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WEDNESDAY, DEC. 19, 2012

## Surprises At This Year's 'Watercolor Wisconsin'

By [Judith Ann Moriarty \(by-author-67-1.html\)](#)



The opening of the "Watercolor Wisconsin 2012" exhibition was a watery affair in more ways than one. Outside the grand old house, known in Racine as the Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts, water poured from grey skies. Inside, 119 juried-in pieces by 86 artists waited scrutiny in this 46th year of the statewide competition. The narrow entry hallway had images of kitty cats, bunnies and buoys, but among the ho-hum was a terrific horizontal acrylic etching (*Front Range*) by Robert W. Andersen, a Racine resident. It would have been on my short list prize-wise, but it didn't make the cut.

Beyond, in intimate rooms, primarily pristine renderings of the conservative kind gave the exhibition a predictable bent (and curiously, many of the images involved images of water). But suddenly, dead ahead in a tiny second floor space, was (wow!) *Warrior Cock Fighter*, an over-the-top 2012 gender-bender by Amy Misurelli-Sorensen. The painting features a bare-breasted, fleshy female attached to a cock's flaming red head. I later found out that it won an "Award of Merit."

Visit Misurelli-Sorensen's website ([amymisurellisorensen.com](http://amymisurellisorensen.com)) and click on her "pin up" series to find an expertly rendered Pinocchio, who yearns to be a "real boy," wearing high heels. Pinocchio, the 1883 child of Italian novelist Carlo Collodi, is a clue (perhaps) to the artist's fascination with classical Mannerist paintings. She studied them in great detail during a 2012 sojourn in Venice, Italy, where she was artist-in-residence at Scuola Internazionale di Grafica Venezia.

Closer to home, she's an associate lecturer at Kenosha's Carthage College and continues to participate in Wisconsin exhibitions. I find it totally fascinating that from 2010-11, she studied at Tom Huck's Woodcut

Bootcamp, where she created a body of work with the legendary Missouri artist. Let the woodchips fall where they may, but this artist is sensational. Fight on.

The technique of watercolor currently involves acrylic and gouache, collage, crayon, pencil and ink, graphite, found objects (by the masterful JoAnna Poehlmann), inkjet printing and casein. And lest we forget the aforementioned unforgettable *Warrior Cock Fighter*—gouache and graphite have never looked so swell.

"Watercolor Wisconsin 2012" runs through April 27, 2013, at the Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts, 2519 Northwestern Ave., Racine. For more information, visit [ramart.org](http://www.ramart.org) (<http://www.ramart.org>).

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