First Place
Jeffrey T. Larson

Combining precise draftsmanship and painterly refinement, Jeffrey T. Larson's *Electrolux* presents a circa-1950-style vacuum cleaner with a gracefully twisted hose. The artist admired the machine's style and craftsmanship. "It was so classic, it was almost contemporary," he says, so, exploiting the tension between the elegant and the functional, he situated the vacuum on a mantel as if it were a sculpture or trophy.

A similar painting usually takes him about eight months to complete, but he finished this one in only five. "The piece seemed to paint itself," says Larson (www.jeffreytlarson.com). Still, he admits that the position of the hose proved a challenge: "I spent probably three days moving that hose around."

"This was a single-object still life, so I wanted to develop each aspect of every element and detail to the fullest in the finished piece—using nuances of light patterns, composition, the abstract flow of lines, and color," he explains. "Every refinement made it different. With a still life, I look for subtle light and nuances."

In addition to still lifes, the classically trained artist from Maple, Wisconsin, also paints landscapes and figures outdoors. He has made a living solely from his art for the past 22 years, developing a large clientele in the Twin Cities area. He also sells his work through the Eleanor Ettinger Gallery in New York City and Tree's Place on Cape Cod.

Asked about the evolution of his art, Larson says, "I hope it's become more personal. I sure hope it doesn't look like anybody else's. I'm always working on being a better draftsman and on improving every aspect of my craft. I try to paint things that I'd like to see in a museum."

■ **Candice Russell** is a freelance writer in Plantation, Florida, who writes a visual art column for the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* newspaper in Fort Lauderdale. She is also an independent curator of museum exhibitions on Haitian art and co-author of the catalog *Allegories of Haitian Life from the Jonathan Demme Collection*.