

Josephine Coniglio, *Easton Irregular*, Art Profile, February 2013

Two seconds after Josephine Coniglio and I met, we discovered that we had lived within blocks of each other in San Francisco. Complete sentences flew out the window, and we began happily hopscotching over memories of the foghorns, the ocean air, liberal politics, the Sunset District, the parks, the art world, the delicious food, the art house movie theatres. (Josephine, did you also climb the stairs of Golden Gate Heights and think you'd always feel that chill ocean wind?) She taught painting, figure and landscape drawing, and design/color theory at City College that was known for its "strong and affordable" art department. She received her B.F.A. from the California College of Arts (I still remember CCA for glass, fiber, wood and clay, before it became a "bastion of postmodern practice") and her M.F.A. from the San Francisco Art Institute. How well I remembered trudging up steep Chestnut Street to that grey fortress for a drawing class, or a movie, or a lecture, or to buy paint in the store in the basement and see all the kids in black smoking and posing around the lily-clogged fountain.

She and I both showed at the SFMOMA Artist's Gallery. (Josephine, I apologize if I spilled wine on you—the openings were always so crowded. Do you remember that infernal Zydeco music?) We both adored Marian Parmenter, the gallery's Art Director, and she once said to me, "There are over 300 of you artists and one of me: how can I show you all?" But she did show us, and she sold our work and encouraged us keep working. (You said you showed your paintings of baseballs at George Krevsky's gallery in his annual spring baseball show--did you know he grew up in Boiling Springs, PA, 5 miles from my hometown? I found this out when we were installing a priceless Roy Lichtenstein mural for him. "God," I thought, "if I mess up, I couldn't even hide in Pennsylvania!") The art world is small enough, but the San Francisco art world was miniscule, and surely we must have crossed paths many, many times in the 20-plus years we lived there.

Since moving to Nazareth, Josephine has built new bridges to the art world. She teaches drawing at East Stroudsburg University and drawing, design and art theory through the Art Institute of Pittsburgh's Online Division. She taught art appreciation and drawing briefly at Centenary College in New Jersey. In 2010-11, she helped found the Art Education Program in Nazareth, volunteering her grant writing and design skills and giving drawing demonstrations at the Nazareth Center for the Arts.

In 2010, Josephine showed her *Pools* series at Home & Planet in Bethlehem. Sensual and super-realistic, these works directly communicate the solitary, muffled, underworld, watery feeling of swimming. She says she likes to paint water since "it takes me inside painterly space. I experience the light effects, opacity, and translucent effect of liquid paint." She also exhibited at the Allentown Art Museum's 30th Juried Show in 2009, at DIVA Gallery and at the Banana Factory's "Masters of the Arts" show, both in Bethlehem. Some of her *Pitches* paintings were in "Looking at Baseballs," a show at Cooperstown Art Association in Cooperstown, New York. She uses baseballs as still life subjects yet she eroticizes them by "directing the gaze to a seductive form." She also paints baseballs that have been busted open in use,

emphasizing mortality and decay, incorporating the idea of *vanitas*, a prevalent 16th-century painting genre that emphasized the meaninglessness of earthly life.

After we reminisced about San Francisco, she told me she has over 50 free online Art Instructional Tutorials on Youtube. Josephine, maybe now I can finally throw out that useless Photoshop manual I carried all the way across the country!

—Elizabeth Johnson