

The 23rd Annual CPSA International Convention (continued)

GUEST SPEAKER, BERNARD POULIN

by Johanna Swart

Bernard Poulin was the guest speaker at the Atlanta convention. Bernard has had a long association with the Colored Pencil Society as a charter member and also served as vice-president for 4 years. His work has been collected by museums, and two of his pieces are owned by Queen Elizabeth.

Bernard congratulated the CPSA on its 25th anniversary and said we are one of the few art groups that pursues scientific investigations to improve our art, referring to our continuing interest in and testing of color lightfastness. He moved on to an impassioned discussion of the purpose of art. He was concerned that some pieces, although technically brilliant, were just copies of photographs and lacked that emotional pull that art must have. One of his several aphorisms was: All art is artwork, but all artwork is not art. Art, he believes, must grab the viewer and elicit some connection and emotion. Artwork, he said, asks questions and answers them—it explains itself. Art asks the viewer questions and makes the viewer seek the answers for himself.

He used examples of artists such as Mary Cassatt, Edward Hopper, and Andrew Wyeth as artists who did realistic work and painted simple subjects, but also evoked emotions with their work. He spoke about Norman Rockwell, who used photos, but only as guides and source material. Norman Rockwell went to great lengths to create realistic scenes in his work, but his work always causes an emotional response in the viewer.

Bernard said that art will have a harder time reaching people in the future because of the prevalence of computers. People these days are attuned to words and screens and have never learned to study the visual. They are used to the instantaneous and are not willing to spend time interpreting pictures. He mentioned medieval times when the illiterate could interpret stories from paintings, stained glass, and statues in the church—when the visual had the power of words, a power it is losing in today's world.

Another point he made was that a millionaire may own a painting but a viewer who simply sees that painting and studies it, lets it speak to him, and create an emotional response in him, also owns that painting.

Bernard later presented a beautiful colored pencil portrait he had done of Vera to her as we celebrated the 25th anniversary of her great dream for a colored pencil organization.



Ateliers Bernard Poulin Studios
www.bernardpoulin.com
(archived webpage image)

Convention Roundup—Julie Fulkerson

This year was the first time that I had a piece juried into the International show, so for my birthday, my husband offered to get rid of me. No, actually, I ran away from home. Honestly, it's been a long, long summer playing full-time mom so I jumped at the chance to hang out with grown ups—artists no less!—and talk art and eat real food.

In addition to me, other chapter members participating this year included Dee Wagoner for the President's Forum, and CJ Worlein and Kay Schmidt who work on the CPSA national governing board. Dee asked me to write about the convention so you all will have an idea what to look forward to at the 2016 Convention in Tacoma.

The first two days of the convention, Tuesday and Wednesday, are for board and chapter president meetings. The festivities begin Wednesday evening with the "Meet and Greet," where we saw the chapter displays and received our welcome bags and free goodies. Thursday and Friday are workshop days, or you can grab the chance to go sightseeing. (The Aquarium was a very popular stop.) Thursday evening is the Art Gala, where we saw all the entries for the show and had the raffle, door prizes, and art auction. So much good art and so many prizes! So much drama as we all waited breathlessly to hear our number called! (Darn it! Dee and I didn't win.)



Friday evening is the Awards Banquet for the show winners and the Signature status awards. Vera Curnow, CPSA founder, gave a very humorous speech about the first 25 years of CPSA and received a gorgeous portrait created by Bernard Poulin, who was also the keynote speaker. We cheered for both Kelly Collins, who received her Signature status, and CJ Worlein, who received her five-year Signature status. To achieve Signature status, an artist has to be accepted into the exhibition three times in ten years.

Bernard Poulin, an internationally known artist and author of the classic *The Complete Colored Pencil Book* and his latest book, *On Life Death and Nude Painting*, reflected on the changes to CPSA and art in these past 25 years and urged us to keep growing as artists. Not to settle for just technical proficiency but to take our art to a deeper, emotional level. A transcript of his inspiring speech will appear in the next issue of *To The Point*.

Saturday morning was the trade show, with lots of goodies to try and buy at a discount, with supplies furnished by Binders, the local art store up the street. Saturday afternoon was the artist reception at the gallery at Oglethorpe University. More food and a chance to look at the artwork together and study the pieces up close. I enjoyed meeting artists whose work I had admired for years, like John Smolko.

"Art is always artwork, but artwork is not always art."

—Bernard Poulin