

## Belmont Art Association Meeting: September 23, 2020

**Location:** Our third Zoom meeting was led by Co-Chair Dari Paquette, with 12 people attending:

**Members Present:** Paul Beckingham (Webmaster), Nicole Bernstein, Naomi Ellenberg-Dukas (Co-Chair), Irene Fairley, Bert Halstead (Treasurer and Membership Coordinator), Kay Hudgins, Mary Lee, Kirstin Ilse, Liz LaManche, Dari Paquette (Co-Chair), Derrick TePaske, and Jane Wentzell (Recording Secretary)

### Meeting

**1. Artists' Critiques:** This meeting began with a discussion of artists' critiques. Bert told us he has received valuable advice at Boston Camera Club for his photography. Paul uses FASO, Fine Arts Services Online, to find teachers who can help him grow artistically. Nicole shared that she did her Master's thesis on how everyone's perception is unique to them, and she decried critiques that demolish an artist's work in order to "toughen them up for the cruel world." There are two sides of the coin concerning artists' critiques: Critiques are helpful if you feel helped, and harmful if you feel harmed. Pick your advisors carefully!

**2. Transformer Box Murals:** The BAA congratulates Liz LaManche and Ian Todreas for their transformer box paintings. Ian was unable to attend this meeting because he was at Town Meeting, but Liz was able to attend our Zoom meeting and described the public's positive responses while she was working. She said people driving and walking by waved and spoke to her, and she enjoyed an extended conversation with the owner of the Oriental rug store when she was painting the adjacent box. Dari visited both Ian and Liz while they were painting their transformer boxes and took numerous photos and progress videos, which she has posted on Facebook and Instagram. The Belmont Media Center also recorded interviews with both artists for this project. Links to those are also posted on FB.

Dari and Bert announced that the cost of materials for painting the transformer boxes exceeded the stipends awarded to the artists. The BAA has kicked in some funds to remedy this situation since artists were not expected to donate their time.

Dari and Naomi plan to apply for another Belmont Cultural Council Grant to paint more boxes. Dari plans to consult the Belmont Center Business Association and Cushing Square Business Association to discuss possible funding of additional transformer boxes. In Arlington the boxes have become so popular that local businesses have paid for the painting of boxes near them, so that they no longer require additional funding from the Arlington Arts Council. \*The Arlington Arts Council holds an annual art auction to raise money for public art projects.

**3. Online Gallery:** Dari reminded people to email images of their work to add to the gallery on the BAA's Facebook page, "Creating During Covid-19." This is an ongoing gallery which she updates whenever she receives new artwork images. She also posts images to the BAA's Instagram account.

**4. Plein Air Painting Group and Other Activities:** Because we are an art and social organization, Dari announced a plan to try and organize socially-distant plein air sessions while the weather holds. She asked for members' interest, and a discussion ensued. Paul spoke about locations he paints outside, and Irene offered her garden and deck. Mt. Auburn Cemetery was also suggested. Mary Lee said she would send out a notice when she goes to paint at local sites to invite others to join her. She said her invitation would be spontaneous, dependent on the weather, and primarily for work, not socializing.

The possibility for outdoor Open Studios was also discussed, perhaps a sidewalk display. Kirstin said she made a temporary outdoor gallery in her yard, hanging her work on her fence for a day. She arranged no publicity, but someone took photos, and Artspace posted them on their site to direct people to her yard. Belmont requires that people apply for a permit to sell items outdoors, but we discussed only displaying art. Irene offered her garden and sidewalk for a display of people's art on Sunday, Sept. 27<sup>th</sup> to make a kind of Art Walk, but there was not really enough time to organize it.

**5. Online Learning and Critique Opportunities:** Dari suggested that our members take advantage

of programs set up by larger neighboring art organizations. The Cambridge Art Association presents a partially-clothed model, usually in a swimsuit, twice each week via Zoom, Tuesday evenings and Sunday mornings, with a mixture of long and short poses. You need to register by 5 pm on the day before each session and don't need to be a CAA member to participate. The cost is very reasonable. Also, there are many online painting groups and critique sessions that artists can join.

**6. Website:** We discussed again how our website can be improved. There are additions and deletions being planned to make it more current. If anyone wants to write articles on art subjects for posting, that would be much appreciated. Members can email calendar updates to Paul, or send to Dari for posting. Dari is hoping to learn how to make simple entries to take pressure off of Paul when he is busy with his full time job. It would be helpful to have a backup person. We are all volunteers, working for the greater good to support our local arts community!

**7. Next Meeting:** Our next meeting will also take place using Zoom. A panel discussion is being planned regarding best practices for using social media for marketing artwork. Naomi will send out a Constant Contact email announcing the date and time. **Make sure you RSVP in time to receive the invitation to join the meeting!** This procedure is necessary for security.

Recording Secretary: Jane Wentzell, 617- 489 - 0412

Edited by Dari Paquette