

Publication: The East Hampton Press & The Southampton Press

## Jurors for Retreat exhibition choose strong works for benefit

By Pat Rogers



Times are tough for all the non-profits. And when services provided have to remain confidential in order to protect clients, as in the casework of The Retreat, fund-raising becomes even more challenging. Luckily, an art opening and exhibition is poised to draw attention to the organization's mission to combat domestic violence and help victims work toward a brighter future. The artist admission fees and a percentage of sales benefit the East End charity.

On Saturday, The Retreat's second annual

Juried Art Show opens with an artist reception at the Richard J. Demato Gallery in Sag Harbor. The exhibition features the top 25 accepted artists for the open call art show. Their artwork plus pieces made by eight runners-up will also be posted on The Retreat's online gallery ([www.theretreatinc.org](http://www.theretreatinc.org)). The show remains on view through May 13 at the Demato Gallery.

Almost 290 artists applied, hailing from as far away as California and Sao Paulo, Brazil. Jurors were Christina Strassfield, Guild Hall's museum director and chief curator, and Max Fishko, the gallery director for ArtHamptons and its sister fair, the San Francisco Fine Art Fair.

The accepted work includes paintings, sculpture, photography and mixed media in abstraction, seascapes, figurative, conceptual and urban scenes. Area artists include Giancarlo Impiglia, Philippe Cheng, Lewis Zacks, Dorothy Frankel, Steve Alpert, Michael Knigin, and Ruby Jackson, among others. The Best in Show winner receives a solo show at the Demato Gallery.

Holding a juried art show as a fund-raiser was a natural, according to event chair, Retreat board member, photographer and college professor Ann Chwatsky. Since The Retreat already holds an annual art auction (Artists Against Abuse), sponsoring a juried art show as a benefit seemed like the logical next step when it was first suggested by Southampton gallery owner and art dealer Peter Marcelle.

"Art is a wonderful outreach for The Retreat," Ms. Chwatsky said. "Artists and people who are attracted to art are giving people. Healing is an art and art is healing."

The first juried art show was held last year at Hampton Road Gallery in Southampton. This year, the event was moved to the Richard J. Demato Gallery, the gallery opened in Sag Harbor last year by Mr. Demato, the board president for The Retreat, and his wife, Harriet Sawyer, who is an artist.

For the artists, it's a chance to be part of a juried show that will presumably feature art of a higher quality. Being awarded one of the top 25 slots is a noteworthy achievement.

"It's hard for artists to get into galleries," said Anthony D'Avino of Babylon. "Artists are sensitive and can be afraid to compete. This show is a good opportunity."

Mr. D'Avino has exhibited his colorful art at the Art League of Long Island in Dix Hills, RVS Fine Art in Southampton, the Fire Island Lighthouse, Adelphi University and other venues.

For Victoria Selbach of Port Washington, being part of the show provides an opportunity to meet other artists who are serious about their work. She explained that discovering a community of artists can be difficult in Nassau County. Ms. Selbach currently has a solo show at Martha de Groot in Port Washington. She has exhibited her figurative work on Long Island and in other places.

Mr. D'Avino heard about the show after seeing a call for artists in Art in America. Ms. Selbach discovered The Retreat's show last year during an internet search for artist-related activities on Long Island. This year's show saw repeat submissions from last year. Accepted both years were artists Deb Bronston-Culp, Mr. Zacks, Mr. Knigin and Ms. Jackson.

The hope is that this year's Juried Art Show will be a success and its reputation for presenting quality art will continue, said Ms. Chwatsky. Just as important is the show's capacity for spreading the word about The Retreat's services and generating funds to help maintain them.

"Letting people know about The Retreat, especially in this economy, is important," said Ms. Chwatsky. "Domestic violence has always been a problem, but when the economy suffers, so do women and children. Pressure can cause bad behaviors and sometimes results in explosions, anger and action against spouses and families. We've seen an increase in hot line calls; the shelter is busy. It's an issue and it's not going to go away. The Juried Art Show is an opportunity for us to let people know about the services we offer."

The Retreat offers free counseling, a 24-hour domestic violence hot line, legal advocacy for victims of domestic abuse, and educational programs for schools. See [www.theretreatinc.org](http://www.theretreatinc.org) for details.

The Retreat's second annual Juried Art Show will be held from May 1 to 13 at the Richard J. Demato Gallery, 90 Main Street, Sag Harbor. An artists opening reception will be held on Saturday from 6 to 8 p.m.

Last Updated Apr 27, 10 11:00 AM



[mailbag@27east.com](mailto:mailbag@27east.com)

©2010, 27east.com / The Press News Group

Ph: 631-287-1500