



# The ACGOW Gallery News

Celebrating 25 Years of Art: 1992 - 2017

**August 2017**  
25th Anniversary Year

For more ACGOW news, visit the ACGOW website  
<http://www.westerlyarts.com/>

## ACGOW Board of Directors

**President:** Arlene Piacquadio  
**Vice President:** Dan Marantz  
**Treasurer:** Ardie Harrison  
**Recording Secretary:** Nancy Gardner  
**Corresponding Secretary:** Lynn Anderson

## ACGOW Committees

**25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:** Debbie Napelitano, Lynn Anderson, Mimi Huszer Fagnant, Carol Schmedinghoff, Francesca Fay, Betsie Withey  
**Annual Appeal:** Lora Cobden, Liz McGee, Nancy Nielsen  
**Associate Members:** Susan Burgess  
**BRAG:** Kristie Foss  
**DBA:** Carey Williams  
**Fund Raising/Art Heist:** Gary Fuller, Lora Cobden, Liz McGee, Kathleen Hemenway, Nancy Gardner, Angel Ramos, Prudence Hignett, Dale Primiano, Helen Roy  
**Gallery Space Design:** Brian Comforti, Lynn Anderson, Hanneli Ansel  
**Membership:** Diane Brown, Donna Mazzone  
**Maintenance:** Charlie Liguori, Fordan Bonardi, John McGuire  
**Newsletter:** Dave Brierley  
**Posters:** Greg Eident (*backup needed*)  
**PR/Advertising/Facebook/MailChimp:** Madeline Beaudry, Kaleeny Cannon, Lois Lawrence, Jane Perkins, Jane Rollins, Rose Mary Gates  
**Regional Show:** Gail Giancaspro, Patty Nunes, Susan Burgess  
**Show Themes and Schedule:** Gail Giancaspro, Patty Nunes, Lynn Anderson, Kaleeny Cannon, Madeline Beaudry, Jane Rollins  
**Supply Purchase:** Roberta MacGregor  
**Visiting Artist:** Karen Dodez  
**Website:** Karen Dodez; Rose Mary Gates  
**Westerly Arts Café/Events:** Francesca Fay, Carol Schmedinghoff, Mimi Huszer Fagnant, Debbie Napelitano, Arlene Piacquadio, Betsie Withey, Lynn Anderson, Sadie Davidson DeVore  
**WRAP:** Arlene Piacquadio (on WRAP board), Robin Halpren Ruder  
Robert Wilkinson: no committee

## President's Message – ABBONDANZA

The August show theme is **ABBONDANZA**, overflowing fullness! In Italy *abbondanza* usually refers to quantity, but ACGOW is using the term as richness of our arts.

In this 25th year our “*abbondanza*”, has overflowed in many directions; fullness of membership, fullness of art mediums, fullness of collaborations, fullness of performance artists and fullness of community.

Saturday, August 5, is our ART HEIST fundraiser in Watch Hill. A ticket will give you admission for two people, oysters, and seafood galore along with wine, desserts, live music, and, yes - **ART!**

Stop in the gallery and buy your ticket. You go home with *abbondanza*! Join us for the fun!

Arlene Piacquadio  
ACGOW President

**Artists' Cooperative Gallery  
of Westerly**  
**Celebrating the joy of art for 25 years!**

**ACGOW**  
7 Canal Street  
Westerly, RI 02891  
401-596-2221  
Open Wed-Sat 11-7; Sun 1-5  
[acgow2015@gmail.com](mailto:acgow2015@gmail.com)  
Look for us on Facebook, too

## Calendar for Coming Events at the Gallery

**July 30** – Last day of July show

**July 31** – Members' meeting 6 p.m.; bring in artwork for the August show

**Aug. 1** – Install August show "**Abbondanza**" – **Gathering Memories Inspires Art**; featured artists **Carey Williams** (wall) and **Karen Dodez** (window)

**Aug. 4** – Reception for the August show; 5 – 8 p.m.

**Aug. 5** – **Art Heist** at The Lanphear Livery, 1 Bay Street, in Watch Hill; 6 – 8 p.m.

**Aug. 18** – **Westerly Arts Café**; folk singer and poet **Tom Connelly**; 7 – 9 p.m.

**Aug. 21** – Beach party and cookout hosted by **Madeline and Mike Beaudry**; 6 p.m.; details to follow

**Aug. 27** – Last day of August show

**Aug. 28** – Member's meeting 6 p.m.; bring in artwork for September show

**Aug. 29** – Install September show "**Celebrating Our Legacy**" - **25 Years of Art**; featured artist **Diane Brown** (wall) and all artists and associates, past and present

**Sept. 1** – ACGOW's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration and reception for the September show featuring former artist members; 5 – 8 p.m.: cake and celebratory toast

**Sept. 9** – Art and Poetry event; details to follow

**Sept. 12-17** – **Bricks and Murals**; Walldogs to paint the murals; see article below

**Oct. 1** – Last day of September show

## Art Heist

**Sat., Aug. 5, 6-8 pm**

This is ACGOW's premier fundraiser for the year. Lots of enthusiasm, music, tasty appetizers, wine, and great fun will happen as it did last year. Ticket holders will "heist" from the artwork generously donated by ACGOW artists, associates, and guests.

Artwork is being collected in the ACGOW store room in bins marked "Art Heist." As of July 28, artists have donated @40 pieces of artwork. The goal is to sell an equal number of tickets.

The minimum value of each piece of artwork will be in excess of \$150. Tickets to bid during Art Heist cost \$150. Tickets are on sale at the gallery. Each donor of artwork will be admitted for free along with one guest. Non-donors and non-bidding guests may attend for \$25 per person.

Art Heist will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. at The Lanphear Livery, 1 Bay Street, in Watch Hill. Ample parking is located behind The Lanphear Livery.



## ACGOW 25th Anniversary News

The 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary show will be highlighted by a special celebration on Friday, September 1, 5 – 8 p.m. Not only will there be a special cake and a toast to ACGOW's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, but there will be a great social time to talk with current and former members. The **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Invitation** and **show entry form** have been emailed and extra copies are located on the reception desk at the gallery.

An art and poetry event will continue the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration on Saturday, September 9. Artists and poets are collaborating so that art and poetry will be mirrored. Artists will speak about their artwork and poets will read their poetry. Musicians will add to the festive evening. Artists should contact **Arlene Piacquadio** for details and poets should contact **Lisa Starr** at [lisastarr1@mindspring.com](mailto:lisastarr1@mindspring.com). More details on this event will follow.

Check out the gallery window exhibit created by the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee at the gallery on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It includes many visual connections to the heritage of ACGOW. Check out the folders of many interesting documents and articles on ACGOW's past on a nearby table for viewing and reading. A photo tablet has been programmed to continuously show current activities and events and is on view in the

## ACGOW Show News from Gail Giancaspro

### Previous dates have been changed

1. Our official 25th Birthday Celebration and opening night reception for September show will happen on Saturday, September 1.
2. Monday, August 28 --- ACGOW ARTISTS' MEETING; 6pm
3. Tuesday, August 29 ---HANG SEPTEMBER SHOW
4. Sitters signed up already for the week beginning August 28 are now sitting in the SEPTEMBER SHOW month **NOT** August Show!

You will need to find new sitting days in August to fulfill your August Gallery Sitting commitment. There are only five members with this issue. Gail will contact them separately to provide some options for August.

## Welcome New Associate Member

- Suzan Lifschitz oil landscapes [slifschitz@hotmail.com](mailto:slifschitz@hotmail.com)

## General News about ACGOW Members and Activities

- The **August 2017 show committee** is: Kristi Foss – co-chair; Mimi Huszer-Fagnant- co-chair; Lois Lawrence, Gail Giancaspro, Robert Wilkinson, Carol Schmedinghoff, Robin Halpren-Ruder, Betsie Withey
- The **September 2017 show committee** is: Nancy Gardner – co-chair; Cary Williams – co-chair; Jane Rollins, Ardie Harrison, Karen Dodez, Liz McGee, John McGuire
- **Art Heist** - Lora Cobden and Nancy Gardner are soliciting help from ACGOW members to provide appetizers and volunteers to help with conducting Art Heist. Please contact either Lora or Nancy for more information and to sign up to help out.
- **Check out the ACGOW “25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: a gallery of memories” front window exhibit June – September. There is lots of background information to share with visitors to the gallery.**
- The July show reception Viewers’ Choice awards were presented to:  
1<sup>st</sup> Place: **Betsie Withey** for her dress “Perelandra”  
2<sup>nd</sup> Place: **Liz McGee** for her painting “Estuary”  
3<sup>rd</sup> Place: (tie) **Angel Zair** for his ceramic “Freedia Angel”  
**Fordan Bernardi** for his photograph “Venice Reflections”

Artist Members: Please contact **Gail Giancaspro** with your ideas for an annual theme for 2018 and individual monthly themes. She and the Show Schedule Committee are in the process of planning for 2018. Also, contact Gail by email [gmgiancaspro@gmail.com](mailto:gmgiancaspro@gmail.com) to state which two months you want to be on a show committee and if you want to be either a featured wall or window artist.

## BRAG for 2017

According to BRAG (Back Room Art Gallery) committee chair **Kristie Foss**, the remaining months of BRAG 2017 exhibits have been filled. BRAG is not used by outside groups in November and December to enable more show space for artist members to exhibit their holiday artwork. The schedule is:

**August** – Ninigret Artists group

**September** – Bricks and Murals

**October** - Frank Olean Center

**November and December** – no BRAG exhibits (ACGOW holiday show uses this room)

## Bricks and Murals Update

In September, Bricks and Murals, a Rhode Island grassroots artistic and economic movement, is slated to enhance the historic downtown Westerly-Pawcatuck community by funding and maintaining 15 originally designed murals showcasing the culture and history of the region. As downtown Westerly-Pawcatuck continues to grow into a regional center for arts, dining and shopping, Bricks and Murals will provide a lasting display of public art that will not only beautify the town, but also help to strategically shape the physical and social character of the downtown area. During July, the Artists’ Cooperative Gallery of Westerly was pleased to feature the mural designs in the Back Room Art Gallery (BRAG). The photographs of the designs were printed and mounted by ACGOW artist **Robert (Wilkie) Wilkinson**. Photographs are available for \$100 of each mural to help fund the Bricks and Murals project.

The mural designs were created by The Walldogs, highly skilled sign painters and mural artists from all over the globe who have volunteered their time and talent since 1993 to more than 26 towns to paint 548 murals depicting local history. This year local artist **Cam Bortz** celebrates 20 years as a member of the Walldogs.

The actual murals will be painted from September 13-17, 2017. A five-day Bricks and Murals Festival will feature real-time painting of the murals. There will also be daily live music, a downtown food stroll, trolley rides, children’s activities, an art show, an auction and a raffle. For more information and to view photographs of the murals, click on [bricksandmurals.org](http://bricksandmurals.org).

## **“Through the Lens” – Betsie Withey**

### **When and why did you join the ACGOW?**

I joined ACGOW in February 2017, first and foremost to challenge myself artistically and be part of a larger creative community. The monthly shows full of new work are a great motivator to prioritize my art and creative time. Life can be a challenge with work and personal relationships taking priority, letting creativity sometimes fall to the wayside. My desire to challenge myself creatively is tied to my move to Westerly two years ago. I had grown stagnant with my art and personal life in Michigan, and felt like I needed a new adventure, a jolt to my system to help focus on my artistic goals. Since moving to Westerly, I've set up a little sewing studio for myself (soon to be an even bigger studio!), found a group of lovely friends and co-workers, and am continually seeking new ways to center my life around art. I've been selling my wearable textile art on Etsy.com for a few years now, doing a mix of made-to-order, and one-of-a-kind work. Etsy has been really good for me, but I got into a lull due to the repetitious sales of smaller, made-to-order items. I've learned a lot about working with color, and improving my craft through making smaller wearable works, but (with a few exceptions) I've stopped making larger work in the past couple of years, and this is something I'd like to change. Having a gallery like ACGOW that demands new work on a monthly basis encourages me to focus on the larger work I want to pursue. Now, embroidery is a time consuming process, and it's unrealistic for me to expect to finish large wearable textile works or tapestries every month, but I think it's about finding a good rhythm and making the ACGOW work for me in the best way for me. I also love the idea of being part of a larger creative community – meeting other artists is valuable in that you can share ideas, encourage each other, and learn so much more than you ever would by yourself.

### **What were your expectations in joining ACGOW?**

At first I expected that I was going to create a lot of new work each month, meet new people, and have a few new gallery obligations. The reality of it was that I didn't create nearly as much work as I thought I would because life is busy, man. I have met lots of new people, and that's been wonderful. I've also learned more about balancing my various obligations with my art. Due to my work schedule, gallery obligations are sometimes a bit tricky to manage, but I'm enjoying the opportunity to stretch myself.

### **What do you find rewarding about working with ACGOW?**

Super fun gallery openings every month, meeting lots of new artists and other people, feeling more connected to the Westerly community, and being a featured artist and being lucky enough to have my work displayed in the window! Another really cool thing is that the committee I'm on (Arts Cafe) brings writers, performers, other creative people to the gallery for evening events, and I've started reaching out to local talent. I never thought I would be doing that, but it's really fun.

### **Which mediums do you work in, and what kind of formal training do you have?**

I'm a textile artist who specializes in making wearables including dresses, scarves, hats, and hair adornments (among other things). In the future I'd love to produce some tapestries and wall hangings as well. My work aesthetic is colorful and nature-inspired with a fantasy world twist. I primarily use a technique called free-motion embroidery (which is like free hand drawing with the sewing machine), but I also use knitting, crochet, traditional sewing, and beadwork in my creations. My favorite material to work with is silk dupioni fabric, which is a shimmery, slubby, highly irregular but very attractive fabric. It plays with the light beautifully, and is delightfully crunchy to sew through. I started sewing in college after my Oma gave me her old Singer machine. At the time I was studying painting, and I was painting these large canvases with women laying amongst green foliage and wild patterned fabric. I graduated from Grand Valley State University in Michigan with a BFA in painting, but my interest soon turned to sewing. I was intrigued by sewing because it lets you create your own clothing and accessories, and to me that was a wild opportunity to make my imagination come to life. Creating a mantle as clothing can transform the wearer. After college I got a degree in fashion design from FIDM/Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising in Los Angeles. I wanted to learn how to sew and design clothing and costumes. I got the idea to make grand dresses inspired by historical costumes, particularly from the Medieval and Renaissance periods, but translating the clothing through a visual language of nature – leaves, tendrils, growths, polyps, and other organic forms. I wanted to create raiments for mysterious personages who were larger than life, and inspired by nature goddesses. Even though I studied art, fashion, and costume design in school, I found my artistic voice later when I allowed myself to play.

## Through the Lens continued:

### How much time each week do you spend pursuing art?

I spend every spare moment I have on my art! I work part time at Zoe & Co. as a professional bra fitter, which is really interesting work. I very much appreciate that working part time allows me to tend to my Etsy store and produce monthly work for ACGOW. As for a number of hours, it depends from week to week, but I often work on my art before my shifts at Zoe, and after—often as late as 2 a.m.!

### Tell us about Perelandra. Why did you name it that? How has it changed over time? Are you satisfied with it now?



I created Perelandra to be a centerpiece among a larger body of textile wearables. I've made hats, another dress, and some other items, but Perelandra was the largest, and the focal piece. I wanted it to be larger than life, hinting at the wearer of the dress as a mythical being. The dress is taller than any regular sized human. It utilizes the language of nature in all its strangeness. It has leaves, polyps, and menacingly bulblike roots that almost seem to be tentacles emerging from the hem. The basic structure of the dress is a historically accurate Renaissance bodice and a linen hoop skirt, but on top of that base, I have created 900 free-motion embroidered leaves bursting forth from the skirt, and a shoulder piece which nods to the idea of an Elizabethan ruff, but instead of mannered ruffles, it's a wild flurry of embroidered leaves on wires. The piece encourages questions about who the wearer could be, and what the purpose of the dress is. Is it ceremonial? Supernatural? The language of all these leaves and the association with movie costumes is something I created to hint at a powerful goddess or a fairy queen, challenging the often cheesy representations we see in popular culture. Fairies to me are something powerful and unknowable. The legends are awe-inspiring and often scary as well as beautiful, and I wanted to capture that feeling. I took the name from a book by C.S. Lewis, and I thought the sound of that name captured a sort of otherworldly feeling—it's not directly inspired by the book's characters or plot. I originally had 600 leaves on the dress, but every time I exhibit it I add more. There's a process of degradation with fabric. Every time you put it away it gets crumpled. Embroidery comes loose. It is like a living being in the way it changes over time. Humidity and light can damage it. There are a lot of factors that can affect the condition of

a textile piece. In order to make the dress feel full and vibrant whenever I display it, I am constantly changing it. Am I satisfied? I love it. I loved it with 600 leaves, and I love it with 900 leaves, but I also think I will continue coming back to it over and over. It's a touchstone piece for me. I keep coming back because I feel like it keeps having new things to tell me.



Betsie Withey at work in her studio with assembled materials she uses to create her fabric artwork

## ACGOW's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - "A Gallery of Memories"



Gallery front window with historic materials produced by the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee of Arlene Piacquadio, Lynn Anderson, Debbie Napalitano, Mimi Huszer Fagnant, Carol Schmedinghoff, Francesca Fay, Betsie Withey



Jane Rollins' artistic banner encourages viewers to sit at the table to browse gallery archival notebooks and artists' books



Photos, newspaper articles, posters enable visitors to explore our past



Jane Rollins' signs and a digital photo frame of recent memories are invitations to see history