

# SPECTRUM

THE BEST IN CONTEMPORARY FANTASTIC ART



**22**

*EDITED BY*  
**JOHN FLESKES**



The Spectrum Gold, Grand Master and Silver Awards

## THE SPECTRUM MUSE

When the new director, John Fleskes of Flesk Publications, assumed his role with *Spectrum 21*, he began to lay the foundation for an entirely redesigned award to further serve as an encouragement through the form of respect and support for the artists whose works are selected by the Spectrum jury for special recognition.

"The Spectrum awards have always been about providing the artists with an award that they could call their own," explains Fleskes. "I wanted to hand out an award that people would hold and say, 'This is too nice to be an award!'"

Fleskes selected the fine artists Colin and Kristine Poole to redesign the award and gave the Pooles *carte blanche* to come up with a concept and design.

"We often hear of the artist's muse," explains Colin Poole. "Of the nine Muses in ancient Greek mythology, there actually wasn't a Muse for the visual arts. In those times, painters and sculptors were considered merely technicians who copied nature. Given the incredible range of imagination and creativity demonstrated by artists in this field, it seemed like the perfect opportunity to create the Muse of Creation to reward their achievements.

"In this version, the Muse is portrayed as a classic, French-style sculpture, an elegant presence you might find on a monument in Paris—quiet, simple and direct. She is wearing an elaborate horned headdress that can be seen either as ornamentation or as part of her being. In this rendering, the Muse is enchanted by the artist's creation and is herself presenting an award to the artist. "In her outstretched hand is the 'flame of creation'—a three-dimensional adaptation of the Flesk Publications logo.

"We have both worked in bronze foundries and have cast our own work start to finish—including molding, wax pouring and chasing, investing with ceramic shell, pouring the actual bronze, de-vesting and chasing the bronze and patination. Kristine's experience with silver casting also came into play as the Muse progressed. This background in bronze and silver-casting processes proved critical, as we were able to take on parts of the production that were too expensive to hire others to do, parceling out the mold-making and the welding/patinas to the

best in their fields in Santa Fe.

"We would like to express our immense gratitude to all of the people who jumped in to help and, in particular, special thanks to Brad Neighbor, Chris Gugelman, Mike Massey and Diane Tintor."

"Beyond the recognition of individual achievement, the awards—the iconic trophy, the ceremonies, the traditions—are a celebration of us all, of the art community as a whole," add Spectrum founders Cathy and Arnie Fenner. "The more attention that is attained for what we do the better it is for everyone. And awards—and the electricity and excitement of presentation ceremonies—are invaluable ways to grow the public's awareness and, hopefully, appreciation of who we are. They're educational moments.

"That was the motivation behind the Spectrum Awards ceremony as part of Spectrum Fantastic Art Live. It would have been infinitely easier—and cheaper—to give the awards out in a hotel ballroom or in the convention center, but where's the fun in that? Artists and their works affect our lives every day in an infinite number of ways, so it only seems right that for at least one night of the year there's a spotlight on the art community with a gala in a real theater with all the trappings."

The Silver Awards are bronze with a silver nitrate patina. This creates the luster of silver while still being decidedly a bronze. The flame of creation is cast in sterling silver. The Gold Awards are bronze with a golden patina. The flame of creation is sterling silver gilded in 24K gold.

Around the base of the sculpture, inscribed text alludes to the ancient cuneiform writing pressed into clay tablets and features the artists' invocation to the Muse of Creation: "Sing within me, Muse. Dwell in my imagination. Inspire me to bring forth my creations."

The Grand Master Award is distinctive, so the sculpture has additional embellishments that are iconic to the body of the work of this year's recipient—a nod to his or her unique brilliance.

All of the bronzes have a polished black marble base.

The new, redesigned Spectrum award was unveiled at the Spectrum 22 awards ceremony on March 23, 2015, at the historic Folly Theater in Kansas City, Missouri.