

FCA Meeting - September 20, 2012
Featuring: Critique by Catherine Moffat

Call to order 7:10 pm

Minutes submitted via email by Kristina Boardman

Chris Stusek, 1st Vice President, welcomed members to the meeting and introduced special guest **Catherine Moffat**.

Members of the Executive then conducted the following business;

1. Fall Exhibition- Publicity: **Jan Pelton** spoke about the upcoming fall show at the Morris Gallery and described publicity efforts (75 posters to be distributed by Metropole, 75 posters for members to distribute, 1200 card stock invitations). Promotional materials will be available at the end of the meeting, and five volunteers around the city offered to act as distribution points for additional materials as needed (Agnes Cornell in the Saanich area, Marney Ward for Gordon Head, Sam Boehner for Broadmead and Sidney, Linda Anderson for Sooke and Sharlene Stushnov-Lee for Colwood). A digital version of the invitation will be sent to members by email for further distribution.

2. Fall Exhibition- Detail: **Agnes Cornell** discussed the jury process for the upcoming exhibition. Drop off is at the Morris Gallery on Friday September 28 between 12 and 4. Members will be notified via email on Saturday evening. Pick up of unaccepted paintings is on Sunday between 1 and 3. There will be a sign up sheet for refreshments available when dropping off paintings. The opening is on Friday October 5th. Registration forms are available on the website. Morris Gallery will be taking 40% commission on paintings and 50% commission on cards and prints.

3. Active Status: **Agnes Cornell** spoke about the jury process for Active Status. This will be taking place at Agnes's house on Saturday. Three originals are to be dropped of as well as jpegs of 7 other images. Members will be notified upon picking up their work that afternoon.

4. Membership: it was announced that dues would be collected during the break.

5. Refreshments: it was announced that our chapter is looking for a second member to look after refreshments, and we would appreciate three items per night.

6. Workshop: **Sam Boehner** mentioned the upcoming workshop with **Richard McDiarmid**, She mentioned he is a wonderful artist and said that it would be a great learning experience and that she highly recommends taking part.

Sam Bohner introduced **Catherine Moffat** to begin the critique.

Biography from Catherine's website at www.catherinemoffat.com...

Catherine Moffat can't remember a time when she wasn't drawing, painting, or wanting to. The love became discipline, and the childhood fascination became her life's purpose. Since first exhibiting her artwork in 1978, Catherine has worked in pencil, pastel, charcoal, etching, watercolour, acrylic and oil.

For twenty-five years, she was known mainly for her finely crafted watercolour still life paintings. In 2005, she switched to oil, a change she likens to going from tuba to violin, so different is the feel. It took months of constant painting for her hand to feel a kinship with the new medium, but now, years later, painting in oils has opened doors to a wider range of challenges and effects. It is perfectly suited to the classical realism she has loved since childhood.

Catherine has always been drawn to the human form, especially portraits rich with shadow. A wide variety of still life subjects makes up a good portion of her work, and a series of small boats has floated through her painting for years. She paints constantly, and has mounted twenty-four one person shows, and been included into countless group shows over the years.

In her own words:

"My painting stems from my longing to make something beautiful. This simple, persistent desire is the gift I was given, and I carry it with gratitude."

Catherine teaches privately and in workshop settings, finding satisfaction in passing on the knowledge that she has gathered through Years of self directed study and practice.

Critique Highlights:

Catherine began by saying that she was about to give her opinion and that members should feel free to speak up or disagree or state intentions to clarify their thoughts and ideas about the paintings. She also mentioned that this is a great opportunity because it is difficult to critique yourself.

As Catherine critiqued the numerous paintings that were on display, these were some of her helpful comments and ideas....

- painting is a lot of delicate weaving
- depth can be aided by adding warmer colors to the foreground and cooler colors to the background
- sneaking in warm touches of the foreground color can also assist with the unity of the paintings...that interweaving of color
- Contrast is what grabs the eye, so sometimes it is helpful to squint to see values and to discern where your eye goes. Everything away from the focal point should be softer, cooler, greyer, in order to keep eye on focal point
- Sometimes eliminating elements from the paintings can make it more successful (large areas of darkness or vagueness can be distracting to the rest of the painting). Consider re-stretching the canvas or reworking large flat areas.

- a nice tree color includes a mauve in the brown
- water could be less bright / intense blue and more a reflection of the sky
- Check value pattern to see the overall design. This can be done by turning the painting upside down or looking at it in a mirror to see if areas need punch or toning down.
- Consider where your light is coming from because shadows will help with the three-dimensional feel of the painting
- There is a lovely place between red and green, such as on a rose stem
- If there is too much detail in a painting it can be overwhelming. Less emphasis lets us focus on the main subject. It may be helpful to neutralize some elements in a painting that has a lot of detail and focus.
- Use less contrast in a non-focal area. A limited palette can help achieve this as well as we direct where we want the eye to go.
- Less exciting detail and less intense color in the background helps to focus on the main subject. (Catherine's comment "Going out with a good looking friend is a bad idea" had everyone laughing)
- Mixing in a hint of a complementary color to tone down / mute the color can be helpful
- One idea is to take three colors and decide ahead of time which amounts of what color will be used to create the painting. Catherine suggested using paint chips from the store. It is nice to paint with analogous colors (close on the color wheel). Complementary colors are more difficult unless they have been muted, or it can look too much like a photo.
- Consider where your dark and light accents are placed in abstract paintings (an option is 2/5ths over and 3/5ths down, or conversely 3/5ths over and 2/5ths down)
- A limited palette can give a nice sense of color.
- Considering white in a background- sometimes it can be successful and sometimes certain areas may need more detail so as not to distract the eye.
- A stylized painting can be very intriguing, especially when the artist has experience dealing with realism, as it can emphasize design and color.
- Backgrounds should be less interesting, more neutral, and less colourful.
- If it feels like you are telling a story and a half, it may be better to eliminate one of your subjects to have one main focal point. Two focuses can be distracting.
- Everything should not be in the same focus- backgrounds can be looser.
- Have more irregularity...not perfect lines, more shadows, add texture, sneak in common colors, soften verticals, humanize it more.
- Nature is not clean cut- use different values and colors and soften hard lines.
- It is more difficult to imply than it is to paint all the detail.

Catherine's paintings were shown to the members and there was a discussion about her paintings of a cow. She said she loved painting it and tried to keep the background painterly. When asked how she created the glow on the cow's ear, she indicated she used Cadmium Red Light.

The meeting concluded with laughter, praise and applause for Catherine Moffat.