

Seeing through touch leads to better skill, better human nature

Nationally known artist to teach her technique in workshops for adults, kids

By STACY TREVENON
Half Moon Bay Review

Italian friar St. Francis of Assisi (1181?-1226) said "He who works with his hands, his head and his heart, is an artist."

Italian artist and scientist Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) said "To learn to draw is to learn to see."

San Gregorio resident, nationally known artist and teacher Jane Rosen, born 1950, says, "My work and my life seem to negotiate the boundaries between perception and cognition, between nature and culture, between people and place. There is an interest in studying the relationship between animal nature and our own better nature, which informs the work ...

What does touch look like?"

"Drawing is pulling a rabbit out of a hat. You're trying to create an illusion of something three-dimensional on a two-dimensional surface."

— Jane Rosen

is now signing students up for, to be held this summer in the state-of-the-art studio she created in her idyllic country setting.

Rosen's "Seeing Through Touch: a Drawing Workshop" is based on drawing classes that Rosen taught for more than 20 years in schools such as Stanford University, the University of

California, Berkeley, the School of Visual Arts in New York, Bard College in New York and University of California, Davis.

Though workshops are scheduled for Aug. 21-22 or Aug. 28-29 (the latter one includes a kids' component), Rosen customarily has waiting lists for her seminars.

"People wanted to work with me," she said.

Her technique, "Seeing through Touch," incorporates and integrates elements of Asian calligraphy and Renaissance drawing technique.

And there is a physical element: the technique links the tactile and the visual, connecting the sense of touch with the line of sight.

"Drawing is pulling a rabbit out of a hat. You're trying to create an illusion of something three-dimensional on a two-dimensional surface," she said. "It's intuitive ... It's exciting to watch what people do when they connect these two."

Her workshop is geared for students of all ages and experience levels (no previous experience is required). It offers something for art students or anyone with an interest in art — or in the mental or motor skills her technique fosters, such as engineers or doctors.

"A lot of medical students take the class for this reason," said Rosen, who counts computer programmers, doctors or computer animators among her students. She tells of the doctor student who told her "I practice medicine differently (now). I can see. I am a better diagnostician."

The workshops focus on drawing both the model and aspects of nature. Each day includes a presentation and morning and afternoon sessions. Students will work with a range of materials including willow charcoal, ink



and wash on newsprint or drawing rolls.

Kids — children age 6 to 18 are eligible — will enjoy some fun media, like teas, coffee, juices, or salt water with pigments.

It all has its grounding in Rosen's rich artistic and academic roots. She was born in New York, received a degree in art and philosophy from New York University in 1972, and then studied at the Art Students League.

From 1969 to 1990 she lived in a Soho loft, showed work in New York galleries, and taught for 15 years at the School of Visual Arts.

Then she spent one Thanksgiving with her brother, a Stanford surgeon, and found San Gregorio.

She was drawn to it; her brother was skeptical. "No one lives there," he said. "Cows live there."

Still, she sold her loft and moved there in 1990 — and found a home.

"Something in my gut said, This is where I can do the most good in life, and where life can teach me what I want to know," she said. "After 40 years in New York, it seemed (the place to) take what I learned practically in art and (teach) what we as human beings need to address."

Her home is on 40 ridge top



Photos by Elena Fava Emerson / Review

Top, internationally known artist and teacher Jane Rosen, at right petting her cat "Puma," and Stephanie Lie of San Francisco, her assistant and an instructor in her classes, pause for a moment in the San Gregorio studio. Above, Rosen stands in front of one of her works, a drawing in Japanese ink and wash with casein (a milk-based paint) of a horse in Pescadero.

acres, complete with a creek, views, agreeable weather, old-growth trees and horse paddocks — and a 3,000-square-foot studio she built there with sculpture and drawing in mind.

"Human nature is influenced by larger forces in nature," she said. "Art raises the question of how (it) can lead us to our own better nature."

Rosen's work is represented nationally in schools, museums and galleries. She teaches at the

University of California, Berkeley, though she is now on leave to do some shows. She is also in the Braunstein/Quay Gallery of San Francisco, and setting up a 10-year survey of work done on the coast, in July.

The cost for her two-day workshop is \$300 for both days, and some scholarships may be available. For information, her Web site is at www.janerose.com/ workshop, and she can be reached at 747-1716.