

## Archway Gallery takes juried art show online amid pandemic

Tracy Maness – July 8, 2020



Although Archway Gallery considered canceling its 12th Annual Juried Art Exhibition earlier this year because of the pandemic, the show had to continue.

On Sunday, July 5, the gallery, located at 2305 Dunlavy in Houston, held a Facebook Live watch party that revealed 39 selected pieces from 243 submissions. Of those 39, three winners and five honorable mentions were chosen. The show that includes all 39 selections is going on both virtually and in person by appointment only through July 30.

“It’s just a really gratifying and satisfying way to sort of share our space for a short time with artists who might not have that opportunity otherwise,” said the exhibition’s co-chair, Liz Conces Spencer.

Archway Gallery is owned and operated by 33 artists. Spencer said they typically like to have the “wheels on the bus” by January, with a prospectus sent out to bring in different artists from the outside; a juror chosen and lined up; and a charity partner ready to work together. But as the COVID-19 pandemic began to take shape,

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Spencer and her co-chair Becky Soria decided they would need to make alternative plans.

In the past, artists would pay to enter the contest and then drop up to two pieces by the museum. Later, they would either receive a call telling them they had been selected for the exhibition or know they hadn't and pick up their works. This year, artists brought their pieces during appointments scheduled half an hour apart.

"There was never a line at the door. There was never more than one person," Spencer said. "And they didn't even come in the gallery, with the exception of one difficult piece, which needed a couple of people to carry it in. And so that worked out well and was a nod to the times that we live in."

Artist Ziping Wang took home first place for her oil painting, *Staring at Night Sky*. She also received a \$500 cash prize and guest privileges at the gallery for a month. Wang said she has been making art as far back as she can recall, learning from her father who taught art at a local university.

"I have grown up running around his solvent-scented studio filled with skylight, knocking over paint buckets and snacking on apples and bananas from his classroom still-life setups," Wang said. "As a kid, I always feel like there are so many things I want to express through paint, but I don't have the proper technical skills to do it."

Later, she studied art at Rhode Island School of Design. She painted the winning piece from one night outside her boyfriend's parents' home in Sugar Land, where she has been riding out the pandemic. Wang said the work's inspiration came from a mixture of emotions inside her. The image is quite fragmented and overloaded because it comes from a combination of insecurity, anxiety, but also faith and optimism," she said.

The show is viewable at [www.archwaygallery.com](http://www.archwaygallery.com). The entire exhibition is also in the gallery on view by appointment only through July 30, along with another exhibition, *BlackLivesMatter: Time for Change*. To make an appointment, email [info@archwaygallery.com](mailto:info@archwaygallery.com). Fifty percent of the proceeds from each piece sold goes to the Houston Junior Forum, and 50 percent goes to the artist.