

The 2024 Art Auction Awards Jurors



Pam Avery, Contemporary

Born in Sacramento, Pam Avery received a bachelor's degree in art from the University of California, Berkeley, where her passion for abstract painting really began. Upon returning to Sacramento, she taught visual art and ceramics at the high school level from 1994-2015. In 2008, she received a master's degree in art education from the California State University, Sacramento. Avery regularly paints and exhibits her abstracts and ceramics at the I Street Art Studios in Midtown Sacramento. Strong influences for her abstracts include color and form found in nature and architecture, dance, and the human figure.



Natalie Nelson, Figurative

Natalie Nelson is the director/curator of the Pence Gallery, a nonprofit art organization located in Davis, centering on exhibiting the work of Northern California artists. She currently curates an active calendar of changing exhibits in addition to developing education programs for adults and children. She has a master's degree in art history from the University of Southern California and has worked for over 25 years in museums and nonprofit art galleries. She is also a mixed media artist who has exhibited in Bay Area galleries such as Transmission Gallery, Bedford Gallery, and Yolo Arts' Barn Gallery.



Steve Memering, Landscape

Steve Memering's body of work abounds with striking rivers, cities, and landscapes, in addition to imaginative abstracts and dreamlike surrealism. Memering grew up in the Sacramento area and received his degrees from the California State University, Sacramento and the University of California, Berkeley. After a variety of adventures in the East, he returned to the Sacramento area and taught art in Rancho Cordova. While teaching, he continued to explore his art and spent decades developing his skills in watercolor, acrylic, oil, and mixed media.



Wes Davis, Photography

Wes Davis has been working as a professional photographer in Sacramento for over 15 years. He owned and ran a cooperative photography studio and creative space called Beatnik Studios from 2006-2021. Davis started his photography in high school as the photo editor and lead photographer for his yearbook staff. During college, he photographed competitive sports across the western United States before earning his bachelor's degree in photography from California State University, Sacramento. Davis has worked in many different fields, from sports to weddings and editorial to commercial. Davis is now a family man, raising his two kids to enjoy photographing life's adventures.



Sandy Fong Whetstone, Sculpture

Sandy Fong Whetstone is an award-winning ceramic sculptor, printmaker, painter, and fiber artist. Her work reflects the beauty and humor found in nature and explores our fraught relationship with it – our struggle to impose our will on nature contrasted with our efforts to preserve it. Her earliest exposure to art was through her father, who studied art in Los Angeles at the Chouinard Art Institute. However, it was not until 2008 that she pursued art seriously as a studio artist at Panama Pottery. She has given mosaic and printmaking workshops at the Crocker Art Museum, printmaking workshops at Myrtle Press, and currently offers ceramic workshops from her home studio.



Susan Ballenger, Still Life

Susan Ballenger was the 2021 Best of Show winner of the PBS KVIE Art Auction. She is a California native, earned a fine arts degree from Principia College in Illinois, and continued her studies at the New England School of Art & Design and the Art Institute of Boston. Ballenger paints predominantly in acrylic, with her style and paint application influenced by her training in watercolor. Her series of urban and rural landscapes, scooters, succulents, palm trees, and desserts have been featured at numerous local galleries. Her "Watermark" show was featured in the PBS KVIE Gallery in 2022. Ballenger strives for bold compositions and vibrant color in her work.