

The Owl Award is given to a Greenwich Pen Women member engaged in creative work in Art, Music and/or Letters. She is selected for her outstanding talent and achievements in her field, in recognition and appreciation of her service to the community, and in gratitude by her fellow Pen Women members.

In general, we try to honor a different discipline each year although some disciplines have more members than others and there are many deserving members whom we would like to honor.

This particular member, Ellen Hackl Fagan, is our outstanding choice for this year. Her achievements in her field include, until the pandemic, a vibrant contemporary art gallery, the Odetta Gallery, on the Upper West Side in Harlem. She has curated changing exhibitions of contemporary art focused on Color Theory, Minimalism, Glyphs, Buddha Mind, Fluxus, History, Humor, Psychedelia, Ephemera, Science, Math and Music which were reviewed in Artillery, The New Criterion, Wag Mag, and Arts in Bushwick.

Honors and Awards include in 1994, the grand prize for Art in Motion, Kinetics, Movement and Change, Farmington Valley Art Center, Farmington, CT.

In 2004, at CREATIVE CONTRACTIONS, HOMAGE TO RUBE GOLDBERG, Stamford Museum & Nature Center, Stamford, CT, she received a \$2500.00 grant award as well as having her work exhibited. In that same year, the RADIUS, PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EXHIBITION AND SERIES FOR EMERGING ARTISTS, Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum and the Ridgefield Guild of Art, Ridgefield, CT, awarded Ellen exhibition and mentorship.

In 2011, the GREENWICH HISTORICAL SOCIETY COMMUNITY ARTISTS SERIES, Greenwich, CT, awarded Ellen exhibition of her work.

In 2014, during the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, Art in Public Spaces event, Ellen was selected as a finalist for Percent for Art Public Commission.

So you ask, I'm not in the Art discipline, what kind of work does she do as an artist? An interdisciplinary abstract painter, Ellen builds connections between color and sound using color-saturated paintings, sculpture, installations and collaborative projects that explore our potential for synesthesia, the stimulation of one sense leading to involuntary experiences in a second sensory pathway. This practice often results in ad hoc performances with viewers. Balanced between randomness and intention, like jazz music, Ellen's art reveals limitless possibilities for improvisation. Ellen also invented The Reverse Color Organ (RCO), a web app that enables viewers to playfully interact aurally with color. She exhibits her work extensively, curates, writes, and creates opportunities for collaborations with artists, curators, musicians, and coders to further her projects.

If you take a look at Artsy.com, and enter her name, you will see a number of paintings under the title of Seeking the Sound of Cobalt Blue. All I can say is WOW.

Within the community, she has organized and facilitated read aloud groups on Joyce's Ulysses and Melville's Moby Dick. She has taught at a wide variety of venues including as an art instructor for the Meriden Boys and Girls Club. Other teaching experience has included the Visiting Artist Program at the Mattatuck Museum and through the museum's Visiting Arts, Kids at Risk program. She has also taught at the Urban Artist's Initiative in Waterbury, at the Southbury Senior Citizens Services, as a teaching assistant at the Hartford Arts School, and as an instructor at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT. as well as being an instructor in the Student Docent Program.

Within Pen Women, Ellen has facilitated visibility of the work of some of our GPW artists. She has offered tours of her gallery for members. She has participated in art field trips – for instance the enjoyable day spent at David Hays Sculpture fields with the son of the artist. She served as GPW treasurer for two years. She provided a meeting place for our efforts to put together a Suffragist series of art, music, and articles for the National League of American Pen Women's quarterly, and came up with the idea as well. Unfortunately, the pandemic damped down the initial enthusiasm for this project and it was reduced to individual submissions that did not include the variety of ideas put forward to their Board.

And finally, her boundless energy, enthusiasm, and good humor make her great fun to spend time with. Congratulations Ellen!