

Presenting Four New Members by Helene Sobol



Tracey M. Benson
digital media | traceybenson.com

"I am interested in the fragility of the landscape we take for granted in our everyday lives and our part within it."

Tracey states: Through our 21st century lifestyles, we are having a significant impact on the natural world around us. By an acknowledgement of the land, of history and memory, I seek to bring a mindfulness to how we view and inhabit the natural world on many levels.

As an artist, the use of readily available, every day objects and materials has always played a role in my work. The material objects that I create are often generic, constructed simply and easily transportable. It is this idea of 'transportable' objects that triggered my interest in creating Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) elements in exhibitions and publications. I am interested in using ubiquitous technologies. For example, many of my videos and photographs are taken with my Internet enabled mobile phone, with minimal enhancements.

Other ways of encountering the landscape, through walking and quiet observation, have also been a significant source of inspiration and contemplation. These humble walks have not only been a source of rich imagery and play, they have also been a way of balancing the hectic pace of modern life. We are overstimulated by technology, consumerism, and processed food. Sometimes it is important just to take a moment and step back from this hectic space into the realms of possibility – of daydreams and meditation. This is how we restore our energies and ability to manage in this busy world. My intention as an artist is to explore how we can be more awake and aware of our own footsteps.

Since 2001, Tracey has lived in Australia in the ACT region, on Ngannawal country, where she is active as an artist, researcher and digital engagement specialist. Her ancestors came from Norway, Germany, Ireland and England.



Charlotta Maria Hauksdottir
photographer | charlottamh.com

Charlotta, a Bay Area photographer, exhibits her work both nationally and internationally, including Iceland, the country of her heritage. She describes two series of photographs which offer insight into her creative process:

"Outlook" is a series of photographs shot in Iceland in the fall of 2015. I was especially moved by imagery of dispossessed refugees in the local newspaper and wanted to juxtapose them with the secure confines of our protected space. Over four months, my tablet gradually filled with both press photos as well as images related to our family. The series consists of over 80 images showing samples of what was happening in the world and in our personal lives while time visibly passed outside the window.

"A Matter of Some Moments" is about memories, intimacy, and the attachment one has with certain places. In this series, I am photographing families at home. Several photographs, taken over time, are composed and faded into each other. In the resulting image, the space remains mostly the same, but the families' actions and interactions are captured in different positions, each presenting an ephemeral, ghostlike appearance. Highlighting the temporality of being, the photographs become a testament to the seemingly mundane happenings that often comprise meaningful memories. Evoking feelings of both nostalgia and loss, the stillness in the images briefly suspends time, creating room for thought about one's own experiences, and the familiar landscapes of our memories and places (see photo on p. 2).

Charlotta's **"Scapes"** series is infused with personal history and landscapes represent physical spaces that are uniquely tied to a person's identity and sense of being.

Two more new members on page 2

Presenting new members *cont'd from p.1*



Pernilla Persson
photographer | pernillapersson.com

"A camera gives us the privilege to be a 'capturer of the moment' and to use it as our time machine to the past."

Pernilla states: This way we can remember a child's enchanted moments; remarkable memory flashes of youth and strength. We treasure family photographs from previous generations as they create a bridge between our parents, future generations and us. Personally I like to dress the world in beautiful imagery, to share happiness and love with you. I love how light transforms ordinary items and people around me to magical beings through vibrant colors, shapes and forms. My fondest memories growing up was visiting the shores, lakes and forests around my house in Sweden. Nature had a big impact on me as a child and fueled an interest to use it as a big canvas of inspiration for my previous work, while discovering my voice.

In 1996, I moved to Boston, MA, to study photography. I desired to deepen my knowledge, develop my skills and feed my curiosity about art, connection, communication and exploring life. Today, I choose to use the fabric of nature or human bodies as my brick & mortar foundation while pushing photographic boundaries. I love the challenge of exploring traditional film photography and digital skills. Combined with artistry in darkroom skills, I create images that have feeling, depth and texture. I have exhibited my photography in Europe, USA and Asia and my work can be found in various collections throughout the world.



Joan Stuart Ross
encaustic painter | joanstuartross.com

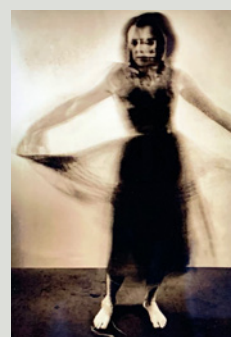
I am inspired by the luminous oyster shells and the stories-high oyster shell stacks that proliferate near my summer studio in Nahcotta, WA.

Joan describes her work: They display my long-time painting interests: spatial depth, composition, the combination of molten wax, resin, and pigment, and the colorful, painterly quality of the brush-laden mark. The Oyster Shell is an icon for the inscrutable oyster and for metaphors about nature, organic form, and the complexity of personal relationships.

I have worked with encaustic for 24 years, merging depth, color dynamics, form, texture, and the hand-made mark. I embed collage and textiles in segments that might not typically appear together. I also work with monotype, oil, and collage.

My maternal grandparents immigrated from Sweden in the 1880s. I was born in Boston and have lived and worked in Seattle since 1968.

Tracy M. Benson - Charlotta Maria Hauksdottir - Pernilla Persson - Joan Stuart Ross



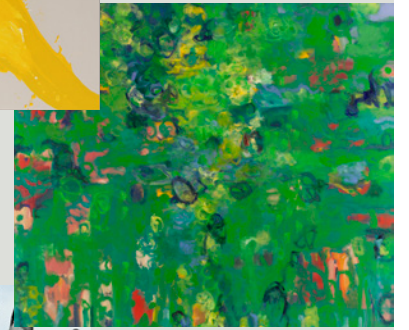
Left to right: Cover for handmade book, photograph by Tracey M. Benson; "A Matter of Some Moments" series, photograph by Charlotta Maria Hauksdottir; "Breathing into existence, a dance," photograph by Pernilla Persson; "Ephemeris," encaustic & collage by Joan Stuart Ross.

Colette Crutcher is collaborating in public tile work with Aileen Barr for two schools in San Francisco. For Visitacion Valley Elementary, they have created about 200 square feet of mosaics on the theme of gardening and are in the process of covering a large concrete lizard-shaped bench with tile. For Miraloma Elementary, they are working on a tiled stairway and surrounding walls leading up to the school. Next fall, they will start work on a stairway for the City of Vallejo. On May 4, Colette will participate in "Draw Til You Drop," a fundraiser for the Willits Center for the Arts and the Arts Council of Mendocino. **Mark Erickson** and his wife Elena will have a two-person exhibition at Robert Green Fine Arts in downtown Mill Valley, CA. The exhibition will feature both Mark's solo paintings and collaborations with Elena. Mark also continues work on his Family Archive Project. **Marc Ellen Hamel's** painting "*Backyard Garden*," (illustrated here) was selected for the exhibit "New Currencies" at JPG at the Bank, a new pop-up art gallery in Lafayette, CA, March 23 to April 27. Paintings and sculpture from over 50 artists were on display inside this newly transformed bank building, curated by gallery owner Jennifer Perlmutter. Marc Ellen's painting "*After the Storm*" is included in the Adobe Art Gallery Spring Open Exhibition "Celebrating H.A.R.D. at 75." Her monotype "*Take the Crosstown Bus*" was selected for "Textures and Patterns" at the San Francisco Women Artists Gallery in San Francisco, CA, April 2 - May 4. Marc Ellen's painting "*Walking the Wild Moor*" has been accepted into Arc Gallery's National Juried Exhibit, "Sanctuary," May 18 - June 22, at 1246 Folsom Street, San Francisco. During the month of June, she will be featured as the Visiting Artist at Main Street Artists Gallery, Quincy, CA. **Charlotta Maria Hauksdottir** reported that her collaged photograph "*Topography Study XIII*" was shown in the Public Alchemy exhibition at Cubberley Community Center in Palo Alto in March. "*Impression X*" (illustrated here) was in the "Something Blue" exhibition at Gray Loft Gallery in Oakland in March. "*Topography Study VI*" will be in the Juried Members Exhibition at Center for Photographic Art in Carmel, April 27 - June 2. Her work was recently featured in Dodho Magazine and Ain't Bad Magazine. **Ulla de Larios** has been working steadily since May 2018 to create a series of linen banners to be part of "Bauhaus 100" in honor of the 100-year anniversary of the opening of the Bauhaus in Germany. She was invited to be a part of the "Textiles" section of this project. The event will take place at Ruth's Table Gallery in San Francisco, a new space opening this summer. Ruth's Table refers to the worktable of Ruth Asawa, the well-known San Francisco artist. Her table was designed and built by her husband and served as the focal point for much of her work, both her own art and her extensive outreach to others. Ulla was given fine linen of many colors by a friend who brought it with her from Germany in 1933. The opening for the show will be July 11, 2019, at Ruth's Table Gallery, 3171 21st Street in San Francisco. **Kristin Lindseth**, who teaches at Mission College and the Triton Museum, was included in "Sculpture Now, An Exhibition by Pacific Rim Sculptors" at the Peninsula Museum of Art, Burlingame, CA, November 2018 through January 2019. The exhibition was posted on www.sculpturesite.com and focused on the current socio-political issues and malaise affecting the country. Sculptures by 14 artists were inspired by current subjects such as the refugee and immigrant crises and the displacement of millions of people, the opiate crisis, climate change, and racism. **Joan Stuart Ross** completed a recent piece titled "*Nordic Light II*," an encaustic, textile collage on panel which will be in the "Artists' Salon" Group Show at the Lynn Hanson Gallery in Seattle, WA, May 3 - June 29 (see "*Nordic Light I*" at right.) This summer, she plans to spend time in her Nahcotta, WA, studio, working toward her October solo exhibition "Spectrum" at Ryan James Belltown gallery in downtown Seattle. She also spent a month-long arts residency at Rancho Linda Vista in February - March, residing at its beautiful mountain and high desert location, painting in the 4500ft. high desert, where she had expected warm weather, but got cold and snow instead!

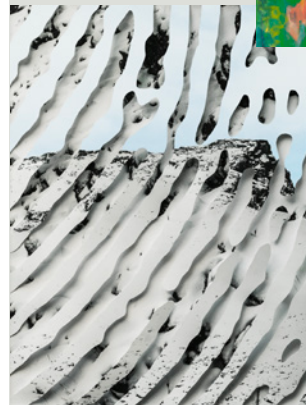
Colette Crutcher



Mark Erickson



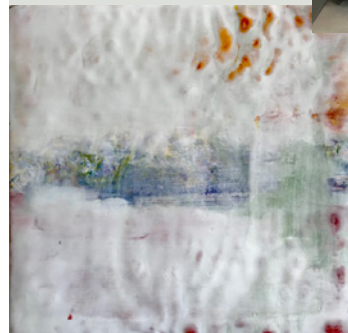
Marc Ellen Hamel



Charlotta Maria Hauksdottir



Kristin Lindseth



Ulla de Larios

Joan Stuart Ross



“Nordic Light” at Think Round Fine Arts, San Francisco

by Colette Crutcher | photograph by Pernilla Persson



Nineteen members of Nordic 5 Arts participated in “Nordic Light” at Think Round Fine Arts Gallery in San Francisco. The show opened on March 30th, and will run until May 18, 2019. Included were videos by Tracey Benson, paintings by Olivia Eielson, Ellen Faris, Pamela Fingado, Marc Ellen Hamel, Karen Olsen, Helena Tiainen, Jenny Wantuch and Lee Williams, collages by Kati Casida, Charlotta Hauksdottir, and Diane Rusnak, photography by Debra Jewell, Pernilla Persson, and Helene Sobol, textiles by Ulla de Larios, marble reliefs by Maj-Britt Hilstrom, and ceramics by Colette Crutcher and Barbara Stevens Strauss. These diverse works, some abstract and some representational, are linked by a rich and subtle color palette and a deep connection to nature - inspired by their Nordic heritage.

The opening was well attended and each of the artists present gave a brief talk about their work. Four sales were made, and a good time was had by all! The beautiful Think Round space, while open by appointment, is not a traditional gallery with a storefront presence, so bringing the public in through events is the best way to ensure visibility for our work. Thank you to Heidi Hardin, gallery owner, and to Colette Crutcher and Jenny Wantuch for curating the exhibition.

In Memoriam Norma Andersen Fox by Marc Ellen Hamel

Nordic 5 Arts Member, Norma Andersen Fox, passed away in November of 2018 at the age of 91. She was one of the original members of Nordic 5 Arts when it was formed in 1993 by Kati Casida. A Norwegian-American artist, Norma was successful in the fields of both printmaking and basketry. When she moved from the East Coast to California in the 1980s, she started to work with baskets because of her attraction to the wonderful materials found here. She said that *“for years, I have been a printmaker, but found I enjoyed the change of working sculpturally and using lighter weight materials versus the large equipment and chemicals needed for etching and engraving.”* She explained her approach to basket-making: *“I create pieces with a strong presence of their own divorced from any suggestion of utility... The natural foliage which now surrounds me--date palm branches, birch bark, Muehlenbeckia vine -- is where my inspiration comes from. I let the natural materials talk to me.”*

Norma earned her BA in Fine Arts from Fairleigh Dickinson University, New Jersey, in 1968 and continued graduate study in Art Librarianship at Simmons College, Boston. Her professional study and teaching took her to Paris, Japan, Sweden, Canada, as well as the East and West Coasts of the United States. Her work won numerous awards and her baskets and prints are in many collections across the nation, including the Achenbach Collection at the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco. Norma was a member of numerous arts organizations in addition to ours, most notably the Bay Area Basket Makers. We will surely miss her intelligence, dry wit, and talent.



The Gourd Teapot

We invite new members to join Nordic 5 Arts

If you are of Nordic heritage or just a fan of the Nordic countries and their culture, we invite you to consider becoming a member of the Nordic 5 Arts. Both fans and artists can join! Please contact us for more information.

You can also attend an upcoming meeting to see if this group is a good match for your artistic endeavors.

Välkommen! Velkommen! Velkomín! Tervetuloa!

Nordic 5 Arts Co-coordinators: Barbara Stevens Strauss and Ulla de Larios

Exhibitions Committee: Ellen Faris and Jenny Wantuch **Secretary:** Colette Crutcher **Treasurer:** Lee Williams

Newsbrief Committee: Marc Ellen Hamel, Editor; Helene Sobol, Associate Editor; Olivia Eielson, Artist News

Website Coordinator and Newsbrief Design: Helene Sobol

The nordic 5 arts NEWSBRIEF is published once a year.

The publication supports and promotes artists with Nordic heritage in the San Francisco Bay Area. Subscription \$10; membership dues \$30.