

Art hobby finally became a career for ex-broker

“What am I doing here?”

This was the question Flemington artist Cara London constantly asked herself during her seven years working on Wall Street. As an assistant trader for a small brokerage firm and then as an analyst with a fund investment company, London knew that what she really wanted was a career in art.

“However, I learned so much about myself there that I never would have known,” she says, “things I could apply to my art. I found that I could do it, the business work, that I could be logical and so on. That, I needed to know, but it made me nervous. I wasn’t happy. Never felt comfortable, because I was doing what I knew I shouldn’t be doing, and that’s the bottom line.”

Then London married and moved to Central Jersey, leaving the world of finance behind her. This was her opportunity to make art full time, not just on weekends and vacations.

“I was always good in art class, but never thought of it as a career,” London tells of her school days on Long Island. “Then, in junior high and later in high school, I started taking sculpture classes from a woman at her home, and I loved it. I lived for those Tuesdays.”

At Brandeis University in New York City, London studied economics and art history. “At first, I hated art history, all those dates and names. But as I went deeper into it, I began to love it,” she explains. “I looked at the pictures and said to myself, I can do that.”

Enrolling in some figure drawing and sculpture classes, London still continued on as an art history major, not yet envisioning a career as an artist. Remembering the wonderful feeling she got from physically handling clay, she concentrated on her first love, sculpture.

By graduation, London realized that she would not go on with art history and joined the New York Studio School, where the emphasis was on the academic principles of drawing and painting full time.

in Clinton, recently bought a home in Flemington. Despite all the problems of settling in, newcomer London has managed to hit the ground running, immersing herself in the area art scene in a very short time.

Aside from her duties as a teacher at the Hunterdon Art Center in Clinton, the duCret School of Art in Plainfield, and the Somerset Art Association in Far Hills, London has been busy mounting an exhibition of her

work this month at the Bernardsville Library. She has scheduled upcoming shows at Gallery 39 in Flemington, Children’s Specialized Hospital in Mountainside, and Temple B’Nai Jeshurun in Livingston.

Her work is sort of an expressionistic impressionism, full of bold, swirling, thick strokes of acrylic paint. “Texture is important to me,” she says. “Painting is more than execution. I make heavily

encrusted pictures, mashing the paint around, letting the picture evolve. Right now, with everything, the teaching, the work on our new house, preparing a studio in the attic, I feel guilty when I can’t find time to work.”

Even with this lament, for someone so eager to get some grass under her feet, London is not one to let it grow there.

— Emanuel Haller
Courier-News

“Everything was treated as a study,” she says. “You were there to learn the basics and there was something good about that. No one was expected to make THE MASTERPIECE! It all was part of the learning process. A good experience.”

From there, London got into a masters program in sculpture at the Parsons School of Design in Manhattan. She stopped doing figurative work and began welding abstract sculpture. But by the time she earned her masters degree in sculpture, she longed to work with paint and color.

A friend introduced her to a class held in a loft, where artists would meet to paint together on various subjects, exchanging ideas, pushing each other to excel. That was almost ten years ago and London still meets with them in Manhattan once a week. In 1986, London attended the Triangle Artists Workshop in Pine Plains, N.Y., for the two weeks of her summer vacation from her Wall Street job. The positive exchanges between the residents, artists and critics, gave her the confidence to stand on her own. It was a concentrated, intense period, and it opened her eyes to the beauty of landscape.

“I couldn’t help but look out the window and see all of nature before me,” London explains, “and that’s why I’m so thrilled to be living here, in beautiful Hunterdon County, where it is all around me.”

Moving first to Whitehouse last July, London and her husband Eric Sirota, a musician and physicist working for Exxon



This acrylic by Cara London is titled “Still Life With Sculpture.”

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working on art.

Artists finds herself just bursting with cre

"I am in love with the painting process," declares Cara London, this month's artist exhibiting at the Bernardsville Library.

"In the years I worked on Wall Street as an assistant trader for a small brokerage house, I couldn't wait to get away to the country and paint, whether for the weekend or on my vacations. All those pictures were pent up in me, bursting to get out."

London's paintings can be called expressionistic impressionism. These acrylics writhe and seem to explode off the canvas. Her floral pictures resemble rockets shooting out of the vase. Bold strokes, loaded with paint, give a tactile, textured surface to the landscapes and still lifes. She will even use her fingers for expression.

In some tabletop still lifes, London distorts perspective to emphasize some foreground fruit in a basket. Another shows an ornate tea service bunched for effect. She communicates her excitement with the process with great spirit in her execution.

Yet painting wasn't her first love. As a child in Long Island, London turned to sculpture and pursued it all through her school years, at Brandeis University, where she graduated with a BA in sculpture, and at Parsons School of Design, earning an MFA in sculpture.

It wasn't until she spent two weeks at the Triangle Artists' Workshop, in upstate New York, that she got the

ABOUT ART

Emanuel Haller, C-N Writer

confidence to stand on her own in a career as an artist and paint the beautiful landscape surrounding her.

Presently, having married and moved to Central Jersey in July, the Flemington artist has jumped into the local art scene with both feet, teaching at the duCret School of Art, Hunterdon Art Center, and the Somerset Art Association. When this show closes, London is booked for exhibitions at Gallery 39 in Flemington, Children's Specialized Hospital in Mountainside, and Temple B'Nai Jeshurun in Livingston.

The library is at 2 Morristown Road (Route 202). Call (908) 766-0118 for more information.

Full slate in Princeton

Along with the exhibition, "Art of Holy Russia: The Gates of Mystery," through Feb. 7, the Princeton Art Museum is offering a full program of events.

■ In a two-day symposium, scholars from the United States, England, and Russia will examine the history, meaning, and the social and political implications of the icon in "The Art and Culture of Medieval Russia."

Jan. 29-30. Registration is \$20 per person and includes refreshments and an evening reception.

■ On Jan. 28 at 8 p.m., Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia, from Oxford University, England, will discuss the icon from a theological perspective, in the university chapel. Free.

■ A musical survey on the evolution of the Russian chant will be performed by the New Russian Chorus of New York, at 7 p.m. on Jan. 29, also in the chapel. Free.

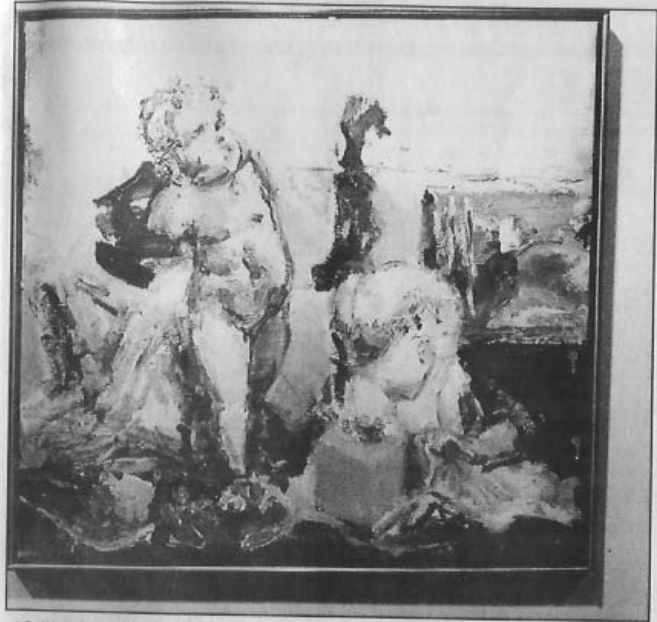
■ A full-length feature film about Andrei Roublev, one of the artists whose work is included in the exhibition, will be shown in McCosh 10, at 3 p.m. irected by Andrei Tarkovsky, the film examines the artist and his work within an historical and social context, chronicling life in medieval Russia. Free.

The Art Museum is in the middle of the campus, behind the giant sculpture "Head of a Woman" by Picasso. Admission is free. For further information, call (609) 258-3787.

Artists sought

Artworks in Trenton has announced a juried works on paper exhibit opening on Feb. 5 and running through March 12.

Artists are invited to enter up to two recent works on paper in any media no larger than 36 by 36 inches, framed and ready to hang. The entry



'Still Life with Sculpture' by Cara London

fee is \$10 for one piece or \$15 for two. Delivery deadline is Jan. 25 and 26 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Artworks' Trenton facility, located at 19 Everett Alley. For information or entry

form, phone (609) 394-9538. Artists may fill out entry form at time of delivery.

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