

'Tuesday Painters' In West Hartford Say Art Keeps Them Young

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WEST HARTFORD — For 15 years every Tuesday afternoon, the seven women have met in a sun-drenched room in the West Hartford Art League's clubhouse to paint and socialize, only taking the summers off.

During that time, the "Tuesday painters," as they're known, have created beautiful art and forged lifelong friendships.

Artwork made by the women, who are all over 75 years old, will be displayed in the league's Saltbox Gallery starting April 6 as part of the organization's 80th anniversary celebration.

Priscilla Houghton-Flynn, 94, took her first class with art league founders Gertrude Patterson and Rebecca Fields in 1933, a year before the Art League opened.

Ruth Porter, 90, has been a member for 74 years. Marion "Tig" Waters took her first class 54 years ago. Beverly Duncan, Carmen Witt, Sally Allen and Priscilla "Peg" Bergethon have all been involved for about 40 years.

Each will have eight pieces displayed in the exhibit.

Most of the Tuesday painters met in a class taught by longtime Art League teacher Mary Roy.

When Roy, whom Duncan said "was a mentor and friend and inspiration," died in 1999, Duncan had the idea that the women should continue to meet. Through good and bad — Waters recently suffered a stroke and hasn't been able to attend lately — the women have been there for each other, encouraging creativity, critiquing each other's art and just talking about life.

"This group has been wonderful. We've stayed together so many years," said Duncan, 81, as she painted an abstract piece using watercolors on shiny paper called yupo. "We talk about all the issues of the world."

The women appear to be, and act, younger than their years. They say they have art to thank.






"Art keeps you young," said Houghton-Flynn, who was working on a pastel piece that looked like a stained glass window, with bright colors and thick black lines.


"I think [being in this group] means each of us stays in touch with that creative spirit. People seem to think that keeps them going," Duncan said. "And, we like each other."




The women, who work in a variety of media, from watercolor to oil to pen and ink to pastel and beyond, say they are excited to show their work in one exhibit.

"I'm so proud of this group, I really am," Duncan said.

An opening reception for the Tuesday painters exhibit will be held on Sunday from 2 to 4 p.m. The West Hartford Art League is at 37 Buena Vista Road. The gallery is open Thursdays through Sundays, 1 to 4 p.m.

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