



Brush Strokes



By Mary Baumgartner

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Baumgartner awarded “Signature Membership” In Watercolor West, a National Transparent Watercolor Society

The 45th Annual Watercolor West Exhibit will include Mary Baumgartner’s “Snow Flowers” in their annual show this year in the City of Brea Art Gallery in Brea, CA Oct. 12. The gallery takes up a city block and is designed to be seen both inside and out with lighted interiors displaying the art at night. It is coming into its 35th year as an arts institution and will continue to evolve and adapt.

Watercolor West was formed in 1973 to encourage the use of purely transparent watercolor by artists. Each year this society exhibits 100 winners from U.S., Greece, Norway, Singapore, India, Canada, and various other countries. Their requirements are stringent: entries must be original and painted within the past two years of their acceptance; Only transparent watercolor on a single piece of untreated rag or wood pulp paper is acceptable; no collage, ink, white paint, acrylic, gesso; no embossing; canvas, yupo or similar paper is not acceptable. Pencil may be used for planning marks, and mats should be white.

The show is always held in October and the organization has over 600 members. This year they received over 650 entries and one recent juror stated that if the artist has enough courage to be himself, to reach deeper into his soul for self-expression, and to not care how the world may judge, the artist can sit among the greatest.

The society has five classifications of membership, with the Signature Member becoming the highest level of achievement. Eligibility for this level means having had paintings accepted and exhibited in at least three juried exhibits and of course being a member of the society in good standing. Baumgartner has been a member for at least 30 years, and had paintings juried in two consecutive years and has entered yearly. This year her entry was accepted—she will achieve Signature Member status, and her painting will hang in the Brea Gallery beginning October 10 until Dec. 15.

Baumgartner teaches transparent watercolor at the Fountain City Art Center twice weekly. She is also the author of the book *Wonderful World of Watercolor* published by Watson-Guptil in 2008 which has sold over 6,000 copies and is considered to be one of the best detailed training book in the transparent watercolor field.

