

ART Abounds

The more than 200 participants in this year's cover contest certainly brought their artistic gifts to the game. And once again they used them to full effect, turning in a stunning selection of photography, painting and illustration for our tenth anniversary competition. We're proud to introduce our winner and 12 finalists (in no particular order). **BY DANIEL JEWETT**



BARRIE BARNETT
Marin Rowing Association Juniors
26" x 30", oil on canvas
barriebarnett.com

Meet Barrie Barnett and the finalists at our Get Covered Contest Celebration event May 12, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., at 302 Bon Air Center in Greenbrae. It's a great chance to celebrate with the contest winner and to view art by this year's Marin Open Studios participants.



FOR AN ARTIST with an impressive creative family legacy who began painting at age 9, received her first commission at age 12 and was a working portraitist by 21, the hardest thing was to hear that she had to stop.

"It was the low point of my life," says Sausalito artist Barrie Barnett, 57, a pastel artist who discovered in 2000 that the dust created during her work was dramatically affecting her health. "To find that the medium I loved was killing me created a huge dilemma; I was secretly planning my funeral."

Called "the finest living pastel artist" by renowned dog painter William Secord, Barnett was going to have to leave that medium and find another way. So the artist, then recently divorced, donated her more than 1,000 pastels to a local art academy in Maryland (her home state) and in 2013 came to Sausalito, where she took up residence on a houseboat, opened a studio in the ICB Building and continued doing animal and human portraits, this time in oil.

"I got through it and discovered it could loosen me up," Barnett says about transitioning to oil. "It was a more fluid outcome, less overworked."

Still, something was missing: Barnett was working constantly on commissions but wanted to "paint something that I love." And then it hit the Marin Rowing Association member (another activity her family excels at): why not paint people participating in that sport?

"I started thinking how I could capture the beauty of the sport in a painting," she says. "Not easy at all, as to me the beauty is in the fluid, perfectly synchronized movement."

She began in January, aiming to have the painting done in time for the contest, and she just made it — after a few nights of sleeping on the studio couch and drinking tea and French brandy. What inspired her was the youthful energy of the athletic Juniors, but she got much more than just a piece of art from the experience.

"This painting restored a fire of ambition in me," Barnett says. "It's a milestone; I discovered that I really want to paint rowers."

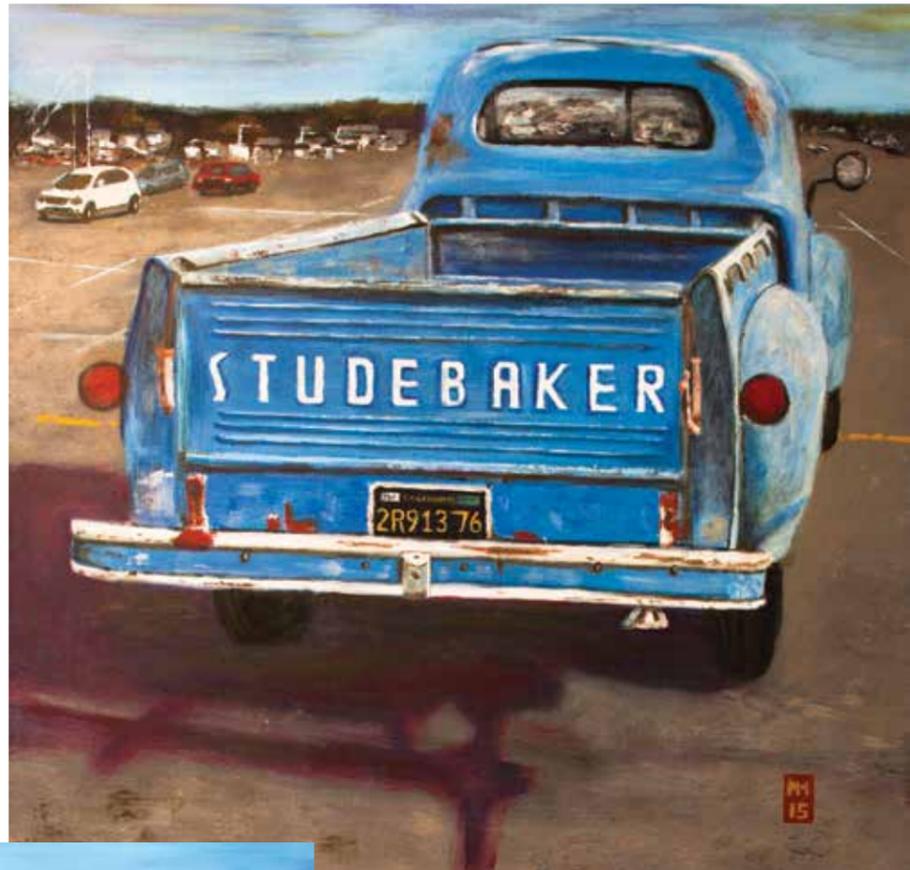
TIM PORTER



PEGGY MURPHY

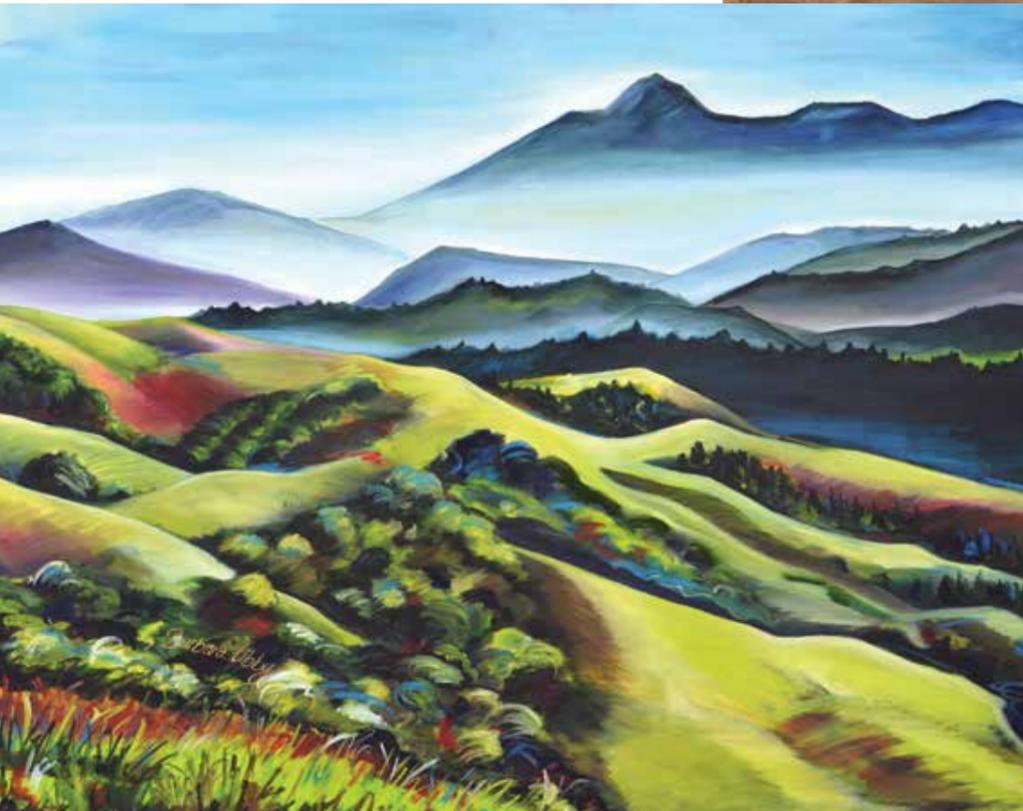
The Blue Studebaker

25.5" x 25.5", acrylic on canvas
escalaworks.com



Inspired by her mother's love of painting, Peggy Murphy, a 20-year resident of Marin, studied with other artists, visited many museums and taught herself everything else she needed to know to become a painter herself. She also finds inspiration in the works of masters such as Édouard Vuillard, Édouard Manet and Wayne Thiebaud.

"I am drawn to subjects that capture beauty as well as the grit and patina of daily life," Murphy says. "This truck with its dents, rust and weathered paint was already a piece of art. I just knew it would make a great subject."



Born and raised on a dairy farm in Switzerland, Barbara Libby-Steinmann moved to Marin in 1996 to study English and pursue an arts career. She teaches art at Bacich Elementary in Kentfield, where she strives to help students develop their creative and artistic skills.

"My passion is to be outdoors, breathing in the fresh cool air of a new day, feeling the sea breeze on my skin, climbing a mountain and enjoying stunning views," Libby-Steinmann says of what ignites her creative spark. "I experiment with simplifying essential shapes and lines, moving toward the abstract, while never completely losing touch with the essential details."

BARBARA LIBBY-STEINMANN

View of Mt. Tam from Loma Alta
24" x 30", oil on canvas
barbaralibby.com



INGRID LOCKOWANDT

The Oyster Farmer

48" x 60", acrylic on canvas
ingridlockowandt.com

Last year's Cover Contest winner is back with another piece reflecting life in Marin. The full-time artist and Tiburon resident began painting at a young age and says she enjoys portraits the most, finding they provide the greatest challenge and satisfaction.

"I drove to Point Reyes National Seashore and randomly turned off Sir Francis Drake Boulevard onto a road paved with crushed oyster shells," she says of this painting's genesis. "At the end of that road, I found myself at the source of the shells, the now-defunct Drakes Bay Oyster Company. While I was taking pictures of the workers, a young oyster farmer, who seemed a little shy, caught my attention."

DEBORAH HAMON

Blue Whiteout

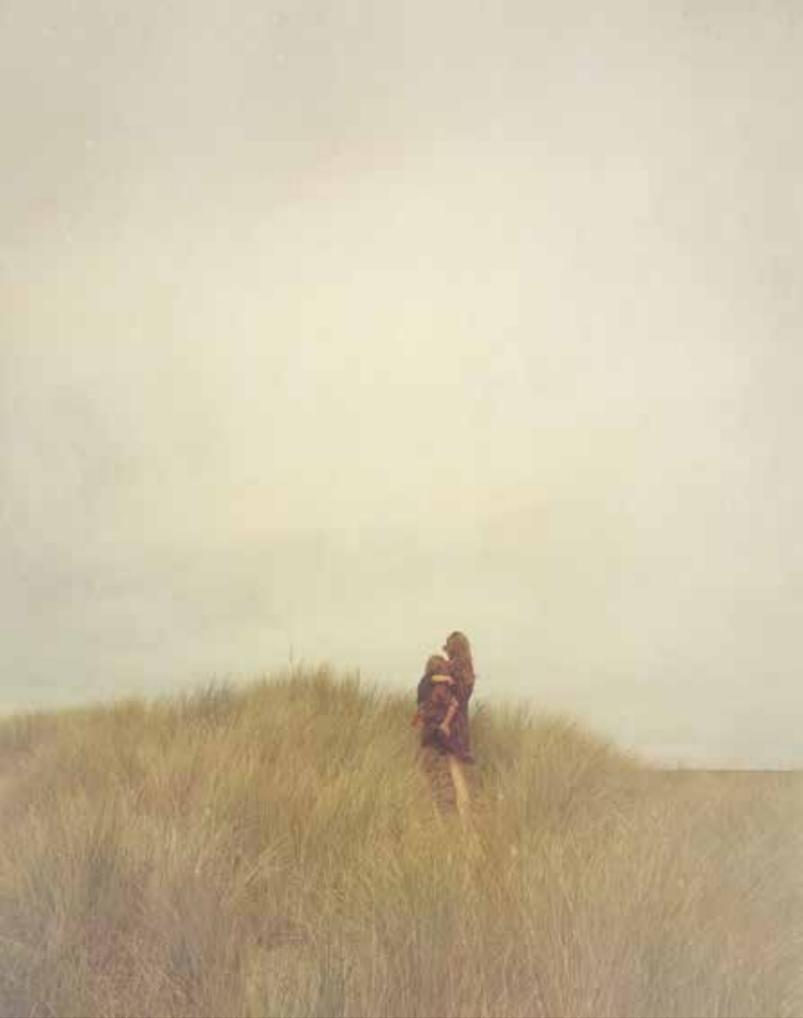
21" x 30", digital C-print
deborahhamon.com



Deborah Hamon is a full-time artist who grew up in Australia but has lived in Novato, where she loves to run or hike the local trails when she isn't holed up in the studio, for the last 12 years. This photograph is part of her "Polar Pom-Pom Project" designed to help children engage with art and climate change.

"I worked with third- and fifth-grade classrooms across Marin in 2013 discussing things kids can do to help the environment and how art can be used to help continue the conversation," Hamon says. "Then I packed up over 2,000 yarn pom-poms and set off on a three-week journey into the remote Arctic (where this photo was taken) on a tall ship."





MARY SERPHOS

Limantour Dunes
Photography
imagesbymariserphos.com



When Mary Serphos isn't out on the Marin trails, traveling the world or working her other job as a psychotherapist, the New York native and current Fairfax resident teaches others to manipulate digital photos and turn them into works of art as she has learned to do — a process that took many years to perfect.

“‘Limantour Dunes’ was taken at a memorial for a dear friend, Deb Hubsmith, a Marin resident who died of leukemia,” she says. “Deb was an inspiration to many, locally and across the country, as she played a prominent role in implementing Safe Routes to School. This photo, shot at Limantour Beach in Point Reyes, is dedicated to Deb, a courageous, generous and dynamic soul.”

STEVE EMERY

Loma Alta Rocks
36" x 36", acrylic on canvas
emerylipinski.com/emery

Steve Emery, a full-time artist since 1980, is an active participant in the arts community of Marin. He helps produce the annual exhibit and fundraiser MarinScapes and even finds time to play accordion and piano in Band of Pirates, which includes four other members of his Sir Francis Drake High School graduating class. He and his wife, artist Kathleen Lipinski, were named Marin County Cultural Treasures in 2015.

“I run the trails to experience the wonders each season brings,” he says of the inspiration guiding his work. “I love getting way out in the hills, running with my camera to get that last beautiful light.”



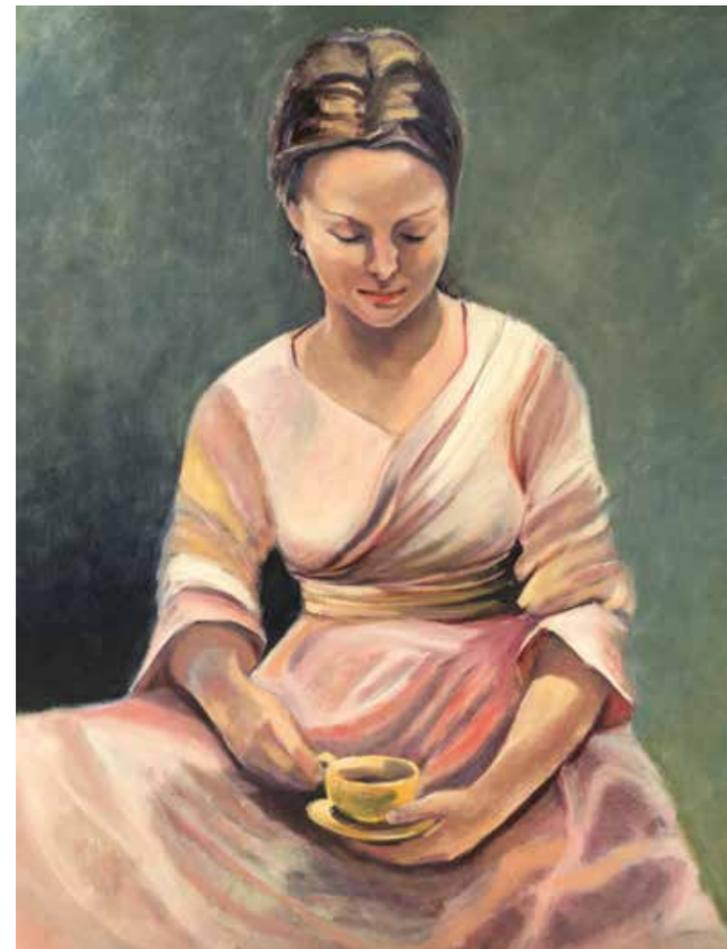
SPENCE SNYDER

Strata
30" x 22", casein on watercolor paper
dropr.com/spencesnyder



Growing up in Novato, Spence Snyder always loved to draw and make mazes in school. He eventually decided to pursue that passion, first at Academy of Art University in San Francisco and now as a freelance designer and illustrator with clients including Yahoo!, Intuit and EA Games.

“This piece is from a series called ‘Sticks and Stones’ and refers to the materials of nature that make up the great majority of our environment including most ‘man-made’ materials,” Snyder says. “This series has environmental concerns at its heart and is generally an exploration of how we humans perceive and manipulate nature.”



ELIZABETH GOREK

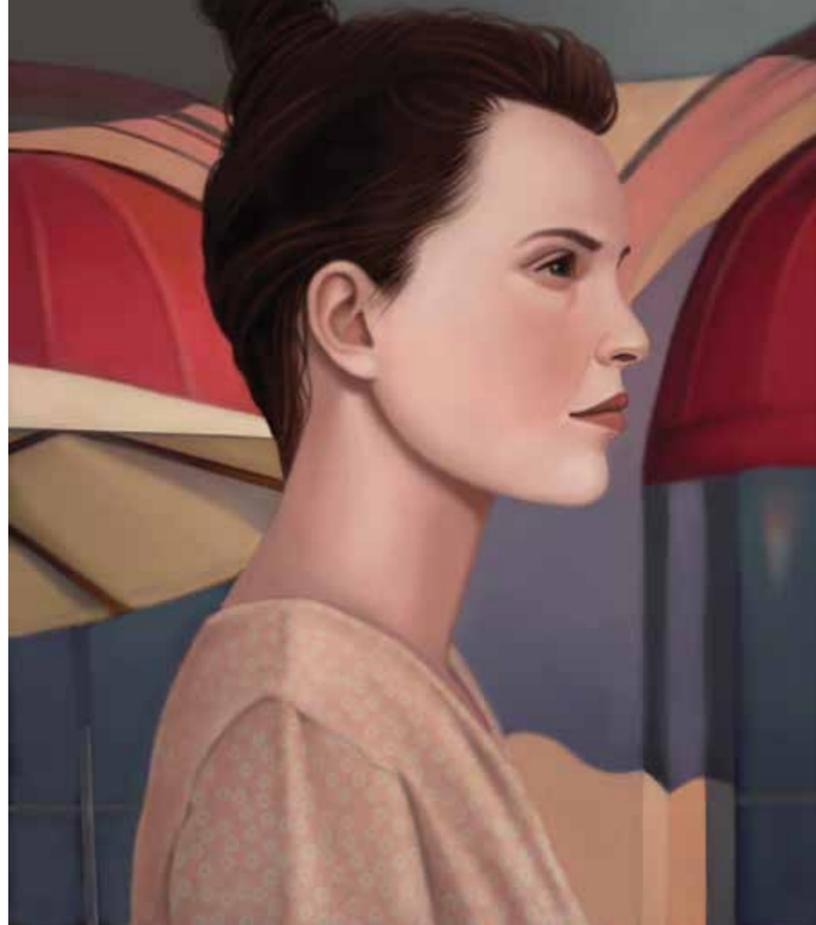
Party Dress
45" x 36", oil on canvas
elizabethgorek.com

After growing up in a family of artists in Hong Kong and Canada, Elizabeth Gorek came to Northern California in 1996; here, she found inspiration in the landscapes, seascapes and the people themselves. You can often find her in her barn studio or at her Sam the Butcher art space in Ross.

“The figure for me has the most power and is what challenges me the most,” Gorek says. “This woman is all dressed up and alone sipping tea. I’m drawn to images of women contemplating things, maybe because that’s what I do.”

MICHAEL WELCH

The Square
24" x 28", mixed media
michaelwelchart.com



Michael Welch is a Northern California native who majored in art at California College of the Arts. Although he got his start using traditional mediums, Welch quickly became enamored of the possibilities presented by new media. He lives in West Sonoma County, but loves to travel to Marin for hiking and dinner.

"I love town squares. There's something really special about a centrally located space in the middle of town dedicated specifically to people," Welch says about what inspired this portrait. "It's always an unpredictable combination of moments of solitude interspersed with various degrees of interesting conversation, people watching, book reading and life contemplation."



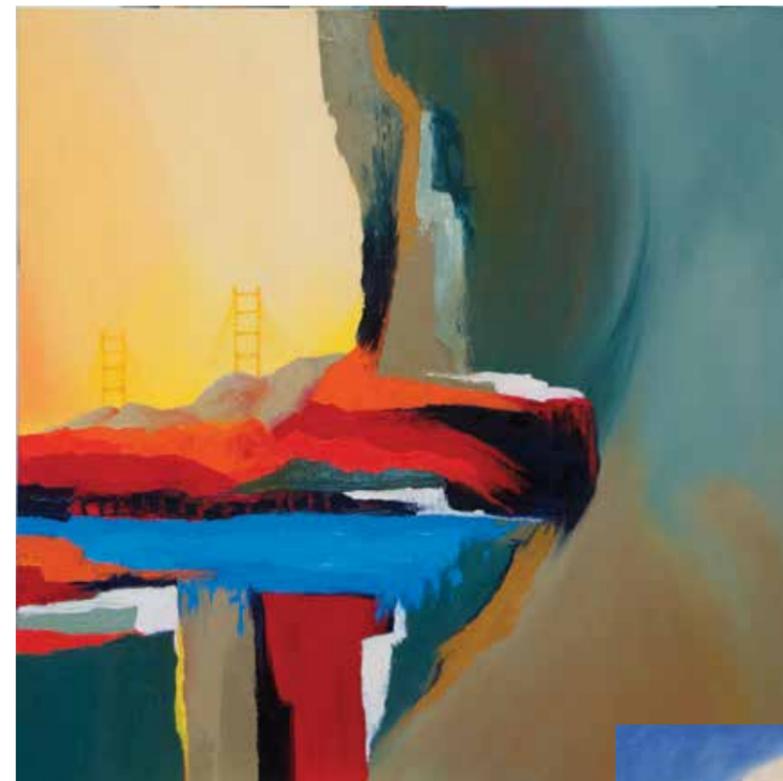
JAMES VAN KRIEDT

Icons of Marin
9" x 10.75", digital illustration
vkdesign.co



James van Kriedt is a Mill Valley resident inspired by Mount Tamalpais, vintage typography and the beauty and bounty produced by Marin's artisans and crafters. He has a degree in industrial arts and graphic design and is the founder and owner of VK Design.

"I centered this artwork around the iconic places we all know, then imbued it with recognizable images, each evoking a different meaning for different people," van Kriedt says.



JEFFREY BEAUCHAMP

Morning Over the Old Back Fields
40" x 30", oil on canvas
jeffreybeauchamp.com



Jeffrey Beauchamp grew up in New Jersey and started his career in New York doing animation for television commercials. It was after viewing the sunset along the Mount Tamalpais ridge road on a motorcycle ride with his father that the artist knew Marin was where he needed to be.

"Every piece I do is made up along the way, but this one was a particular metamorphosis — from figure to landscape, shallow space to deep," Beauchamp, the 2011 Cover Contest winner, says. The piece started out as a figure painting, and "it was a nice enough beginning, with a yoga-like pose from my model, but it wasn't quite interesting enough, so keeping the general thrust and presence of the young woman, I transformed her into a lofty cloudscape."

TIM PORTER (BEAUCHAMP)



CONNIE MILLHOLLAND

From Marin
36" x 36", oil on canvas
millhollandarts.com

Early in Connie Millholland's life, teachers recognized her talent and asked her to develop art projects for other students. That provided a lot of confidence for the budding artist, although it would take several years and lots of experimentation in different techniques to develop and perfect her abstract style.

"I wanted to create something different than a traditional landscape and began on one cold day in January, swirling the paint around the canvas to develop the background," Millholland says of this painting. "I then created the shapes to resemble a view of the Golden Gate Bridge from Belvedere. The painting evolved very easily and I was pleased with the results."

