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Juror's Statement

2017 Tennessee Watercolor Society Annual Show and Competition

It has been a great honor to jury the 2017 show and competition for the Tennessee Watercolor Society. Needless to say, it has been a huge responsibility and one that I have taken very seriously. To jury a show is never an easy task and requires that the juror make some tough choices. The body of work from which I had to choose was diverse in subjects and styles, which adds to the challenge of making my selections. One of my specific goals that I set for myself when I jury a show is have an open mind about each and every piece and not allow any prejudice to creep into my decisions. It has always been my belief that good art stands on its own merit regardless of the subject, the style, the artist, or the medium.

Having painted everything from exacting photo realism to abstract expressionism, I have a good working knowledge of the skill and dedication that goes into each painting, regardless of the style. In making my selections for this show, I was careful to put together a nice mix of styles and subjects that truly illustrate the endless possibilities of working in watercolor. My method of making my selections is neither scientific nor philosophical. It begins with my first impression when viewing a piece of art followed by an evaluation process. The following are some of the main characteristics and qualities that I look for when making my selections. The degree of technical proficiency that was employed in painting the piece is very important. A good composition is high on my list of requirements and a strong balance of values. These are the two things that I feel draw attention to a painting and create a sense of drama. Original and expressive design is also something that I find very appealing as well as the creative use of bold or unusual colors. Other important qualities that I might look for in a painting are interesting textures, a pleasing balance of hard and soft edges, and a nice balance of positive and negative space. I often ask myself when studying a painting, "Would this piece command my attention if it were hanging in a gallery surrounded by dozens of other paintings?"

I feel confident in my selections and would like to commend all of you who entered a painting in this show. I know from personal experience that it's never easy to expose yourself to the possibility of receiving a rejection notice. Anyone who enters competitions, however, will from time to time receive one. That is not necessarily a reflection on your painting. Each juror is different and has to make the tough choices based on his or her own criteria. If your painting was chosen for the exhibit I offer my congratulations. If your painting was not chosen, I hope that you will not be discouraged from entering the piece into another show. Lastly, I want to thank every one of you who entered a painting because without dedicated artists like you, beautiful exhibits such as this might never occur.