

FCA SIGNATURE STATUS 2016

*Signature Status with the FCA stands for a certain level of excellence achieved by the individual artists and entitles the successful applicant to the use of the letters AFCA (Associate Members), respectively SFCA (Senior Associate Members) as well as other benefits. Jurying for both levels of Signature Membership is done by our Board of Governors once a year. The next meeting will take place on **March 13, 2016**. Applications for Signature Status (AFCA and SFCA) need to be completed online by not later than **February 25, 2016**. For Signature Application forms and more information on the jurying process please visit www.artists.ca*

In the following article Standards Chair and SFCA member Gaye Adams will give an insight into what happens at the Board of Governors meeting and what jurors are looking for when jurying Signature Status applicants.



WHAT HAPPENS AT THE BOG MEETING?

By Gaye Adams,
SFCA, MPAC, AFC

Well, it's that time again—time for potential applicants to start thinking about applying for AFCA or SFCA status. As Standards

Chair for the FCA it is my task, along with the Standards Committee and the FCA Board, to establish and maintain clarity and fairness around all the processes pertaining to standards within the FCA. Juried shows, signature status applications and copyright issues come under the umbrella of standards.

In conversations with Board and Staff members, it has come to my attention that there is an air of mystery around the process of members being juried into signature status. Members seem to be uncertain about what goes on at the Board of Governors meeting, and are understandably curious.

In an effort to be transparent, I would like to lift the veil and describe to you exactly how things work during this important meeting.

The FCA staff contacts all SFCA members a few months before the event and SFCA members are given the invitation to attend. The Board of Governors is comprised entirely of SFCA

members in good standing, and we gather once a year, usually in March, for the sole purpose of jurying applicants for signature status.

Those attending often travel from the island or the interior and there is no honorarium for participating. I think it is important for members to understand that the SFCA's attending are doing so to contributing their time and shoulder all of their own expenses as well.

We have a short time of coffee and re-connecting when we arrive and the meeting convenes right on time. Once the jurying commences, no late comers are admitted as it would affect the outcome of the voting.

Voting jurors sit facing a large screen where painting images are projected. We have two sheets of paper on a clip board, one for AFCA applications, and one for SFCA applications. Entrants are numbered, and not named, and so retain anonymity. Of course if images submitted have large legible signatures on them, anonymity is compromised by the artists themselves.

All of the AFCA images are run through on the screen, about three seconds per image. After that, we start the jurying by viewing one entrant's slides at a time in the order they appear on our sheets; ten digital images, and then three originals which volunteers bring out walk past each juror for careful viewing. A box is checked by each juror indicating "accepted" or "declined," and then we move to the next applicant. A majority of votes is necessary in order to receive signature status.

Our choices are completely private and individual. There is no discussion of any kind during this process.

After the AFCA applicants have been juried, we take a short break (usually 15 minutes) and then the process is repeated for the SFCA applicants.

Out of respect for the privacy of the applicants, we do not discuss the jurying afterwards except in very general terms, as most of us want to check to see if we voted for a similar amount of acceptances and declinations. It is sort of a "check and balance" system for most of us.

In the years I have participated it has been my feeling that it is a fair and respectful system, although we are always open to discussion about how we can do it better, balancing both the objective and subjective aspects of the process.

If I may add a personal note here, I think that entering juried shows requires a certain level of courage and ambition. Submitting for a signature status requires even more courage. There is a level of vulnerability in all of us that can make the process a little scary, which means it may not be for everyone. A degree of equanimity is required.

But for those who desire to excel, to push beyond what is comfortable, to grow as an artist in every way, it is worth both the trouble and the risk of declination. Please remember, we who comprise the jurying body for the shows and for the Board of Governors meeting, have all been where all of you are right now. Most of us apply to shows at the next level and get declinations on a fairly regular basis. We understand how it feels, and we encourage you to go for it anyways. It will keep you sharp and keep you growing. Our mandate is to promote growth and excellence in art making, and the jurying process helps facilitate that.

I hope this sheds some light, and I encourage members to send any questions they might have to the FCA staff, and we will work together to make sure you get clear and concise answers.

HOW JURORS SELECT SUCCESSFUL SIGNATURE APPLICANTS

I asked a few of our regular Board of Governors attendees to share with us the criteria they employ when making their decisions in the hope of creating some insight that would be helpful to applicants.

Janice Robertson SFCA, NWS, LAI, AFC

For AFCA, I look for the obvious technical elements to be strong- good sense of design, good values, good color, competent drawing, good technique and a recognizable artist's voice or style that is evident in all the submitted pieces. I try not to let my personal taste interfere with my choices as long as the work is strong and consistent.

For SFCA, the same elements will apply as AFCA but I am going to be more demanding in terms of looking for work that is unique, attention getting and confident. I want to see the artist's maturity and personal approach shining through in each submitted piece. If there are 8 strong images and 2 that are not as good, I will usually reject the candidate. The applicant should be able to come up with 10 great images if they want to achieve SFCA.

For me, negatives for either AFCA or SFCA applicants would be work that is copying the style of another recognized artist or tired subject matter that is done in a conventional way that we have all seen many times. I like every style from pure abstract to photo realism, so style is not an issue for me, as long as the work is consistent.

Donna Baspaly, SFCA, NWS

Overall elements I am looking for:

Originality, design and composition strength; a good grasp of technical ability;

the ability of the work to sustain interest; quickly read; transcends the meaning; spontaneity; colour; line; mark making; values' simplicity; one goal—one painting; unity; unforgettable; artistic flair. These criteria are not absolutes. They are simply relative to complement the intuitive, creative response. Presentation of the artwork is important.

When I am viewing the AFCA's I look for a minimum of 8 to 9 out of the 10 paintings being of high quality and consistent in competency of creativity, technical ability and emotional ability. The style of the artist is integrated in all their work whether barns, boots, or buildings.

On viewing the SFCA's I look for a distinct 10 out of 10 professional integrity. The signature of that artist is very clear and consistent in their work.

Suzanne Northcott, SFCA

When jurying for AFCA I look for consistency,

technical excellence and an original voice. The work must be of very high caliber, and feel alive. Anything derivative or inappropriate I won't consider.

For SFCA's, these qualities are taken for granted and there must be, in addition, a sense that a mature voice is bringing expertise, intelligence and heart to the Federation through work that is thoughtful, intentional, personal and wonderfully executed.

Kiff Holland, SFCA

Simply put: composition, colour, attack, emotion, response, finish.

Dene Croft, SFCA, FCA Board President

What I look for when jurying an AFCA candidate:

Principally a cohesiveness in style and application of technique. A level of ability at least approaching a professional standard.

Originality in the subject and some overall maturity in the execution.

What I look for in a successful SFCA candidate:

A consistent standard of overall excellence in application of technique and brushwork. A consistent level of ability generally excepted in our industry as "professional". A distinctive style and a single creative focus and direction. I also look for the artist's ability to paint a variety of subjects with an equal level of proficiency.

As you can see, each juror has slightly different criteria with many common threads woven throughout. As there are generally in excess of 20 jurors involved, I believe the collective wisdom and experience prevail.

I wish you all happy painting and the best of luck with your signature application.



Artworks by successful Signature Applicants 2015

Deadline: February 25, 2016

Signature Status 2016

Are you ready to take your membership with the FCA to the next level?

Active and AFCA members have now the possibility to apply for their Signature Status (AFCA / SFCA)!



Visit www.artists.ca to download the **Signature Status Application Package 2016**