

Art Calendar

by Louise Buyo

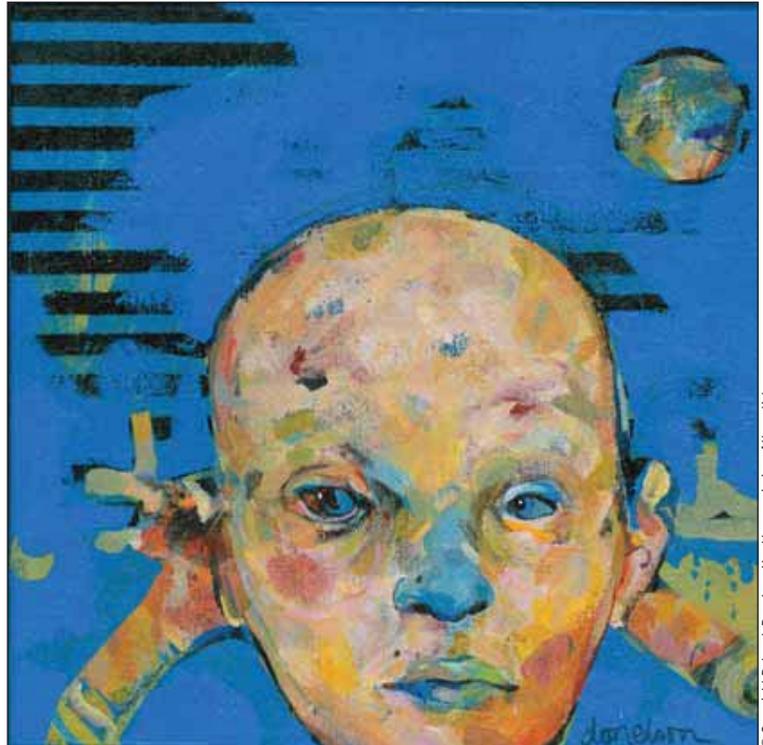
January 2009 Cover Contest

The Art Calendar staff is happy to present the winner and the finalists of our January 2009 Cover Contest, sponsored by JERRY'S ARTARAMA: **Deborah Donelson, Somer Harrold and Shelley Hopkins.**



Artist Deborah Donelson.

1st Place,
Recipient of
a \$500
gift certificate
from JERRY'S
ARTARAMA:
Deborah
Donelson,
Albuquerque,
New Mexico



Baby Blue, by Deborah Donelson. Acrylic on canvas, 10" x 8".

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Cover Contest winner Deborah Donelson believes it takes a lifetime to create a painting.

"When people ask me how long it takes me to make a work, I tell them it takes me 58 years because all the scars and wounds in my life are in it," says the 58-year-old artist.

Accumulation is central to Donelson's artistic technique. She builds up many layers on the canvas, smearing and manipulating the paint. During this process, she'll let the work dry then scrape through it so that the color underneath can come through.

"My work is really about making marks and interesting surfaces," she muses. "I'll write text and then cover it up. It's kind of an excavation."

In her work, Donelson hopes to uncover buried identities. Her newest paintings make up her show, "Tracks/Traces/Vestiges," currently on exhibition at Matrix Fine Art (www.MatrixFineArt.com) in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The artist explains, "My work explores ways to get below the surface of who we are — to understand the vulnerability of who we are underneath all the guises we project for ourselves."

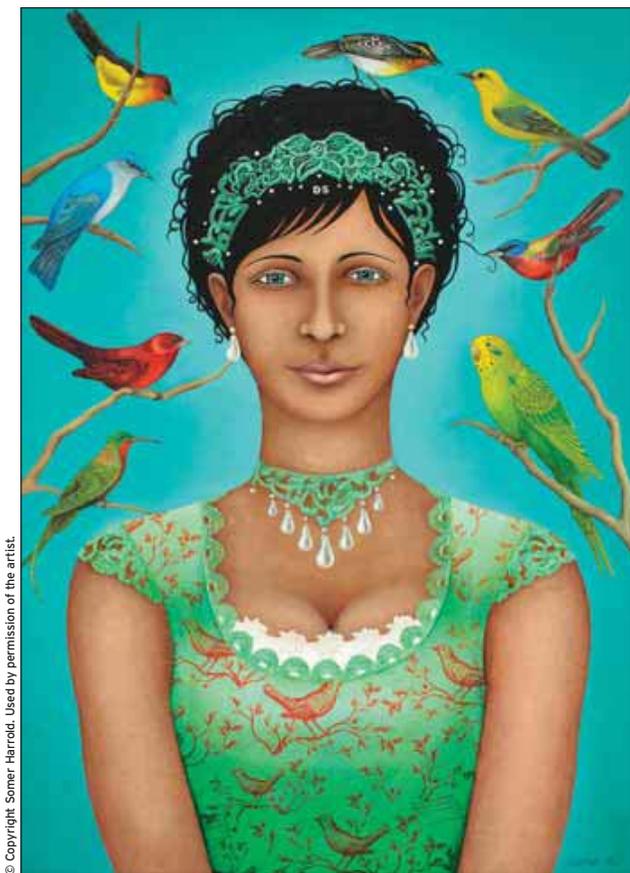
Donelson knows firsthand about multiple identities. A restless spirit, she has led a gypsy's life. In college, the artist majored in French and attended school in France for a year. Afterwards, she hitchhiked all over the world. Donelson spent a year in

India, married an Englishman, moved to Britain and lived abroad for ten years before returning to America in the 1980s.

Upon moving stateside, Donelson earned her B.F.A. at the University of New Mexico, then took off to get an M.F.A. at the Maryland Institute. Donelson ended up in Baltimore for 15 years, finding gallery representation and supporting herself through her work. Unfortunately, her gallery fell on hard times and closed.

Donelson had always wanted to return to New Mexico, so she seized the opportunity to head out West once again. Upon her arrival, she recognized the change immediately. "I've been to so many new places, but the minute I drove across the line to New Mexico it felt like I was coming home," she says.

The move sparked other changes and Donelson began moving in a different creative direction. She quit painting and took up printmaking. She didn't feel any urge to pick up a brush until last year. Now, the artist is determined to make paintings she knows will both surprise and challenge viewers.



© Copyright Somer Harrold. Used by permission of the artist

Targetgirl #12: La Isla, by Somer Harrold. Mixed media on India paper, 36" x 24".

2nd Place, Recipient of a \$100 gift certificate from JERRY'S ARTARAMA: Somer Harrold, Carmel Valley, California

Cover contest finalist Somer Harrold (www.SomerHarrold.com) has had some interesting experiences over the years. One in particular stands out.

"I was living in apartment with roommates who had birds flying around loose. They had a whole bunch — maybe 20 — and they didn't have a cage," she reminisces.

The 31-year-old artist didn't stay in the apartment long, but years later those birds appear in *Targetgirl #12: La Isla*.

La Isla is a part of the larger *Targetgirl* series. When Harrold found a stack of vintage shooting targets, she was attracted immediately to the black silhouettes, white lines and numbers. The artist collaged over them, used pencil or charcoal with white gesso to build up shapes, sealed the paper with acrylic and painted over them with oils.

For Harrold, the paper serves as a kind of map to the past. She chose subjects that symbolize the changing nature of femininity.

"These women are based on iconic figures I felt were a balance between positive and negative in the attention they've received throughout history," the artist states.

During a trip to Cuba in 2000, the paintings she came across in the museums fascinated Harrold. She says, "There were all these wonderful portraits of Cuban society women posing with birds. They gave off this feeling — a wish for freedom."



© Copyright Shelley Hopkins. Used by permission of the artist.

Of Tides and Times, by Shelley Hopkins. Oil on canvas, 48" x 36".

3rd Place, Recipient of a \$100 gift certificate from JERRY'S ARTARAMA: Shelley Hopkins, Collierville, Tennessee

For Cover Contest finalist Shelley Hopkins, the creative process is a family affair. In her work, the 38-years-old artist will use her offspring as models.

"I take my sketchbook with me everywhere. I have four children. A lot of times, I sketch the kids playing or running around," she says. "For *Tides and Times*, I knew exactly how I wanted it to be. I had them pose in that position."

The artist often chooses subjects inspired by the poetry of her husband Paul Hopkins. The two work in tandem; he'll write poems based on her paintings. One poem, "Tides and Times," became the foundation for the eponymous work — a piece that deals with the memories of lost loves ones.

"The beach is going through the little boy. Maybe he isn't there, but his memory is still there," Hopkins states. "We all have similar experiences."

For Hopkins, it is important to find common ground with others. The artist makes her work as universal as possible. She notes, "I don't put any facial details. I want viewers to interpret a work with their own memories. For me, if I see the person's face, I find it distracting. I want viewers to fill in that face for themselves."

The poem, "Tides and Times," can be found online at the artist's Web site, (www.ShelleyHopkinsArt.com). AC