some of the concerns of the county.

Note: A tutorial entitled "Venue Procedures" can be found among the Tutorials in the dropdown of the "Our Artists" menu item on the HCAA website, hcaaonline.org.

If you haven't paid your HCAA dues, please do so promptly.

Please note that 2020 dues are \$50 for Resident Members.

Pay by check to HCAA PO Box 37, Hyattsville, MD 20781 or online at hcaaonline.org.

HCAA Officers and Board Members

from HCAA President Denise Brown

Some unseen components of HCAA are our Officers and Board Members. The Officers are President, Secretary, Treasurer, Sales Representative, and Vice President. Our Board Members vote on decisions regarding the HCAA organization such as website issues, dues, donations, and policy.

The President is the contact person for the group, responding to requests for Calls for Artists and Calls for Volunteers on art projects throughout the county and state; informs the membership of events and activities sponsored by HCAA and other groups; coordinates the annual calendar for our five venues; schedules receptions; maintains communication with venue owners; schedules Board Meetings; attends informational meetings by the county and state art organizations; maintains equipment for installations, including ordering new equipment; responds to contacts by people seeking information about HCAA; and reaches out to members for help in our various volunteer positions. I have also taken on the role of curator for our installations. The year 2020 will be my last as president, and I would like someone to shadow me for the year to learn how I do what I do as president.

There are two secretaries, Recording Secretary (Roxanne Ando) and Corresponding Secretary (Margot Braswell). The Recording Secretary keeps minutes of our meetings. Roxanne has also been instrumental in updating our price list once we have finished an installation. Roxanne has assisted with our grant proposal process. Margot has begun a Twitter account for HCAA, and has often posted announcements for me when I am away. Margot has also taken on the job of checking in with our venues to confirm our event or installation.

The Treasurer keeps track of our accounts; pays bills, reimbursements, and donations; and pays the taxes and the artists for their sales. Richard Brown is our Treasurer, and he would like to step down by the end of 2020. Richard would like to have someone shadow him to learn the process.

Our VP of Sales is Monna Kauppinen, and her backup is Melanie Gugliuzza. Monna is contacted by the buyer and makes arrangements for the sale and delivery of the artwork sold through our venues and website. Melanie handles these duties when Monna is away.

We have had two other VPs: Mary Ann Lipovsky and Sally Ann Rogers. Mary Ann has stepped down due to her job constraints. Mary Ann has been the Reception Coordinator and is very supportive of the Art Critique, often hosting in her home. Mary Ann also coordinated an art exhibit at the Greenbelt Library for Art Critique members. Our VPs are there to step in for me or pick up one of the duties of the President, when needed. For example, Sally Ann will often coordinate the Open Studio Tour in Spring that is going on at the same time as our installations and local festivals (Riverdale Park). Sally Ann has also attended meetings of the Prince George's Arts Council or Parks & Planning when I could not be there. Sally Ann also maintains our Facebook account.

There are many ways to get involved in HCAA in various committees and teams. If you are interested in one of the above positions, please contact me at president@hcaonline.org.

"...don't forget to make some art - write or draw or build or sing or live as only you can. And I hope, somewhere in the next year, you surprise yourself."

Neil Gaiman, author

"Fall Back"
October 26, to January 26, 2020

Hyattsville Community Arts Alliance

Old Line Fine Wine, Spirits and Bistro
11011 Baltimore Ave.
Beltsville, MD 20705

Contact: Denise @ 301-699-1148 www.hcaonline.org

"Autumn Colors"
October 26, 2019 to January 25, 2020

Hyattsville Community Arts Alliance

Doctor's Community Hospital
8118 Good Luck Road,
Lanham MD 2070

Contact: Denise @ 301-699-1148 www.hcaonline.org

You still have a few days to catch the current PGCC Solo Show by Kellie Duncan

HCAA will be celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2020. We need your ideas and your help to make our anniversary a special event for our artists and our community. If you're interested in serving on the Anniversary Committee, please contact Denise Brown.

Hyattsville Community Arts Alliance Presents: **Kellie Duncan**
ARTISTIC AND AUTISTIC



PRINCE GEORGE'S PLAZA COMMUNITY CENTER
6600 ADELPHI ROAD, HYATTSVILLE
DECEMBER 7 - JANUARY 4, 2020
RECEPTION DECEMBER 15, 2-4 PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT DENISE:
301-699-1148 or visit: WWW.HCAAONLINE.ORG



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE ARTS

Maryland State Arts Council Part of the Maryland Department of Commerce

UPCOMING HCAA EVENTS - January-March 2020

Dates and times are subject to change. Please check the HCAA website.

Event Date (Time)	Location	Event Type	Exhibit Theme or Solo Wall Artist	End Date
Jan 4 (9a)	Franklins	Installation	"Spectrum"	Mar 7
Jan 4 (9:45a)	Fleisher's	Installation	"A Season for Harmony"	Mar 7
Jan 4 (12n)	PG Plaza Community Ctr	Installation	"Black History"	Mar 7
Jan 25 (10a)	Doctors Community Hosp	Installation	"Healing Light"	Mar 28
Jan 25 (1p)	Old Line Wine & Spirits	Installation	"Modern Visions"	Mar 28
Jan ?? (4-6p)	Date/place TBA	Art Critique	check website	
Feb 8 (1-3p)	PG Plaza Community Ctr	Reception	"Black History"	
Feb 16 (2-4p)	Hyattsville Municipal Bldg	Annual HCAA Meeting		
Feb 23 (3-5p)	Franklins	Reception	"Spectrum"	
Mar 7 (9a)	Franklins	Installation	"Right-Brained Image"	May 2
Mar 7 (9:45a)	Fleisher's	Installation	"Color & Light"	May 2
Mar 7 (12n)	PG Plaza Community Ctr	Installation	"A Vision Awakens"	May 2
Mar 7	PG Plaza Community Ctr	Installation	Solo Wall	May 2
Mar 21 (1-3p)	PG Plaza Community Ctr	Reception	Solo Wall	
Mar 28 (10a)	Doctors Community Hosp	Installation	"The Artist Perspective"	Jun 13
Mar 28 (1p)	Old Line Wine & Spirits	Installation	"A Time Away"	Jun 13
Mar ?? (4-6p)	Date/place TBA	Art Critique	check website	

Hyattsville Community Arts Alliance

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50 YEARS OF SERVICE
TO THE ARTS

HCAA - Original, Affordable Art!

THANK YOU! HCAA EXHIBIT SPONSORS

Bladensburg Waterfront Park

*outdoors.pgparcs.com/Sites/
Bladensburg_Waterfront_Park.htm*

Community Forklift First Fridays

CommunityForklift.org

Doctors Community Hospital *dchweb.org*

Fleisher's Jewelers *fleishersjewelers.com*

Franklins Restaurant and Brewery

franklinsbrewery.com

NBC Studios Asman Gallery

Old Line Fine Wine, Spirits & Bistro *oldlinewine.com*

Prince George's Plaza Community Center

Pgparcs.com

Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission

wsscwater.com

EVENT ADDRESSES:

- Community Forklift 4671 Tanglewood Dr., Edmonston, MD 20781.....301-985-5180
- Doctors Community Hospital 8118 Good Luck Rd, Lanham, MD 20706301-552-8118
- Fleisher's Jewelers 5200 Baltimore Ave, Ste. 103, Hyattsville, MD 20781.....301-699-5553
- Franklins Restaurant & Brewery 5123 Baltimore Ave, Hyattsville, MD 20781.....301-927-2740
- NBC Studios Asman Gallery 4001 Nebraska Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20016202-885-4000
- Old Line Fine Wine, Spirits & Bistro 11011 Baltimore Ave., Beltsville, MD 20705.....301-937-5999
- PG Plaza Community Center 6600 Adelphi Rd, Hyattsville, MD 20782 301-454-1400
- WSSC 14501 Sweitzer Lane, Laurel, MD 20707 301-206-9772