March/April 1995

The Official Newsletter of the
International Association for Astronomical Arts

General Editor: David A. Hardy
Coordinator, USA: Michael W. Carroll

CONTRIBUTIONS

US and Canadian members please send contributions to Mike, UK and European members to Dave. If you use e-mail you can please yourself!

All comments, suggestions, tips, ideas, advice, articles, reviews of books, videos, CD-ROMs or exhibitions, cartoons and artwork are welcome. The latter may be sent as B&W or colour photo prints/illustrations, or in digital TIF format, down the 'phone line if you prefer. Only slides are a problem (for the moment!)

Remember that this is YOUR association, and Pulsar is the best method we have of communicating with all other members.

Please also remember that the 'I' in IAAA stands for 'International'. The last thing I want is to turn Pulsar into a vehicle for European artists (honest!), but where are the submissions and artwork from US artists? (Oh, you thought someone else would send something? Unfortunately, they thought the same...)

As is so often the case, only Board members have sent material from across the Pond. Are the rest of you leading such boring lives that no one else would be interested in what you're doing?? I don't believe that for a moment! Try us!
ARCHES NATIONAL PARK '95

Artist George Bellows said, "You can learn more in painting one street scene than in six months' work in an atelier." Because of our subject matter, most of us are primarily studio painters, but in deference to George, the IAAA is giving its membership a chance to "get out in it" and paint one of the most beautiful places in the world. On September 4 through 9, 1995, members of the IAAA will again travel to the rugged beauty of Arches National Park in Moab, Utah, USA.

This workshop will be a flexible one, enabling people to camp or to stay at a spiffy place I found with the help of a friend at AAA. The house has space where we will have evening critiques and chats about the business, printing tips, etc. (HOWEVER, we will keep in mind that one of the best features of the desert is the night sky! If you have a telescope and would like to share, please bring it.)

Charges for the workshop have been kept down owing to the facility of the park. The food is prepared for our own meals, with the exception of breakfasts, which we will provide. We are looking into the possibility of getting local supermarket to furnish your supplies at a group discount. If you are planning to camp, we will leave arrangements up to you. Registration fees for campers are $40.00 (see below). If you are staying at the Lazy Lizard facilities, the fee is a miniscule $102.00 (US). The fee includes the following:

- Breakfast for 5 days: $22.00
- Administrative fee: $10.00
- Motel (5 nights): $70.00
- Grand Total: $102.00

Please note that there are only ten places reserved in the house. GET YOUR RESERVATION IN SOON! We would like a total of 20 people, divided by payment by June 1 so we can firm up our reservations. For those camping, the deadline is July 1.

How to get there: The nearest airport is in Grand Junction. Your best bet is probably to fly into Denver, then take a commuter flight to Grand Junction. I can come get you in Grand Junction, or you can rent a car for flexibility. There are some excellent four-wheel-drive roads (well, they're kinda roads) in case you want to rent an appropriate vehicle. Please let me know ahead of time of your travel plans and whether you need help getting to Moab. It's about an hour's drive due west from Grand Junction on I-70 to Crescent Junction, then another 45 minutes south on Highway 191 (163 on older maps). You can't miss it!

About Arches: Arches National Park has the greatest density of natural arches in the world. According to park brochures, "Wind and water, extreme temperatures, and underground salt movement are responsible for the sculptured rock scenery." Arches is a beautiful, stark land which surely must resemble -- geologically -- some areas on Mars and Venus, but you let your imagination wander even farther. We will try to set up a meeting with an expert to give you the skinny on the science behind the landscape. Highlights include Park Avenue, with its balanced rocks, spires and eroded fins, the monoliths of Courthouse Towers, the giant arches of The Windows, and many other places to hike, paint and photograph.

Another unique region (unlike anything I have ever seen, and I've been around!) is called Goblin Valley. It is like a forest of stone mushrooms the size of a person. It's a bit of a drive on rough roads, but perhaps we can make time.

What you will need: A large container for water is a must. Even in September, the desert can be a dangerous place if you run out. Make sure you have hiking shoes, a daypack for carrying paint and food, and extra clothing for those surprise desert storms. Sunblock and hats are a good idea. In the evenings, we will provide sherry for all. We will critique, bring slides of your best and worst work. We are here to learn, so be sure to bring examples of things that you would like help with. We also may ask for one or two original paintings for a possible exhibit.

Possible Art Exhibition: We are looking into the possibility of holding an art show at the Park Service Headquarters or other venue in Moab. More details in the next Pulser.

Please REMEMBER YOUR DEADLINE and check paintings payable to the IAAA. Send them to me at:

Michael Carroll
965 Kansas St.
Littleton, CO 80123
USA

And don't forget the major Tenerife Workshop and Exhibition being planned for next year; details in the last Pulser, but we do need to know as soon as possible how many members we can expect to participate. Write or e-mail Mike if you live in the USA or Canada, or Dave if you are British or European.

Tucciaroni Exhibit

Joe Tucciaroni and his wife are busy organizing an exhibit of his art called Visions of the Universe. It opens at the Orlando Science Center in May of 1995 and runs through August. It is also being booked at the Museum of Science in Miami for December '95 through March '96. Joe is looking for other possible venues as well.

The exhibit includes seven astrophotographs by world-famous astronomer David Malin, who told Joe that he is "very keen to explore the art-science boundary." Joe says that some of his biggest -- and best -- we're sure -- art is included in the display. Among the 20 paintings are works that are 4' x 5', his largest yet.

Congratulations, Joe! (MWC)

DESTINY IN SPACE (I)

This new 40 minute IMAX blockbuster comes from Graeme Ferguson, the director of The Dream Is Alive and Blue Planet. 43 astronauts from nine shuttle flights were involved in the filming, which includes deployment of the Hubble Space Telescope, Galileo Jupiter probe, and ORFEUS-SPAS.

The film also explores the surfaces of Mars and Venus through the magic of computer graphics from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. "IMAX enables space explorers to take the peoples of the Earth along with them on their voyages," says producer Ferguson. "Never before in the history of human discovery has it been possible to do this." Destiny in Space was five years in the making, at a cost of $10 million. The film was co-sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum and the Lockheed Corporation. (MWC)

EXHIBITION: Thomas Cole, 60 paintings


Thomas Cole is considered to be the English father of the Hudson River School of landscape painters. Born in Lancashire, England in 1801, he lived in Greenwich Village, New York City, and spent much of his time in the Adirondack mountains in upper state New York. Many space artists consider our genre to be a direct descendant of the Hudson River School.

Whether you share this belief or not, this exhibit promises to be a window to a world view current 19th century. The paintings are large; reflecting the expansive and power of the land in both North and South America. The palette is skewed towards the dramatic light seen at dawn and dusk. The paintings of the Hudson River School had an early influence on the incipient environmental movement in the United States and elsewhere.

(See also my article on Joseph Wright of Derby and other British artists in Pulsar, Jan/Feb '92 - D.A.H.)

Art Calendar, billed as the business magazine for visual artists, is a versatile "one-stop-shopping" resource for artists. The monthly publication lists galleries and museum exhibit opportunities, public art commission announcements, residencies & artist colonies, grants & fellowships, alternative media/internet exhibit opportunities, as well as informative articles written by artists (the editor is a working artist).

There is much more to this journal. I highly recommend it for the artist who is too busy painting to keep track of "the art world." Unfortunately for our non-U.S. members the listings and opportunities are focused on the United States since it is a U.S. publication.

Art Calendar, P.O. Box 199, Upper Fairmount, Maryland. 21867-0199; $35.00/year.

Annuaire de L'Art International is an international directory of museums, galleries, and art competitions in Europe. Published by Editions Serdramas, 11 rue Arsene-Housay, 75887 Paris, France. It is written in French and English. The cost is $200. U.S. Perhaps our French members can review this publication in a future Pulsar? (DMD)
Are you Online?
The IAAA wants to compile a directory of all members who have e-mail addresses, to speed up communication. Andy Chatkin has suggested that we should have a home page on WWW, while Joel Hagen has already set up an IAAA Lounge — a virtual text environment where we can all interact real-time over the Net.
Please send your e-mail address to Mike or Dave, preferably by e-mail (M) and with a cc. to the other. Our addresses are on the back page.

DESTINY IN SPACE (II): an in-depth report by Don M. Dixon

This is a worthy sequel to the Imax extravaganza The Dreams Are Alive, Imax is a large format cinematic process that produces an extremely sharp, projected image 50 feet high by 70 feet wide. Generally about 40 minutes long, Imax films are shown in custom theaters at museums or theme parks. A good, low-flying aerial scene filmed in Imax can give a great roller coaster effect, but the sheer size and crystalline clarity of the image is what really gives Imax its punch. Imax camera flown aboard shuttles are truly the next best thing to being there.

In Destiny we are treated to some great footage of astronauts performing monitor sickness experiments in Spacelab, the ISEP deployment and repair missions, and a shuttle landing is truly more impressive than the real thing! The film explores future possibilities in space with some great — and some not-so-great — computer graphics.

Clearly, IAA Imax could have helped the production of this footage; Jupiter is modeled as a candy-striped orb that makes NASA's Voyager colors look downright realistic, and there is not a lot of imagination in the composition of some scenes. A Venus flyover based on the Magellan database has the old brownish-hue coloring and grotesque elevation enhancement of the JPL original. I suppose this is impressive to some, but I'd have to see it on a player, not on a screen, to appreciate the art of Venus in one of these films.

Far more satisfying is a new Mars flyover, rendered at Imax resolution with a red and yellow comic-strip map applied to hide pixelation. The sky is properly colored and, most pleasingly, the verticle scale is not exaggerated. We see Valles Marineris as it actually is.

The finale includes a delightful sequence on terraform- ing. When I pointed out Mars to my 4 year old tonight, he remembered the scene "where they gave Mars an ocean" — from a film he's seen over a month ago! It's a powerful image, to be sure. The film is well worth seeing.

... IAA input could have helped...
(D.A.H.)

ARS AD ASTRA
The First Art Exhibition in Earth Orbit:
CALL FOR ART

Many of you may already have heard from member Arthur Woods of the Ours Foundation regarding this unique opportunity to fly your artwork in space. If you have not yet responded, don't delay!

Up to 50 works dedicated to the theme 'Space and Humanity' will be selected for this visionary and important event in space. To qualify, the work may consist of either drawings or paintings using a water-based medium such as watercolor, acrylics or inks. Due to weight considerations each must measure 21 x 30 cm and be done on special paper which will be provided. Each artist may submit up to three pieces, of which one may be selected.

The artworks selected will be flown on the space station as part of NASA's EuroMir '95 mission. It is currently scheduled for the Progress supply launch on 15 September 1995. After arrival, the artwork will be installed on the space station by the cosmonauts to be sent up for the mission. It may be flown on the next Mir mission or on the shuttle if necessary.

This will take place during a television transmission during the mission. The artist of the selected artwork will also receive a check for $200 from the Ours Foundation. The registered artwork must be received by 15 November 1994. Please write direct to:

THE OURLS FOUNDATION
P.O. Box 180, CH-8424 Embrach, Switzerland
Tel: +41 1 865 08 53
Fax: +41 1 865 26 65

Treasurer's Report:
April 21, 1993 to April 1994

starting balance: $16,151.97
deposits $ debits $ membership: 1,780.00 100.00 exhibits: 2,500.00 150.00 tax return: 67.57 interest: 95.79 postage: 0.00 222.08 total: 10,594.83 472.08 balance: $11,122.75

Art of the Cosmos' three year tour ended in September last year. It opened at the Hayden Planetarium in 1991, went to the Discovery Museum in Bridgeport, CT, the Arts and Science Center in Statesville, NC, the Bergen Museum in Pavus, NJ, and finished at the Maryland Science Center in Baltimore, MD. The expenses of building it were just $8,000 and what it took in was about $400. I've really only made the title in order to interest the public in the various museums. However, I will probably be doing shows from time to time, as a matter of fact, in various locations, there is an interesting one on the horizon; I'll keep you posted.

Beth Avary

New Member Profile:

Jane Ira Bloom, a new member, was featured in Time, "Women: The Rund Ahead. What does America's space program have in common with a soprano saxophone?" Quite a lot, when the instrument is played by Jane Ira Bloom, 35, a jazz virtuoso who was the first musician commissioned to create a score for NASA's art program.

Witnessing a Discovery shuttle launch close up inspired her to compose a four-part suite entitled 'Rediscovey', which premiered at Cape Canaveral last fall. Long influenced by the interplay between music and space, Bloom has also composed scores for the famed Pilobolus Dance Theater and the repertory theater at Yale, where she earned a master's in sax in 1977.

She uses a synthesizer, controlled by foot pedals, to amplify her atonal effect, e.g. the drop in pitch that occurs when a train rushes by with its horn blaring. Bloom has six times been cited in Down Beat's annual critics' poll as a talent deserving wider recogn.ition. As to why she first took up the notoriously cranky instrument, she has a winning answer: "It looked so shiny."


Computers in Space Art

Well I really thought that my piece last time would produce a sack full of letters in response, but not so — yet, at least. Whether you know it, or like it, or not, computers are going to affect your life and the way you work (if they don't already do so), and I'm not talking about computerized tax bills!

Following last issue's EuroReport, John Lewis sent me some samples which he had produced using VisImpo as a starting point, but manipulated with CorelDraw and Corel PhotoPaint!, using a 386 PC which he originally went to process the CCD images from his 16 inch Newtonian telescope. The results of one of these projects can be seen on the cover, and I think you'll agree that it's quite impressive. Further comments from John can be found in EuroReport (page 7).

Don Dixon says he has mixed feelings. The landscapes generated by programmers such as Bryce, he says, have a quality comparable to much of the stuff that we do in the animation business, and he would not feel that his style had been compromised by including it in a pre-generated background in a painting. (But Don uses a super-Amiga and doesn't have Bryce.)

He says that which concerns him most is that we shall in the not-too-distant future lose our ability to evoke a "gee whiz!" from our audience by simply painting a beautiful, unrealistic landscape. They can do that themselves. Further, says Don, there is a certain futility in spending hours to produce art that is virtually indistinguishable from something that can be computer generated. Why bother?

The silver lining of the cloud is that we will be forced to really stretch as artists now. Technology has caught up to us.

Don't you have any feelings about all this? Perhaps you've evolved into computers, and don't want it? Perhaps you don't even know what Bryce or VisImpo are? If so, tell us and we'll try to include a primer...

Incidentally, Arthur C. Clarke's unusual new book The Snows of Jupiter (see last issue) uses VisImpo illustrations to 'green' Mars, and US publication has now been signed up. It's well worth a look.

(D.A.H.)
The Birth of the IAAA
by Michael Carroll

It was ten years ago last November, within the walls of a surreal, ancient hotel in the desert wasteland of Death Valley, California, that the International Association for the Astronautical Sciences came into being. Since then, the organization has grown from fifteen artists in two countries to 125 artists from eight nations.

The IAAA has become a non-profit organization, paving the way for various grants, one of which has come from the Planetary Society to help fund our highly successful Dialogues projects. Dialogues involved a series of workshops and exhibitions including European, Russian, and American artists. There have been newspaper and magazine articles, television interviews, posters and art auctions the world over. We have hosted art shows and artists' workshops in many locations throughout the world; plans for others are in the works.

The genesis of the IAAA was not in Death Valley, but rather in an art show sponsored by the Planetary Society. The Society, a long-time IAAA supporter, wanted to host the first international space art show in conjunction with the Voyager 2 Saturn encounter in 1981. I was asked to put the exhibition together using a list of artists from the recently debuted Cosmos television series, as well as artists supplied by Astronomy magazine art director Tom Hunt. The show was a stunning success, thanks to the generosity of the Planetary Society and the talents of art show coordinator Judy Titelman.

Judy had an impromptu gathering of the artists at her home. At this party, Bill Hartmann suggested that we hold a workshop in Hawaii to study the volcanoes and paint the field.

The following year, eight artists met in Hawaii in what would be the first of many workshops. This highly successful conference was followed by the meeting in Death Valley in 1983. It was during this assembly that the IAAA was officially formed. A "triumvirate" of three co-presidents was formed, staffed by Kim Poor, Rick Sternbach, and myself.

Since then, we have changed our structure to have a president, vice president of European affairs, vice president of North American affairs, secretary, treasurer, exhibition coordinator and board of directors. Presidents Kim Poor, Kim Szathmary and Dennis Davidson have served us faithfully in what is often a thankless job. Thank you! Laurie Ortiz is our current membership chairman, for those of you who have friends interested in our group. Vice President David A. Hardy and Thomas L. Hunt round out the administration, along with Joel Hagen, creative air-strike leader. A host of volunteers makes the organization function. Without all of you, we could not do the things we do.

After our initial formation, an art show followed, curated by the Reuben H. Fleet Space Theater's art director, Laurie Ortiz. The Fleet Center gave much support to the "Visions of Space" project, and the show traveled to several other cities. Since then, Beth Avery has taken the reins of Art Show Coordinator, sending IAAA works throughout the world on numerous exhibitions.

We have held workshops in Moscow, Iceland, Arches National Monument, Canyon De Chelley, the Crimea, Hawaii (again - for a solar eclipse) and other sites. In addition to organizing a southwest workshop, Kim Poor has popularized astronomical art through fine art prints and original art sales by catalog and gallery venues.

Much has happened in the past decade. With the help and creativity of its members, the next ten years of the IAAA promise to be more exciting, as our organization grows and continues to promote space science, science education, and art which depicts the astounding cosmos around us.

Have you paid your Annual Subscription? Remember that unless you are a paid-up member you won't be able to take part in IAAA workshops, exhibitions or other activities.

"Hmmmm ..., legs but no brains. Maybe that explains their lack of enthusiasm!" Cartoon by Arthur Gilber

As I write (9 February), a British-born Shuttle astronaut, Dr Michael Foale, is in orbit, making the first spacewalk and talking to a Russian cosmonaut on the Mir space station. So the following letter sent to our President by Swedish artist Bibbi Almsteds seems particularly appropriate:

"Last summer I had the nice experience of participating in an exhibition of space art in Houston. It was part of the celebrations of the 25 years jubilee of the first Apollo landing on the Moon. The magazine Space Week invited international space artists to an exhibition at the NASA Space Center, Houston.

I have previously taken part in art exhibitions arranged in connection with Space Technology Fairs and I feel this to be an excellent channel for space art. Unfortunately space exploration has for years been mainly an American affair, leaving us space artists in Europe a bit on the side. However, the European Space Agency (ESA) is now involved in space exploration, putting astronauts in space, most notably with the Russians. Therefore I ask my European colleagues: What about closer contacts with ESA and what about a more active European/Russian branch of space artists?

From John Lewis [see cover]:

"Is it Art?"

Think of an artist sitting (or standing) in front of a canvas or board, brush in hand, busily creating an image in oil, acrylic or other favoured medium. The end result is what the artist would wish to be called a 'work of art'. Likewise, the artist, who, by arranging a few house bricks, with the addition of the odd piece of wood here and there, creates what is considered a 'work of art'. In each case, something has been created by the manipulation of a medium of one sort or another.

Recently, I sent Dave Hardy some 'artwork' [see our cover], to illustrate the sort of thing I was working on my computer. The general question he posed was: how much of this type of work is 'art'? To my mind, this is a perfectly reasonable question and one which I have asked myself. However, the more I think about it, the more convinced I am that it is art.

In my experience, an image, in its finished form, would not have been generated as such, by the computer. It requires my intervention in order to produce the final, acceptable image. Consider a computer screen as a piece of paper which remains blank until someone decides to put something on it. From then on, thought and imagination determines what is to be added and kept, and what is to be deleted. In other words, it is just another medium to manipulate.

In its present form, I'm not sure if my computer will ever be a replacement for my airbrush, but having said that, it is proving to be a useful tool for testing out ideas, before committing time and resources to more traditional methods of painting.

In finishing, if there is one aspect to all of this which deserves careful thought, then maybe, it is this: with the advent of software such as Vinges and Bryce, the question will not echo Andy Warhol's: is this a computer or Paterson's comment [see Computers in Space Art - Pulstar, Jan/Feb 1995], "which artist?"

Time, technology and hopefully, human individuality, will tell.

and from Richard Bidley:

I thought it was about time I contributed something to Pulstar. Firstly, keep up the good work of producing Pulstar - it is wonderful reading astro art articles, and so rare to get the chance to read this subject.

I was born deaf (I wonder if I am the only deaf member of the IAAA?) and I've always had a deep fascination with art, astronomy and science fiction. I was inspired by Arthur C. Clarke and space artists David A. Hardy and Adolf Schaller. I have probably produced fewer astronomical paintings than most other members of the IAAA, but I intend to change this! My family and I have just moved to Lyme Regis, Dorset for me to become a self-employed artist (but at present I am hard at work to earn a living.) It has been a lifelong ambition of mine to paint full-time.

Finally, could someone please explain where the boundary is between space art and science fiction art? Would I be right in thinking that the boundary is hazy and not sharply defined?