

DIALED IN

CONNECTING STATE PROGRAMS TO ISSUES AND TRENDS IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS



'Amplify Your Life' by Mary A. Rappazzo

You're invited to attend:

The CLARITY Reception

featuring:

Mary A. Rappazzo

Artist Meet & Greet

Tuesday, September 15

6:00–8:00 p.m.

Long Beach Renaissance Hotel

Pool Terrace

3rd Floor

VOICE: Mary Rappazzo

Mary Rappazzo is a deaf artist based in Los Angeles who has supported the deaf community throughout her career.

Her art has been featured in many exhibits across California and has won awards for several pieces. This year at TEDPA, Clarity is exhibiting Mary's work at the booth so we caught up with her before hand to get her take on art and life.

Q: Who are your artistic inspirations?

A: My grandmother first inspired me to paint. I began painting at age 10, with her encouragement, because she felt that I had a good creative and spatial ability. Also, I was inspired early on by some well known artists, such as Georgia O'Keeffe and Edward Hopper. I love their themes and their use of rich colors.

Q: Where do you find ideas for your paintings?

A: In some ways the origins of my paintings are a mystery to me, which is something I love about painting. When I start a painting, I sometimes do not know where or why the image came to me. However, when I step back and examine my work, I do see three common themes: One is of people connecting with each other. A second theme that moves me is social justice. Lastly, I am often inspired by the ideas brought to me in commission work. For example, I was inspired when Clarity approached me with the theme of this exhibit--a fully engaged lifestyle.

Q: You really honed in on your signature style in your early twenties. Can you expand on your style?

A: My painting style is figurative, and it depicts representational images in idealized forms that are not naturalistic. The figurative shapes lack emotional definition, so the experience of filling in those voids rests with the viewers--the emotions and thoughts that you see in the painting are your own. Perhaps you are reliving your own life experiences, or perhaps you are imagining how you might feel if you were there. I encourage the viewer to let their mind go, to project their emotions and thoughts onto the piece without inhibiting or censoring. Specifically, my signature style is a representation in which I depicted only one eye. In fact, I am so well known for this "one-eyed" style that when I told my brother I would be painting for Clarity at the TEDPA conference, he asked, "Will you paint the phones with one eye?" Next time I paint my brother, it will be with no mouth.

Q: How have your life experiences influence your art?

A: I think my hearing loss enhanced my intuitive abilities, sensitivity, and perceptions of how people engage and interact. Although I don't think about it on a conscious level, perhaps my experiences as a deaf artist makes me especially attuned to the themes I choose. I have noticed that the figures in my art are often created without a sensory organ or two, yet they are completely engaged in the world around them.

Q: Describe your involvement in the deaf artists/artists with disabilities communities.

A: Currently, I'm helping prepare an exhibition by deaf artists at the Los Angeles City Hall's Bridge Gallery, which will occur this September. This exhibition's goal is to promote awareness of the deaf artists to the mainstream public and will include a competition for young deaf artists. I have also taught art and graphic design to deaf students in the public school system and donated my art to contribute to fundraising efforts in the deaf community. I support organizations such as GLAD (Greater Los Angeles Agency on Deafness, www.gladinc.org), the California State University's at Northridge National Center on Deafness (www.csun.edu/ncod), and Hearing Loss Association of Los Angeles (www.hla-la.org), which provide valuable resources and support to people with hearing loss and their families.

Q: How do you feel about exhibiting your art at the TEDPA conference in September?

A: I am honored to be part of this exhibition and share the poster with the attendees. When Clarity first contacted me about creating a piece that expressed fully engaging in life, I felt the theme was an excellent match to my art, and I was excited to be part of this project. I appreciate the opportunity to reach a new audience.

To contact Mary about her art, exhibitions or commissions through her website, www.mar1eye.com.

TEDPA 2009: CHARTING THE COURSE

At the [2009 TEDPA conference](#), the focus is "Charting the Course." And the conference has an invigorating schedule of informative panels, exhibits and networking opportunities planned to help guide your organization on the road towards success.

Here at [Clarity](#), we are "Charting the Course" by constantly thinking forward, looking for new ways and developing new solutions to improve the quality of life for our customers. In this issue of *Dialed In*, you'll read about some of these new ideas we're exploring, from wireless technology to social media.

We can tell you more about this at TEDPA, where we'll have a special exhibit for you. [Mary Rappazzo](#), an artist who is active in the deaf community, will exhibit her art at a reception we are hosting on **Tuesday, September 15, from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.** Read more about Mary below and please be sure to see her work at TEDPA. We are looking forward to talking with you and learning about the successes and challenges you've seen since last year.

Have a great trip and see you in sunny California!

CLOSER LOOK: Wireless World

The world is shifting quickly towards wireless. From computers to phones, wireless counterparts of tried and true hard-wired devices are being created to account for this growing trend. In fact, nearly 90% of the U.S. population owns a cell phone according to [CTIA](#), the international association for the wireless telecommunications industry. This is up drastically from 70% of Americans in 2005 and 40% in 2000.

Clearly, more and more people are turning to wireless phones, which today is almost a misnomer as the devices now functions as cameras, computers, music players and gaming gadgets. But where does this transition leave people, such as seniors, who aren't adopting this technology quickly? Or people who have disabilities that make using these devices difficult--or even downright impossible? These are important questions to consider for consumers and manufacturers alike, as we will soon be living in a world not cluttered with tangled wires, but driven by the next generation of wireless networks.

CELL PHONES FOR ALL

Most often, it's seniors who suffer from disabilities like hearing loss, arthritis and poor vision--health challenges that aren't conducive to using modern day cell phones. However, instead of living in a wireless dark age, seniors are increasingly embracing cell phones despite experiencing difficulties using or understanding them. While landlines still remain a staple for the 65 and up group, 64 percent of the adults over 65 used a cell phone in 2008 according to a national survey from the [Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project](#).

Clearly, seniors have interest in these devices, as they provide a means to stay connected with family, friends and caregivers and can contact help during an emergency. But it doesn't take a trained eye to see that mainstream cell phone manufacturers ignore this group. On just about every model, buttons are too small, sounds are too quiet and menus aren't intuitive. This leaves seniors searching for more friendly devices that are built to fit their specific needs.

In order to provide your customers with a modern wireless device that fits their needs, the design must stretch beyond the typical tactic of "dumbing down" a pre-made cell phone by adding larger numbers or putting pictures of older users on the packaging. Rather, development of these phones must start from the ground up with seniors' needs in mind.

CREATING WINNING WIRELESS SOLUTIONS

When we set out to create the [ClarityLife C900](#), a cell phone for seniors, we began with our specialty: amplification. Currently, the C900 is the only amplified cell phone on the market and the 20 extra decibels of sound nicely complement the large text on the big, bright display and the oversized buttons for people with low vision. Plus the robust size makes it easy to hold for those with arthritis. Just as important, it also has an emergency help button on the back that, when held down, automatically calls and texts five pre-programmed contacts should the user need help.

But it's not simply about cell phones. Wireless technology means connection. For example, another solution Clarity built for seniors from the ground up is our [AM6000 wireless notification system](#). Ideal for those with moderate to

profound hearing loss and the deaf, this system connects to the telephone, doorbell, alarms and motion sensors to alert users of activities within the home. Bright LEDs have distinct flashing patterns for each event and a bed shaker is included for those times spent relaxing so the hearing impaired never miss another call or visitor.

The need for these devices is evident, and the C900 has already been recognized as the leader in this category by major media outlets such as [The Wall Street Journal](#) and [The New York Times](#). As wireless technology advances, seniors and people with disabilities can't be left out in the cold. Make sure the wireless products that are being offered to your customers are designed--not just marketed--with their unique needs in mind.

GETTING SOCIAL

Did you know that social networks and blogs are the fourth most popular online activity, surpassing personal email? Millions of people belong to them and everyday, more and more people and organizations are connecting via social networks. And now, you can connect with Clarity by joining our [Facebook fanpage](#) or following us on [Twitter](#). We also recently launched a www.clarityproducts.wordpress.com.