

Feature

The Michael Newberry Interview:

Michael Newberry's painting career has spanned three decades. He has exhibited throughout Europe and the United States and taught life drawing, drawing and composition, and painting at Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles. He has established the *Newberry Workshop*, sharing his knowledge through a series of online mini-tutorials. He has also published several essays and lectures on aesthetics and the philosophy of art.



Art and Entrepreneurship

Kaizen: When did you first become interested in painting and start thinking about it as a possible career?

Newberry: I started painting when I was about eleven, after falling in love with Rembrandt's art work. My grandmother bought me a book of his work for my birthday. I enjoyed going through it, and I began drawing and painting. But as far as a career, that didn't happen until much later, in my twenties, when I started examining what the life of an artist would be and whether or not I had the skills to make it worthwhile to follow up on painting.

Kaizen: You attended art school at the University of Southern California in the 1970s. How was your experience there?

Newberry: I was introduced to postmodernism by a teacher who taught sculpture. The class was about pre-found objects, which are like the *Bicycle Wheel* of Duchamp. So we were doing things like that. I aced those classes because it was very easy for me to come up with wacky ideas. I had another teacher who painted blades of grass—millions and millions of blades of grass. He probably got stoned while doing it. So there were teachers that I wasn't interested in, but I allowed myself

to learn from them. I went into it with the attitude that, later, I could make anything that I wanted.

In my course of study at USC, there was one teacher, Edgar Ewing, who ended up as my mentor. He was a wonderful, wonderful teacher. He painted a little bit in the style of Picasso, but he understood that I had these feelings about what made magic in painting. I didn't know how that worked, but I could feel it. He understood what I was seeking and that he could show me some of the techniques that enabled that to go through. He understood me well. As one of his introductions to his class, he said that art was like making love. His eyes would just beam and shine—and he was about sixty-five years old. So here was this man with a big gray moustache and blue eyes, and when he would equate the love of painting with making love, you just saw him light up. It was a beautiful thing to see. I immediately embraced his view. That was how it felt to me; it was a connection of love to art.

Kaizen: Is formal training helpful or harmful in developing an artist's creativity? How important is it for an aspiring artist to attend art school?

Newberry: Formal training depends on who you're learning from. The word "formal" in fine arts implies that it is classical training. If the teacher is not talented, it can be dull, boring. It would be like taking a grammar course from an idiot, which would be just a nightmare. It could turn people off of the language altogether. But going to art school, even with strange teachers whose footsteps you have no intentions of following, is a good experience. It is important to know what is out there and to be open to it. ...

Kaizen: You also play high-level tennis, and you had a hard choice between pursuing tennis professionally and art. How did you choose between the two?

Newberry: It was a difficult decision. In my early twenties, I was a world-class tennis player, having beaten several guys who were in the top one hundred, and my art was still developing. There were two things that went into the decision. One is that everything I tried to do in art worked. It may have taken time, but everything I tried worked. In tennis I had some limitations. I thought maybe my career—at its very, very best—would be top-fifty in the world. That is very respectable, but it wasn't like I could be

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

number one in the world, no matter how hard I worked. ...

The other reason, which I think is extremely important, is that early on I thought about what my life would be like at eighty years old. A tennis career or a sporting career is short-lived, with the peak at twenty-seven years old. So at twenty-seven, athletes start going downhill, and at thirty-two they are almost old. ... When thinking about being an artist, it was of constantly growing. As an artist, the more you know and the more you experience, the more refined, or the more powerful, or the more expressive you can become. You can be eighty years old and be in the greatest demand that you've ever been in your life. So I thought that it would be much wiser for me to invest the time into my art and go with that as a long-term career. At the same time, I had friends advising me to do the tennis, then to retire and do art. But I knew that, when you're working on your skills as a young person, things are easier to do, you can automatize your skills. The skills are much more difficult to acquire when you are older.

Kaizen: What artistic goals did you set for yourself as a painter?

Newberry: When I was about nineteen or twenty I quit my sports scholarship at USC, and I quit thinking about tennis as



Woman in Blue, 1981, oil on linen, 55x36"

my ultimate goal. I decided that I had to be an artist, so I left USC. If I was going to be an artist, I wasn't going to do the four hours of training every day for tennis. I took off to Europe and went to art school there. I still didn't feel quite clear or quite ready to go in a direction, but I knew that I wanted to do life-drawing. I knew I wanted to work with the human figure, and I knew that compared to mastering the human figure everything else, visually, is easy. So that's a standard that I believed in and still believe in. Doing the landscape and still-life and abstracting anything else is a piece of cake in relationship to the human figure. If you mess up the human figure, your audience and you feel that something is terribly, terribly wrong, unless it is absolutely deliberate distortion that you want to do.

“Commissions and art do not go together.”

Kaizen: Who were your influences when you made the decision to become a full-time artist?

Newberry: My influences at the time were the great Renaissance painters: Raphael, Michelangelo, and Leonardo. Rembrandt has been an influence of mine since I was eleven. The French Impressionists were an influence—I love their colors. This is especially true with Monet, but I also enjoy the intensity of van Gogh and his colors. So early on I had these as vague influences. I also knew painters like Jasper Johns, who is an abstract painter and is still alive today. He was an influence. I think when I was about twenty-one I realized that what I wanted to do was to combine realism with the fresh colors of the Impressionists. Following closely on that was that I wanted to have something meaningful to say that was passionate, worthwhile, and special. So I think when I was about twenty-three I started thinking about the content as being more special. What we would call that, as far as literature goes, is Romanticism. It just means something extraordinary and special in subject matter, not an ordinary day-to-day thing.

Kaizen: After art school in California and Holland, why did you decide to move to New York City?

Newberry: New York City is the center of the art world, and it was then as well. I thought, “I'm an artist and I'm talented, why not go to the center and see what is going on there?” ... I had an exhibition in 1983 or 1984 that went pretty well and I made about \$16,000. I lived off of that money for six months, during which time I

Painted Pursuit, which was a major breakthrough for me. Then I found myself with no money and having this major painting. I tried taking it around to all of the galleries, but they wouldn't have anything to do with me. That is when I said good-bye to New York, because I realized that I didn't know how to live there anymore, and I didn't have the funds to live there anymore. ...

Kaizen: The history of art is full of stories of artists who never achieved recognition or financial security in their lifetimes. So, in your twenties, when you decided to take the plunge, was it scary?

Newberry: I wasn't scared, but I was well aware of the choice that I was making—that I was going to be living in poverty for a while. I had very rare, brief moments of doubt. I remember once, when I was in Holland, I was having a terrible time with a painting, *Woman in Blue*, that I had already been working on for three months. It was looking terrible and I was ready to trash it. And, in Holland, they have miserable weather from the North Sea. There was all of this wind and hail beating against the window; it was two o'clock in the morning, freezing cold; and the painting wasn't going well. I remember thinking, “I could be in the south of France playing tennis on red clay. I could be traveling. I could be going to wonderful places.” Then, suddenly, something clicked with the painting, and I said: “No, Michael, you are a painter. You are a painter, so don't worry about it. You'll get through this.” I remember that that was my lowest spot, but I never had fear. It was more like, “Well, I could be playing tennis, but I don't want to play tennis on tour. I've got to paint.”

Kaizen: Was it tough to mesh business practicality with the creativity of art?

Newberry: Well, there is one natural thing about being an artist that is good for marketing and business, and that is exhibitions. It seems to be a kind of natural, symbiotic connection. And, being young, in your twenties, going to New York, doing these things, living in foreign countries, and exhibiting your work—there is kind of an inherent support mechanism that I wasn't aware of, but family and friends back you up. They are all excited to see where you are as a young person. When you're putting on an exhibition in New York, people get really excited to support that. So things work out. ...

Kaizen: Did you have mentors to give you advice on financial matters and marketing?

Newberry: No. Well, not on financial matters.



Denouement, 1987, oil on linen, 54x78"

There was a little bit of help from friends, with someone helping me set up a press release to send it out for an exhibition. So, for example, when I put on the exhibition in 1984 in New York, I prepared for it for about a year. I did the whole press routine, sending out notices with deadlines and follow-ups, but I did that with some guidance.

Kaizen: Were commissions a part of your early business success?

Newberry: No. Never had them; don't want them. Commissions and art do not go together. My view of an artist is that you express your soul, and anything short of that is defaulting on being an artist, becoming a craftsperson. That is fine for lots of people using art as a craft, but I don't think they deserve the title of “artist.”

Kaizen: That's interesting, because some people would argue that it is necessary to take commissions to be an artist.

Newberry: I am thinking in the context of living today, where we live in a healthy financial climate. Of course, Rembrandt took commissions. In the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the average life span was thirty-five years—it was kind of do-or-die. So getting a commission might have meant the difference of your children's living or your family's being able to feed itself. Under the pressure of literally surviving, I can see artists' accepting commissions. But I don't see that as a problem today, unless people create that situation: they go into debt or have a big house. They make it so that they are so tied up that they have to accept things that they don't want to do. I don't think that we live in a society where someone is going to really starve. If you believe in yourself, you can find someone who believes in you as well. So, a big difference between Rembrandt's time and our time is that we have much, much more security in the Western world.

Kaizen: What, then, were your first steps in establishing yourself as an artist?

Newberry: The first step is making the work [chuckles]. Go and do it; you're a painter, so paint. When I first moved to New York, everyone in the building was an artist, or so they said. My mother once said to me: “You were so shocked that these people weren't actually making art.” I was making art every day, while other people were talking about it and not doing it. But they had to make a living, so they had to do something else. When they would get home, they didn't feel like painting, and they didn't paint. So that is the first step. The second step is the natural thing: sharing your work, inviting people to see your work, exhibiting your work. Most of my exhibitions were things I set up on my own. I would rent a space and exhibit it, or negotiate a space, or somehow set something up and then send the invitations. So, those are the first steps for having a career as an artist. And naturally, I did those then. I think that today, with the internet, having an online presence is important. ...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

From the Executive Director



We had a busy and exciting past semester at CEE. We heard from three internationally-known guest speakers, offered our new course on *Capitalism in the Modern World* (Thanks, Professor

Rezazadeh!), awarded prizes to two students for excellent work, and made plans for new courses in entrepreneurship and business ethics to be offered in the 2008-2009 academic year. Read all about it within.

Our feature interview for this issue is with painter Michael Newberry. We met with Mr. Newberry in his New York City studio to explore his thoughts on entrepreneurship in the world of art, the importance of being passionate about one's career, and the complex issues of courage, independence, and artistic integrity.

By the time you read this, CEE will have launched two other ventures—our new physical space and our new virtual space. So please come visit us in the Burpee Center—or online at EthicsandEntrepreneurship.org.

Kudos again to Christopher Vaughan for his fine work in designing *Kaizen's* visual theme and layout.

Stephen Hicks, Ph.D.

NEWBERRY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Kaizen: So a gallery presence isn't necessary for an artist?

Newberry: Gallery presence is a can of worms, with a lot of complex problems. I have an acquaintance who's a young artist, twenty-nine or thirty years old. On paper he has a great looking career: he is represented in one of the well-known galleries in New York, he exhibits in the international art fairs that travel through this gallery, and he gets commissions. But he talks freely about the experience of being in a gallery, and he's mentioned two interesting points.

One point is that he must paint six paintings in a year. So every two months he has to supply a painting and it has to be a minimum size (the painting has to be about 4 x 6 feet). And this painter's a realist painter. Realism takes quite a bit of time, but the dealer is not saying to him: "Paint your best. Paint something magnificent. Paint what you want, and I will find a way to sell it." The dealer is not saying that. Instead, the dealer is saying, "I want six paintings of yours." This young man has said that he would like to do a life-size painting with seven people in it. He is



Expectation, 2007, charcoal on Rives BFK, 19x26"

"You are in control of what you are doing every day. You never feel compelled—you're free."

not going to be able to do that in two months—two years is more likely. So the dealer is not supportive of the spirit of the artist. Actually, he is dampening him by saying he has to "do this."

The second point is that this same artist was talking about how he would like to have two or three weeks during the summer to paint for fun. So he is in the New York scene, but if he isn't painting for fun every day, I don't know the connection between him and art. I'm missing something there. It means he is just a craftsperson, in contrast to the way I've formed my career. I paint what I love to do *every day*. There is a big difference there!

The dealers have their own set of problems. Dealers want to move the work, sell the work, live off the work, but they also step in and make suggestions. What they are *not* doing is telling people to go for their very best and they will support it. But that is the only kind of dealer that I'm interested in.

Kaizen: Does that kind of dealer exist?

Newberry: I don't know—I haven't found him yet.

Kaizen: One of the difficulties artists face is the temptation to compromise their vision to give customers or galleries what they want. How do you handle that?

Newberry: Just say no. ...

Kaizen: Looking back on the early part of your career, what was the most *difficult* part?

Newberry: [Chuckles] I don't think I had a difficult part. I have always felt totally free. I've felt every day that I could do what I wanted to in that day. If I didn't feel like painting, I didn't have to paint. I've gone on three-month trips to Greece, doing pastels every day, knowing I was making my money. I wasn't on a vacation, and yet I was traveling all of the Greek islands in the summer. As long as I'm making the art, I'm free to live in other countries, which I've done. The difficult part is selling your work. If you can handle that part, though, it is a whole other view. You are in control of what you are doing every day. You never feel compelled, like you have to do something—you're free. You're free to take a nap when you're tired and you're free to take time off. At the same time, when you love what you do, you may work sixteen hours a day. You might find yourself working around the clock, pulling all-nighters. And all of it is the way to go.

Kaizen: What was the most rewarding aspect of launching your artistic career?

Newberry: That's a tricky question, I think. One of the most rewarding aspects is that somewhere in my day, every day, I feel a moment of exultation. I love painting and it brings me profound pleasure. Even with the problems in the painting that I need to solve, I enjoy the challenge of it. When I make mistakes, I'm like, "Damn, I made a mistake! Oh, good! I don't have to go down that path again. Now that is behind me." It just moves aside, and I concentrate on where I want to go. ... I have had moments, especially when I'm putting on an exhibition, and I'm alone with the exhibition, when no people are there, and I'm seeing it by myself. The feeling of pride is overwhelming. ...

Kaizen: Your art has evolved over the course of your thirty years as a painter. What have been the most significant developments? Have the subjects and themes of your art changed, or have your major changes involved technical growth and discoveries?

Newberry: I think that the first significant development was the concept of technically integrating the freshness of the Impressionist colors by putting together the passionate themes, realism, and vibrant, fresh colors. Finding my way there as a young man has been the most powerful development. I think that I'm doing variations of those things now, and I'm continuing to grow with more subtlety. ... Within that, I'm making inroads in aesthetic theory that further my visions, like taking a wild vision and then figuring out how to bring that vision about. For example, with *Denouement*, I had to figure out the color theory



God Releasing Stars into the Universe, 1993-99, oil on linen, 5x7'

and the lighting theory—how I was going to be able to integrate this mass amount of information to create my vision. That, then, was a stepping stone, that painting. More recently, writing the tutorials has been a key step in my career.

Kaizen: To switch gears and ask a more philosophical question: How does art express values and metaphysical themes?

Newberry: That is a difficult question. In painting, you have the subject matter, the content, and you also have the means, the style, and the technical developments. All of them play a role in communicating what the piece is about. If you have a mucky style with sick-looking colors—no matter how uplifting the figure is or the fruits are—if your style is really ugly, it is going to communicate a kind of grotesque sense, a feeling,

as sense of life, a sense of being. So there are a lot of factors that go into communicating values. That is why it can be very confusing. For example, you can have a painter, like one I just saw who did a still-life of three lemons. The colors are so beautiful, so clean, and there is a gorgeous harmony of colors. So he conveyed the freshness and the beauty of it, and it registered as a value. There is another painter that paints everything with muddy colors, and he does it over and over and over again. It gives off a very gloomy atmosphere. So, these two artists can take the same subject matter and convey completely different values through the method. That is part of what can touch you, and, if you are not an expert in art, you will not understand how that is working.

CEE Guest Speakers:

Each of this semester's guest speakers was invited to Rockford College in connection with the CEE-sponsored *Capitalism in the Modern World* course.



Dr. David Schweickart is Professor of Philosophy at Loyola University Chicago. Dr. Schweickart holds Ph.D.'s in both mathematics (University of Virginia) and philosophy (Ohio State University). He is the author

of *Against Capitalism* (Cambridge University Press, 1993) and *After Capitalism* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2002). On September 19, he gave a talk entitled "Marx's Democratic Critique of Capitalism and Its Implications for a Democratic Socialism."



Dr. David Kelley (Ph.D., Princeton University) is a former professor of philosophy at Vassar College and is currently Senior Fellow at the Atlas Society in Washington, D.C. Dr.

Kelley is the author of *The Evidence of the Senses* (Louisiana State University Press, 1986), *The Art of Reasoning* (W.W. Norton, 1998), and *The Contested Legacy of Ayn Rand* (Transaction Publishing, 2000). On September 26, Dr. Kelley spoke on Ayn Rand's moral defense of capitalism.



Dr. Alexei Marcoux (Ph.D., Bowling Green State University) is Associate Professor of Business Ethics at Loyola University Chicago and a policy advisor for the Heartland Institute. He has written articles for

publications such as *Business Ethics Quarterly* and *Journal of Private Enterprise*. On October 31, Dr. Marcoux discussed the social philosophy of Friedrich A. Hayek, the 1974 recipient of the Nobel Prize in Economics.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



London Interior, 2006, charcoal on Rives BFK, 19x26"

Kaizen: New York is a major center for the art world, being on the forefront of philosophical and aesthetic developments. What are the current trends in art?

Newberry: It seems to me that it is an eclectic grab bag. Installation art and monumental installations are what is going on in the museums. Some of them combine a certain beauty.

There is a certain artist, Cai Guo-Qiang (<http://www.caiguoqiang.com/>), who has an installation of about one hundred wolves. The wolves are manufactured, stuffed wolves, but they look realistic. They are flying in an arc, a little like Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. They merge to fly across a gigantic museum space all grouped together. It is probably a feat of engineering, how he attached the wires or the internal metal structure. Then the wolves crash and hit a glass wall, falling to the floor. The image of the sculpture is quite breathtaking to see. It has a social element about running over dead animals, because you have machinery and modern man in it. That is one of the themes riding through it.

Another thing is that the artist never sculpted any of these animals. Well, he certainly didn't do all one hundred of them or he would have been working on that project forever. So the artist is no longer the person who actually makes the thing—the artist directs it, like a film director. A concept like Michelangelo's actually sculpting or painting the work doesn't seem to be a big element in the major museums. They seem to be more interested in the concept and the idea, and in having the artists as a kind of movie director, where they turn over a couple of million dollars to them and then they put all of these pieces together. ...

Kaizen: Postmodernism has been with us for over a quarter of a century. Do you think it has run its course or will it have staying power?

Newberry: I don't know. I think postmodernism speaks to a lot of people, even though I believe that it is a very negative movement. In the history of art we have the Middle Ages, with monsters on the sides of cathedrals and buildings. In painting and sculpture, the Middle Ages held a dark view of humanity. Then there are things like the destruction of the Buddhas. There are lots of different movements in the history of art, and some of them are beauty-centered, reason-centered, and passionate, like the Romanticists, the Ancient Greeks, and the Renaissance artists. The Middle Ages lasted longer than, for example, the Ancient Greek period. You have periods in human history that have different bents, different agendas, or different focuses. So, in fact, postmodernism could last for a very long time. What I see now is that you don't have pure postmodernists—you have a grab bag, where they are using eclectic things. But, if you look at Byzantine art, it's the same thing with their architecture. They would use some Roman columns and Ancient Greek columns, elements from other buildings and ruins stuck in there.

They would put this here and that there; so a lot of churches are made up of garbage and trash. I see postmodernism as a kind of Middle Ages. So it could indeed last for quite some time.

Kaizen: Your art runs contrary to the postmodern aesthetic. Has that made it more or less difficult for you to market yourself in New York?

“The number one thing is to value the work that you do.”

Newberry: It makes it difficult. For example, there are some realist painters called the New York Ash Can School. These painters take street people, tattooed people, mentally retarded people, and they render them totally realistically. Steven Assael has a disturbing theme of having this woman, who doesn't look sane and is naked from the waist up, breastfeeding a plastic doll. It is really disturbing to look at. The same painter paints people who have projected piercings with tattoos and stuff—it is not pretty at all. But he is using a classical, Old Master technique of brown and gray under-painting and dark washes. There isn't much color in them, but they are very realistic. This painter is embraced and accepted as a contemporary, successful artist in New York. There is the Forum Gallery in New York, which has representational artists, and several of them are disturbing as well, with decapitated bodies flying through space, umbilical cords, blood, and all kinds of very dark Norwegian or Scandinavian myths in the pieces. So, in the back of my mind, I thought, “If I could create a really disturbing piece, I could enter into New York a lot easier.” That is the postmodern influence and how it has affected painting.

Kaizen: How does a painting like *Denouement* reflect you? Where does it come from?

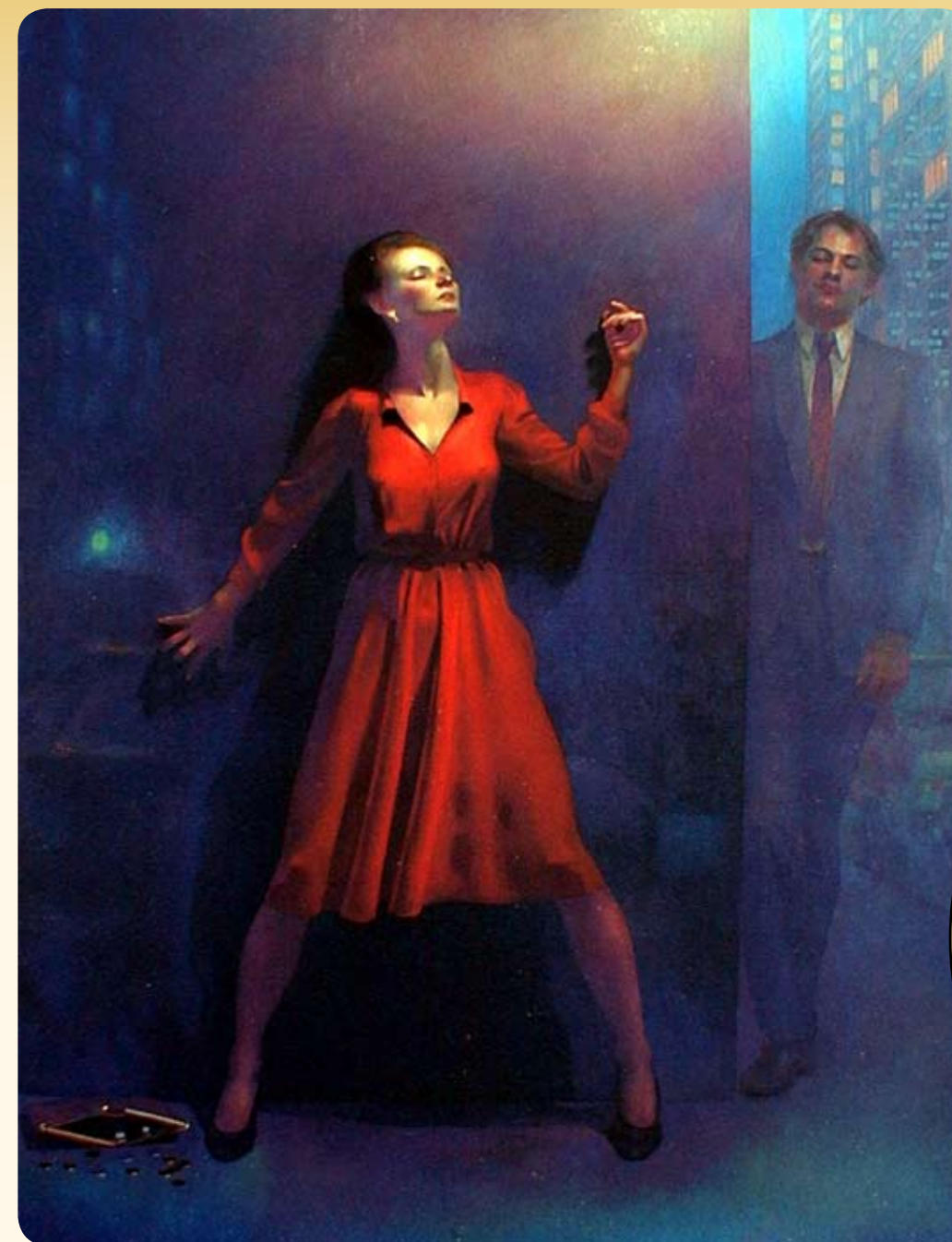
Newberry: In hindsight, when I'm looking at artworks that I like—movies, literature, music—I love very stylized artworks, almost allegories. I don't really like realism very much. For example, I really enjoy the old Disney cartoons *Snow White* and *Bambi*. I loved *The Thousand and One Nights*, which is all of these Arabian tales with a lot of fantasy in them. I love the very stylized action-adventure of Steven Spielberg, like *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. In literature, I like stylized epics. Aeschylus' ancient Greek myth, *Oresteia*, is a good example. These artworks speak to me in a profound way. They are not realism at all; they are very stylized morality tales. So in my principal works there is a connection for me to create this stylized universe in which I am expressing an ideal or a state of exultation. ...

Kaizen: The art world is highly competitive, like any other area of human endeavor, and critics and other artists can be harsh with each other. How do you deal with criticism of your art?

Newberry: It's really hard, but I don't come across much criticism of my art. I think the overriding reason why I don't is because of my sincerity and love for what I do. People who may not like my work still register the sincerity. ... So I don't get nasty comments or really critical comments. ...

Kaizen: Even so, for most artists, there are long stretches of time when recognition is non-existent or, if it is there, it is uninformed or simply negative. How does one develop the inner resources to stick with it through those times?

Newberry: The number one thing is to value the work that you do. You love it; you believe in it; it's a personal value to you. The second thing is that you follow through on it, so that when there are



Pursuit, 1984, oil on linen, 7x5'

News from the CEE

Student Presentation Prize Winners

In Fall 2007, the Center for Ethics and Entrepreneurship offered prizes for the best two student presentations in Professors Hicks and Rezazadeh's *Capitalism in the Modern World* course. Contestants were judged on the basis of the quality of the analysis and the effectiveness of their presentations, both oral and written. The two winners received \$300 each.



Paul Lindsay

First Prize (Tie)



Emily Wallen

First Prize (Tie)

High School Entrepreneur Day

On November 8, 2007 Rockford College hosted its first semi-annual Entrepreneurship Day for high school students in the Rock River Valley. Over one hundred students attended the interactive presentations featuring Rockford College faculty, staff, and successful alumni entrepreneurs. Professor Jeff Fahrenwald spoke on the personality and behavioral traits common to successful entrepreneurs. Dr. Stephen Hicks discussed the ethical grounding required to be a great entrepreneur. Dr. Fred Rezazadeh outlined economic factors that impact the success of entrepreneurs. Professors Hank Espensen, Bill Lewis, and Steve Kadamian emphasized the importance of good accounting and the necessity of developing a business plan. Local entrepreneurs Helen Hill and Ezio Marino talked about the challenges and rewards of running a business. The high school students were also given time to think about their own business ideas and to reflect upon their future goals. Additional events included a sweatshirt raffle, complimentary lunch, and a campus tour.

Distinction

Featured Faculty: John Reis



Adjunct Professor John Reis received his B.S. in Philosophy from Elmhurst College and his M.A. from DePaul University. He has been teaching at Elmhurst College since 1989 and has twenty-five years

experience in sales and management. Professor Reis taught *Business and Economic Ethics* in Summer of 2007 for the CEE and the Department of Philosophy.

CEE Course Development Grants: Congratulations to Professors Jeff Fahrenwald and Robert Von der Ohe, this year's recipients.



Professor Jeff Fahrenwald is Associate Professor of Economics and Business, Associate VP of Graduate and Community Education, and Director of the MBA program. He teaches in the areas of human relations,

management, leadership, entrepreneurship, and international studies in the MBA program. Professor Fahrenwald's grant was for his *Entrepreneurship* course, to be offered in the Summer of 2008.



Dr. Robert Von der Ohe is the Ludwig von Mises Professor of Economics and Business. He teaches international trade, financial management, and policy and strategy in our MBA program, as well as courses at the undergraduate level. Professor Von der Ohe's grant was used to develop a new course, *Entrepreneurship and Ethics*, to be offered in the Fall 2008 semester.



Icarus Landing, 2000, acrylic on canvas panel, 36x55"

problems with it, you embrace solving the problem of whatever it is that you are making or creating. So, in your heart, you know that you are doing everything you can. That really diffuses a lot of indifference. ...

Kaizen: You are now fifty years of age, and you have been a professional artist for over three decades. Looking back on your career to date, what has been your biggest challenge?

Newberry: There are three different things. One third of that, I am in control of—the art work. I constantly enjoy trying new things and challenging myself. So a painting like *Denouement* was an extremely difficult challenge. Other paintings as well have been extremely challenging for me to create. But those are all within my control or my ability to deal with. They are my responsibility.

Another part is establishing my reputation to the outside world. With that, there have been some very difficult

challenges, like periodically trying to break through. ... But when I come across people who are not interested in the direction I want to go, if curators in the museums aren't interested, then there is nothing I can do about it. So it takes a certain kind of wisdom to differentiate between the challenges that go into a painting and the challenges that go into society. You have to be very careful not to let society dictate what your goals are. ...

The other challenge, and a very rewarding one, is finding homes for my work. I am blessed to have several collectors who love my work. Perhaps my work is a kind of filter, but the people who collect it have been colorful, intelligent, creative, and they have been great friends. It's an incredible feeling to have such good people embrace and honor my work. ...

Kaizen: If you had to choose, which of your works means the most to you personally?

Newberry: Leontyne Price, the opera singer, was once asked this question and she said, "They're all important." The thought is a little abstract, but the truth of it is that the love of making art and the process of doing it is the same love, care, and energy that go into every piece that I am making, whether it is a sketch, a thumbnail drawing, or a five-year project. Every time you approach an artwork you approach it with your whole being and with love. However, *Denouement* plays a role because it was a big breakthrough for me. The nude self-portrait I have of *Longing* is my most vulnerable, naked presentation. It is the closest to the reality of being me in the sense that I'm not dealing with a story, or an abstraction, or a stylized thing. Instead, I'm presenting myself in a

vulnerable way. So the theme of *Longing* is interesting. The painting *Icarus Landing* is a very simple painting, but a very powerful piece. So, those are three works that I'm really proud, happy, and elated that I could paint and that I had the skill to make.

Kaizen: What is next for Michael Newberry? What are you currently working on?

Newberry: Currently, I'm finishing *Venus*. She has been on the easel for some years now, and I am about two weeks away ... I hope. I also have a 3 x 4 still-life developing, as well as a life-sized work, *Lovers Jumping*.

Kaizen: In closing, what is the most important piece of advice you would give to young artists just launching their creative, entrepreneurial careers?

Newberry: There are a few Dos and Don'ts for artists beginning their careers. Do what you love and establish it, don't take commissions, and do write about your work—it will serve you well.

This interview of Michael Newberry was conducted for Kaizen by Stephen Hicks and Virginia Murr. To see more of Newberry's art and writings, please visit his website at MichaelNewberry.com.

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Michael Newberry in his studio

In the Next Issue:

Anil Singh-Morales

(Liberal Arts graduate in Philosophy and English Literature, former

Senior Director at Microsoft, CEO of Echomundi)

on Entrepreneurship and Global Markets

Kaizen (改善) is a Japanese term meaning "change for the better" or "continuous improvement." Kaizen has been applied worldwide as a method for continuously improving the efficiency of all aspects of a business through a cyclical process of standardizing operations, measuring their efficacy, evaluating the data, innovating to improve performance, and returning again to standardization. Kaizen is also used to eliminate wasteful effort and to humanize relationships within the workplace.

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