

The Natchitoches Art Guild & Gallery presents its Annual Juried Art Competition and Exhibition each year in August. This year marks the 16th year of this prestigious show. In order to demystify the process whereby entries are received and accepted into the show, here is a brief description of the procedures used by our Guild. The process is built around a commitment to fairness, impartiality and merit.

All entries are received as electronic files on CD disks, and must be received by the published deadline -- no exceptions (this year we received 3 entries after the deadline, which were sent back to the artists). Artists are assigned an artist number as their entries are received. When all entries are in, the images are compiled onto a master disk that is sent to the juror. (Our juror this year is renowned artist Doug Walton; see his bio below.) The juror is also sent a sheet listing the entries on which to record his selections to be exhibited in the Natchitoches Art Gallery during the month of August. The juror's list does NOT identify artists by name, only by artist number. This ensures complete anonymity and impartiality, since the juror does not know any of the names of the artists or their entries. The entries the juror receives have been reviewed and, if needed, any identifying text, titles and artist names that might have been included in the image files have been removed. This further insures impartiality and anonymity.

The juror then has five days to complete the selection of the pieces to be included in the exhibit. He is given an upper limit to the number of pieces he may accept, based solely on how many we can physically exhibit to best advantage in our gallery. This year that number was 50 to 65. The juror's guidelines are to accept entries based on merit alone; there are no quotas within each category, and no obligation to accept entries in all categories. When he completes his selections, he returns the list to the Guild and notifications are mailed out to the artists.

This year, 133 entries were received from 41 different artists. The juror accepted 63 entries from 32 artists, with all five categories represented. The final judging for prizes is based on the juror's study of the actual pieces, which he views *in situ* after they are delivered to the gallery and the exhibit is hung. The judging usually takes place the day of the opening reception. This year that is Saturday, August 8th. Prizes are announced at the reception.

Juror's Criteria:

Mr. Walton's highest expectation when judging a work of art is that it goes beyond the mundane and ordinary. He asks two important questions: 1) what is the artist saying?, and 2) how has it been said?

The first question deals with content, both subject matter and emotional content. The second has to do with the degree of creativity and originality. Often, the "how" is more important than the "what". Mr. Walton commented that he was very impressed with the overall quality of the entries, and with the broad range of style, technique and subject matter.

Juror's Bio:

M. Douglas Walton is a noted Louisiana artist who was raised in Oklahoma. Walton attended Oklahoma State University where he obtained a Bachelor's degree in Architecture. For five years after graduation, he worked for Haas and Massey and Associates, an architectural firm in Shreveport, LA.

Walton was an associate professor at Louisiana Tech University from 1977 to 1984, where he taught architecture and watercolor. In 1977, he began teaching his popular workshops in Ruston, LA, and through the years, expanded to locations across the country (in 22 states) and around the world (in 13 countries). He calls these workshops "Encounters", since they are experiences where attending artists explore creativity and expand their artistic horizons. He encourages his students to go beyond the mundane and ordinary, in order to achieve their own personal interpretation and expression in their art.

Three feature articles about Walton and his work have appeared in Watercolor Magazine (1991, 1996 and 1999). He has received numerous awards, served as juror, and delivered the keynote speech for the 1999 Alabama Art Education State Convention. His work is bold and colorful and includes a wide variety of subject matter, including people, places and things encountered over his 30 years of teaching and travel.

Jo O'Quinn, President