

2011 OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONAL IN THE ARTS AWARD

Harry Simon

Highly respected in the arts community, Harry Simon has been a major force promoting the visual arts in Morris County and beyond. A lifelong resident of Morristown, he opened the Simon Gallery in Morristown in 1996 with his wife Mary Ellen. Within the first four years of operation, the Simon Gallery had four *NY Times reviews*, including one by Barry Schwabsky who said, "The Simon Gallery here is the kind of bright, undistracting space in which most artists dream of showing their work: a near-ideal art gallery." After initially showing both realistic and abstract art, the gallery now focuses exclusively on abstract, non-objective painting, photography and sculpture. One of his most memorable exhibits was the Motorcycle Show (in 1998), inspired by The Art of the Motorcycle exhibit at the Guggenheim Museum. Being a motorcyclist himself, Harry filled the gallery with Ducati motorcycles and artist Ilene Steglitz's digital drawings. A motorcycle ride from the gallery to Bear Mountain and then to the Guggenheim for a rooftop party and a docent's tour of the exhibition was only topped by the sale of ALL of Steglitz's works to the company that took Ducati public the following year.

The Simon Gallery mounts eight exhibitions a year featuring works of emerging, mid-career and established artists from across the country and Europe. It has been a focal point for expanding the awareness of contemporary art in the Morris area – and is the only gallery of its type in the area.

Harry has juried shows at *City Without Walls*, *The Watchung Arts Center*, and the *Arts Guild of Rahway*. He also advised

the Morris Museum on their first *Art of Collecting Fine Art* fundraiser and was a panelist at the event (as well as a conversationalist at the Arts Council of the Morris Area's first Great Conversations fundraiser).

This past year, Harry has worked to spotlight Morristown as a visual arts destination and to encourage public engagement with the arts. He organized a collaboration among multiple galleries to create two *Art Around the Park* events - free, self-guided gallery walks which allowed the public to view a large variety of quality artworks in multiple private and public gallery spaces near the Morristown Green. Participating galleries included the Egan Gallery, the Gallery at 14 Maple, the Simon Gallery, the Atrium Gallery, the lobby of the Gensler architectural firm and the Hyatt's Eclectic Grill. Harry himself curated not only his own gallery space but also the exhibits at Gensler and the Eclectic Grill.

Additionally, during this past year, Harry attended the New Jersey's conference on *Arts Builds Communities* at Rutgers University with other Morristown area community members, and now serves on the *Arts Builds Communities* initiative in Morristown.

Therefore, for his creative and excellent work as a gallery owner, his commitment to broadening the community's appreciation and awareness of the arts and his ongoing work to provide new opportunities for artists and for the public to engage in the arts, the Arts Council of the Morris Area is proud to recognize Harry Simon with the 2011 Award for Outstanding Professional in the Arts.

NOTE:

Would Harry Simon please come up for to receive the award

May 12, 2011