

Juror's Statement from Ellen Elmes

To the Artists of the Delaware Watercolor Society:

It has been my pleasure to serve as your juror and judge once again. The scope of your artwork in terms of subject matter, style, watermedia techniques, and expression has made my job an intriguing and informative exploration of your skills and vision. As an artist myself, I always learn from engaging in the critique process of other artists' works regarding the myriad ways and means of creative expression – it is encouraging and uplifting!

My jurying process in the consideration of each artwork is based on achievement in four categories: (a) skillful use of watermedia; (b) composition; (c) color/value and contrast; and (d) original and expressive content. I have written comments in this regard about one artwork created by each of you, hopefully to further your understanding of my deliberations. In choosing the artworks deserving of awards, I look for the artist's exceptional ability to combine skilled watermedia techniques and elements of design with compelling expression.

For the First and Second Place awards, I have chosen artworks that are excellent examples of not only skilled technique, but both are outstanding in expressing the atmosphere, the feel – of “being there.” In “Rainy Day in NYC,” the cool colors, hunched shoulders of figures under umbrellas, puddle reflections, and the swish of rain merely lifted from the colors of clothing and the stone wall, provide unfussy imagery that easily pulls the viewer into the feel, smell, and sounds of a city shower.

In “Summer Haze,” the artist's rendering of wiggly silhouetted figures, backwashed soft depressions, and hard edges of sand, and the convincing, but mere, suggestion of waves and surf immerse the viewer in the shimmer of heat and sunlight one feels on the beach. Both award winners have successfully utilized “less is more” by carefully selecting essential but limited visual information to leave us, the viewers, to expand the imagery of our own fond, remembered rainy days and seaside beauty.

The Third Place painting, “Lovebug,” is a loving capturing of a cat's intensity and a bouquet's burst of color. The juxtaposition of warm and cool colors, soft and hard edges, and varied textures of fur, glass, and wood are intriguing, inviting the viewer to find personal relevance to the embrace and beauty of home.

My choices for Merit Awards span a more varied selection: from the still, moment-in-time expression and skillful painting of “The Calla Lilies are in Bloom”; to the dynamic, sweeping composition of diagonals in action choices. In “On the Edge”; to the abstract envisioning of a mind's perspective in “Neurodivergent.” Though varied, all of these paintings are exceptional in skill and vision.

I hope my choices for awards will stand as representatives of excellence in a larger field of accomplished painting that this exhibition accomplishes overall. Congratulations to all.