

Juror's Notes

To all of the talented artists who submitted works for the “AWAKENING” exhibit, I thank you for the privilege of seeing them. A note about my process as a judge; I tried to pick the widest array of media, technique and interpretation of the theme. I would have so loved to be able to have included more.

Here are my notes on each of the three Awards of Excellence and Honorable Mentions. “*Joy*” figure sculpture: she is beautifully composed and rendered. It seems to me that she has lived life and stands victorious, strong and joyful. The way that the thumb folds over the other fingers speaks volumes to me!!!! Such power in such a small choice. Engaging with just the digital image leaves me UPLIFTED, ready to take in WHATEVER. It's a shining example of why art is so critically important to society.

Next, “*First Awake*”. I chose this in every pass. Beautiful and powerful image, exquisite detail, and a wonderful example of engaging portraiture. It tells a story yet leaves room for the viewer to tell their own story. The awake girl has warmer tones than the sleeping cooler toned girl. I love the Picasso-esque sculptural solidity of the arms. The awake girl has so much presence she defies me to look back. It's a grand portraiture question “who are you? Where am I in relation to you? Speak to me. Surely you do!!!!!!

“*Standing Twice As Tall*” I LOVE the composition. The eye “had me at hello”. Strong image yet soft painterly execution. Stunning example of the magic of pastel..... that dance between drawing and painting. It's a great example of the interpretation of the theme Awake. She is wearing a mask and looks like an essential worker. Our flag is still flying, and her stance speaks acknowledgement of what was but fully able to move forward.

NOW FOR THE HONORABLE MENTIONS..... encaustic “*Salmon and Blue*”. It's a more unusual medium. As an artist, one of the real joys for me is when a material/idea/technique transcends everything and captures more than the beauty of working, but the timeless joy of experiencing life. Encaustic has such luminously.

“*Spare Me a Fag*” oil painting. Raw, real, I like the play on words. I see the interior/exterior fight to realize and incorporate one's broader, deeper more expansive self. Self destructive, self effacing, tattooed, pierced, colored, costume, in a cracking little girl pink colored frame asking “can you see ME? The real ME? And God responds YES I made you I know you and treasure you.

I want to end with “*Wing of a Dream*”. The other pieces touch on the Covid-19 experience, the political experience, the beauty in human physicality, and beauty of experiencing the landscape around us. This piece speaks to me about imagination : that place where all things spring from. It's so fluid so hopeful so full of life.

Kathleen Gurchie, Juror