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## Countdown to Silicon Valley Open Studios 2011



### An Interview with Artist Ron Andrews

Ron Andrews is a self-taught watercolor artist who has participated in Silicon Valley Open Studios for seven years. He currently serves on the board of Silicon Valley Visual Arts (the parent organization of SVOS) and the Pacific Art League in Palo Alto. He feels that both organizations offer "great opportunities for individuals to try their hand at the process of creating art." Ron's work can be seen at Gallery House on California Ave in Palo Alto (an artist cooperative gallery), as well as on his website: [www.RonsArtGallery.com](http://www.RonsArtGallery.com).

We recently spoke with Ron about his creative process, his sources of inspiration, and more. Here's what he had to say:



**Q: Your first career was as a scientist working in the field of physics. What led you to become a professional artist?**

A: I've always enjoyed sketching, drawing, etc., but I never had the time to do anything serious. After I retired from Lockheed Martin, there was the opportunity to take some local art classes. Watercolor was compelling due to its uniqueness. A few classes led to a few more. Frustration gave way to personal satisfaction. My wife and I love nature and the environment, so landscapes became my preferred subject matter.

**Q: Have you always expressed yourself creatively via painting, or have there been other channels for your creativity?**

A: Earlier in my life, I worked at direct metal sculpture. Besides the creative satisfaction, "burning metal" seemed to melt away the workplace frustrations. In addition, I have always dabbled in photography, had my own darkroom, and enjoyed the creative

opportunity that it offered.

**Q: Are there any unique perspectives that you, as a scientist, bring to the visual arts?**

A: Nature is a source of inspiration – from microscopic patterns and design found in nature's creations to the macro grandeur of a Sierra landscape. The natural phenomenon of watermedia flowing and blending on wet paper presents a challenge to capture potential beauty in an artistic creation – sort of partnering with nature to develop a semi-spontaneous work of art – not completely representational, but suggestive of a landscape scene full of feeling and emotion.

**Q: What do you hope is going through the mind of the viewer when looking at your work? How do you think your work influences him or her?**

A: I strive to create something that communicates my inner feelings about a natural scene or experience. I try not to define too much detail, but to be suggestive. My hope is that the viewer is inspired to recall similar feelings based on his or her past experiences and associated memories. I rarely paint from a photograph. I will browse photos I have taken in the past and then start a painting with only a general idea of the scene, but I do know if it will be warm or cold, pleasant or foreboding, a grand vista or a nature portrait, etc.

**Q: Do you have a special time of day or location where you feel the most creative?**

A: I am a morning person. I do my best creative work early in the day. Ideas for paintings seem to come engaged in other activity that is not particularly mentally challenging, e.g. while semi-conscious in bed early in the morning, while doing aerobic exercises, while listening to a TV show that is not particularly engaging.



"Ledge" by Ron Andrews

**Q: For people who don't have a lot of experience viewing art, do you have any advice for how someone can try to better understand and appreciate the work? What should people be thinking about when trying to "tune into" the art and the mind of the artist?**

A: There are many opportunities to learn – visit a museum and listen to a docent led talk; go online and search for artists or art genres that you are attracted to; pick up a library book on art appreciation. I believe art is very personal, and there is art to be enjoyed by everyone. As I learned more, I pursued the question "What makes a masterpiece 'great'?" The computer offers access to a lot of resources to answer that question.

We want to thank Ron Andrews for taking the time to chat with us about his work. If you enjoy hearing about art from the artist's perspective, you'll find lots more information about the artists who participate in Silicon Valley Open Studios at our website, including an in-depth [interview with figurative painter Nancie Crowley](#). Check it out!