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# *artistic* EXCELLENCE

TEXT BY BONNIE GANGELHOFF

It's time once again to reveal the winners of our annual Artistic Excellence competition—first, second, and third place, plus 10 honorable mentions. The competition was open to artists of all ages and experience levels living anywhere in the world, and it was open to artworks of any medium, subject, and style. Particularly notable this year is the fact that six of the 13 winners are stunning still lifes. They are complemented by three powerful figures, two gorgeous wildlife pieces, a moody urban scene, and a sparkling landscape. We hope you enjoy them all!



HONORABLE MENTION

Laurence Saunois  
FRANCE



**What inspired your winning entry?** In 2010 I took part in the Society of Animal Artists Annual Exhibition in San Diego. During one of our outings, I saw this white pelican awash in the evening light. This subject included everything I

like to do in painting—a beautiful bird, movement, water, droplets, and contrast with beautiful light. Once I was back in France, I thought about painting this scene. In late 2011, I began the composition and work.

**Where did you study art?** I never studied art. I am completely self-taught. Depending on the subject, I choose the medium that seems most appropriate—oil, acrylic, dry pastels, charcoal, and even sculpture sometimes.

**How would you describe your style?** My painting is not exactly a hyper-realistic style, although at first glance people may believe it is a photograph. But they discover little things that characterize a painting and not a photograph. What I like above all is the illusion.



Le Bain, oil, 24 x 31.

**What is your pet peeve?** I don't really have a pet peeve when it comes to art. I like all phases of creation in painting. But among all these phases, the one I find most annoying is certainly that of the application of the first layers of color—those that serve as a working basis for the creation of the smaller details.

**If you weren't an artist, what would you be?** I would certainly be a naturalist or be in a craft related to animals and nature. Otherwise, because I like everything that relates

to the garden, maybe I would be a landscape gardener because, for me, creating a garden is also a kind of art.

**What are your goals for the future?** Create, always create. I would like to make very large-format works, explore new subjects and compositions, and convey more emotion to viewers.

**What galleries represent your work?** None at this time. I would really like to have American galleries interested in exhibiting my work.