

BY BONNIE GANGELHOFF

Artistic Excellence

Our annual Artistic Excellence competition drew more than 2,200 entries this year. The editorial team examined each of them carefully, asking ourselves a series of questions: What kind of impact does this piece have? Does it pack an emotional punch? Does it convey a strong sense of mood? Is it well designed, with an interesting composition? Is the drawing solid? Is the use of color sophisticated? After thoughtful consideration of all these points and more, we proudly present this year's winners—three top awards and ten honorable mentions. We think you'll agree that they are an impressive sampling from today's representational art world.



Bruce Lawes

CANADA

What inspired your winning entry? Like the female form in my figurative work, the horse has an elegance that is equally challenging to paint and undeniably just as graceful.

ELEGANCE was a melding of the grace and beauty of the female rider acting as one with the horse in the beautiful dance called dressage. The cropping of her body creates a dynamic effect and a mystery within the composition.

Where did you study art? I am primarily self-taught, although I studied briefly at the Ontario College of Art and Design University. I have also had many interactions with the modern masters of the day, learning and absorbing all I could over the years visually and from firsthand encounters.

How would you describe your style? My style, like my subject matter, varies from painting to painting. I determine my approach based on the feel, mood, or dramatic effect I wish to convey. I have been called a hyper-realistic painter. But then I will do a painting mixing impressionistic techniques with realism to illustrate emotion and motion. I chose solely a realistic approach for ELEGANCE because I wanted to convey a sense of refinement.

What's the best advice you've ever received? If you find something you love to do, never let it go, as you will never do another day of work in your life. If this does not pay enough to live on, find something else related to pay the bills that will allow you to pursue your passion until you do succeed.



If you weren't an artist, what would you be? I would probably be a cabinetmaker building very high-end rooms with hand-carved fireplaces and uniquely shaped moldings.

What's the most meaningful recognition you've received for your artwork? The recognition

from my early mentors has had great meaning. As a young man I was in awe of their abilities, and now I have had the honor of showing my work side by side with them.

What are your goals for the future? To continue using my skills to help people and animals by fund-raising efforts or just bringing people closer to the pure love of art.

What galleries represent your work? K.B. Wales Inc., Brampton, Ontario, Canada; Westmount Gallery, Toronto, Canada.



Elegance, oil, 30 x 48.