



Corliss Blakely



Painting w/

PIXELS

May 19 - July 15



Dave Tilton



Caitlin Burns

From Gaming Imagery to Classic, Representational Works

The *Painting with Pixels* Featured Artists are truly pioneers. They've taken the risk of exploring processes that have been generally recognized as merely technical and boldly call their work fine art.

Because a device rather than a brush is required for photography, the measure of that medium is still being debated when compared to oil painting. So it would follow that utilizing the building block of digital processes—the pixel—might, for some, preclude a computer-generated work even more from being museum worthy.

In that vein, this exhibition raises some questions of what visitors determine as art. For one, is it the media that defines the work or seeing the “hand” of the artist in it? If a piece initiates an emotional response, does that determine its creative credibility? And finally, does the work become more artistic the closer it comes to being representational?

If the ability to express a unique style is any indication, then the computer software utilized by our Featured Artists may be seen as a vehicle for truly artistic works.

Florida Featured Artist Andrew Theophilopoulos is equally comfortable with a brush and oil palette as he is with a stylus and Photoshop software. He references the work of John Singer Sargent in both media, whether for a portrait of a dignitary or a character in an animated feature film. A graduate of the illustration program at the Ringling School of Art in Sarasota, the artist has found himself involved in heated discussions with Ringling fine art majors and their professors regarding digital media's place in the art world.

“They would say that digital painting had nothing to do with fine art painting,” he said. “The way I see it is that the tools are different, but the fundamental processes are the same—determining the colors, light, and shapes. They match each other note by note.”

Andrew provides a side-by-side comparison of both a digital and an oil painting of the same subject in this exhibition. This presentation allows gallery visitors the opportunity to personally evaluate what they consider the merits and minuses of each.

Featured Artist Corliss Blakely also works in both oil and digital formats. She sees numerous benefits to the process of painting on her iPad with the ArtStudio and Procreate software programs, among them the ability to create virtually anywhere without supply expenses and the toxic exposure of traditional media. Corliss has easily adapted her highly realistic, sharp focus technique in oils to digital when painting still life works. The iPad is a tool she now reaches for almost daily. She celebrates the belief that “the world is changing and artists now have a new canvas to create on.”



Above: *Game of Thrones* Photoshop painting by Andrew Theophilopoulos.



Top right: *Serenity* by Karin Schminke



Bottom: *Coda* by Paula Oeler and Dave Tilton



Left: Pictured is one of four digital images by Andy Warhol created for Commodore computers in the 1980s that have been recently retrieved. Now on view at the Warhol Museum on a vintage Amiga computer, they are part of an original set of 28 the company asked Warhol to create to advertise the product.

Credit: The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.



Digital canvasses take the form of graphics tablets, laptops and other mobile devices. Depending upon the software and the device, an artist can use a mouse, a stylus, or their fingers as brushes. The first commercial program that allowed users to freehand draw, create graphics, and manipulate objects was MacPaint, introduced in 1984. Soon to follow in 1987 was Adobe Photoshop.

In 1985, iconic pop artist Andy Warhol became one of the first notable digital artists. Enlisted as a Commodore representative, he created digital art on an Amiga 1000 to help advertise the computer. He called the 28 images “experiments.”

Paula Oeler and Dave Tilton, who create under the umbrella name of Carta Studioworks, have gone through extensive experimentation with their digital process, both as collaborations and with Dave’s individual work that portrays imaginary people. The marriage of Paula’s representational photographic forms with Dave’s musically–inspired, painterly aesthetic has resulted in landscapes that skirt the surreal but are grounded in the appearance of a natural form. The couple, who reside on Washington Island, use Photoshop as their tool for expression to “explore how memories re-form themselves into landscapes filled with suggestion, mood, and sumptuous beauty.”

Karin Schminke’s work also references the natural world, but her process combines inkjet printing and a wide array of traditional art media. A sheet of aluminum, chosen for its reflective qualities, supports the work. Transparent pigment inks and acrylic gels are layered onto the surface for additional reflection of ambient light. This light is then modulated by laser-cut papers embedded into the gels and selectively applied acrylic paints. The artist explains her fascination with light: “As light is such a focus of life here in the Pacific Northwest, it naturally plays a major role in all of my art.”

The work of *Painting with Pixels* artist Caitlin Burns from Florida seeks to call attention to the digital process. Her lenticular prints juxtapose natural imagery with a heightened appearance of pixels. For her, the recognition of the process is integral to the work’s message. She says, “I seek sincerity and serenity in the deceptively manufactured.”

A fine art professor who does embrace digital imagery as fine art is Featured Artist Michael Connors, who teaches printmaking at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The inspiration for his installation *Mirror Mirror* came from his experience teaching in a virtual classroom that he created for his students through the software Second Life.

“I was struck by the metaphysical and identity issues associated with students discovering and developing their avatars within the virtual world ...” he said. “*Mirror Mirror* depicts the confrontation of idealized natural and virtual worlds at that moment of self-realization when one confronts their alternate identity for the first time.”

Michael combines the processes of digital photography, inkjet printing, polyester plate lithography, relief, chine colle, collage, colored pencil, and pastel for this eight-panel collage. Aside from the traditional media incorporated into *Mirror Mirror*, consider this question in your evaluation of it as fine art: Would the message have been as effective if created only with acknowledged fine art tools?



Michael Connors’ *Mirror Mirror* print installation explores the theme of idealized identity through avatars.

# Featured Artists

## Corliss Blakely, VT

Corliss is internationally recognized for her work in several media. She received her formal art training at the Vesper George Art School and The Museum School of Fine Art, both in Boston. Her paintings hang in collections worldwide. Corliss translates her meticulous, sharp focus technique in oils to this new technology. [ArtistinVermont.com](http://ArtistinVermont.com)

## Caitlin Burns, FL

Born in Ottawa, ON, Caitlin graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of South Florida (St. Petersburg) with a major in graphic design, minoring in art history. Based in Sarasota, she freelances as a web developer and motion graphics designer. [Caitlin-Burns.com](http://Caitlin-Burns.com)

## Michael Connors, WI

Michael is an artist of many disciplines, including film, interactive computer installation, painting, and printmaking. He has served as a printmaking professor at UW Wisconsin-Madison since 1998. At that time, he founded the Digital Printmaking Center—one of the first international university fine art research facilities to integrate traditional and digital printmaking processes. Michael's works have been featured in three Wisconsin Triennials and numerous national and international exhibitions. [MichaelConnorsArtist.wordpress.com](http://MichaelConnorsArtist.wordpress.com)

## Paula Oeler & Dave Tilton, WI

Since the time they met while pursuing advanced degrees in geography, Paula and Dave have shared both an appreciation for nature and the use of digital technologies for information and electronic music design. Through the years, they have pushed digital's potential within the photographic genre, using Dave's interest in electronic music as a model. In 2007, they established Carta StudioWorks in Madison to create abstract landscapes. They moved to Door County in 2011 where they now explore more representational elements through two diverse paths: Dave's portrait/figurative work and their collaborative work that incorporates Paula's representational forms. [CartaStudioWorks.com](http://CartaStudioWorks.com)

## Karin Schminke, WA

Karin has been a professor of art at several universities, including the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Her work has been shown extensively both nationally and internationally in corporate and public spaces, among them the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM) in Washington, D.C. She is the co-organizer of Digital Atelier: A Printmaking Studio for the 21st Century at SAAM. With the Atelier, she was invited to demonstrate her process of integrating digital technologies with traditional art materials at the opening of the Brooklyn Museum of Art's 27th Print National. [Schminke.com](http://Schminke.com)

## Andrew Theophilopoulos, FL

Born in Canada, Andrew lives and works as a creative nomad, traveling to study the landscape while freelancing as a digital illustrator. In the spirit of the old masters, he is redefining the legitimacy of digital art. His illustration and concept artwork come to life with a mystical sense of imagination and adventure, tinged with the classical aesthetic of the Golden Age Illustrators. This award-winning artist has worked in the feature film, gaming, television, and publishing industries. His traditional artwork is internationally exhibited, and he is regularly commissioned to produce portraits for prominent world leaders. [AndrewTheo.com](http://AndrewTheo.com)

**SPECIAL EVENT** Friday July 7, 1-5PM

FINDING THE FUTURE OF PAINTING IN PHOTOSHOP **W/ ANDREW THEOPHILOPOULOS**

\$35 per person includes beverages and hors d' oeuvres

*Painting with Pixels* Featured Artist Andrew Theophilopoulos is equally adept at classic, representational oil painting and the use of Photoshop software in creating fine art paintings. Join Andrew for a lecture, demos—and a user-friendly, hands-on experience—to explore digital painting. Both artists and art appreciators are welcome. Feel free to bring your own device with painting software installed. Andrew recommends the Procreate or Sketchbook Pro apps for cell phones and tablets, and Photoshop for laptops. He will be doing demos in Photoshop. Register online at [PeninsulaSchoolofArt.org](http://PeninsulaSchoolofArt.org)