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Art Students Tap into History at Seattle's Newest Cider Bar

Stunning copies of master works provide a unique atmosphere for a unique venue.

SEATTLE, WA – May 7, 2013 – For hundreds of years, artists such as Edgar Degas, Mary Cassatt and Georges La Tour have copied works of the Old Masters to gain new perspective, inspire creativity, and hone their skills in the classical tradition. Today, on Capitol Hill in Seattle, WA, a new generation of art students is reaching back into the past to create works of art for a uniquely modern venue.

Capitol Cider, with plans for more than 100 varieties of cider and at least 70 meads (a wine made with honey), is the first of its kind in Seattle, and a wholly modern public house with an eye to the past. Carved lion heads adorn handrails and dark wood surrounds the fireplace and vintage piano. And, hanging salon style on the walls, are more than 20 well-known works of art – including Gilbert Stewart's famous portraits of George Washington and John Adams, and "Owl's Head, Penobscot Bay," by Fitz Henry Lane.

Not the originals, of course – but not prints. These are hand-painted master copies created by students in the Aristides Atelier at Gage Academy of Art, reflecting the cultural and historic significance of a bygone era. Portraits of Chevalier d'Eon and Walt Whitman hang alongside dramatic scenes of naval battles and maritime heroics, and help Capitol Cider offer a truly unique combination of history and artistry to their guests.

While America's love affair with hard cider stretches back to the first English settlers, its popularity began to wane in the early 1900s. Today, with the drink's popularity again on the rise, modern orchards combine the rich heritage of apple growing with research to produce an annual US crop exceeding 220,000,000 bushels.

“The inspiration for Capitol Cider's interior was our desire to incorporate the importance of hard cider in early America,” says designer Julie Tall, owner of ReSettle Design in Seattle. “Hard cider is the fermented drink that our country grew up on, and we wanted our interior to reflect that sense of history through its art.”

Tall contacted Juliette Aristides at Gage Academy of Art, whose students were already involved in their annual master-copying project. Creating detailed copies of a masterwork is a time-honored method for artistic training, and a regular part of the intensive curriculum in the Aristides Atelier at Gage. “Artists have always studied other artists,” says Aristides. “Not only to train the eye and

develop important techniques, but also as a way to force them into artistic decisions they wouldn't normally make."

In all, 10 artists from the atelier participated in the project, including Saavy Dani, Ulan Moore, Clara Bui, Scott McCall, Martijn Caspar Swart, Kevin Miller, David Dwyer, John Zadrozny, Bobby Di Tranni and Stephani Johnson. The unique collection also contains one original piece: a sprawling mural by Aristides Atelier graduate Tenold Sundberg. The 10-foot mural depicts a wild fight among rowdy bar patrons, in the style of renowned painter Thomas Anshutz. Sundberg utilized his fellow artists and classmates as models for the work, adding a distinctly personal element to the raucous scene.

ABOUT GAGE ACADEMY OF ART

Gage Academy of Art is celebrating more than 20 years as a vibrant extended-learning and contemporary art center, providing community based artistic development for artists of all ages and abilities. Featuring year-round programs that engage and inspire, Gage is home to public art events, lectures, youth programming, and exhibitions. For more information, connect with Gage on Facebook and Twitter, or visit GageAcademy.org.

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