

THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2014

Around the Valley

OUR COMMUNITIES IN BRIEF



GEORGE SAKKESTAD/STAFF

Holly Van Hart, of Saratoga, won the Triton Museum of Art's 2013 Statewide Painting Competition.

CHAMPION SARATOGA ARTIST

Painting without pause

By Khalida Sarwari

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SARATOGA — If anyone was looking for Holly Van Hart on Christmas Day, she could be found in the studio of her Saratoga home "painting up a storm."

Fresh from placing first in the Triton Museum of Art's 2013 Statewide Painting Competition, Van Hart has been busy preparing for a series of exhibitions this year.

"I have a good idea of how many works I need. I just have to work hard at creating good works," Van Hart said just weeks after a reception where she was announced as one of two first-place winners in the Triton competition for her 30-by-40-inch painting, "Possibilities Abound."

Along with the work of fellow first-place winner Cuong Nguyen, of San Jose, Van Hart's paint-

ing, depicting a nest cradling three eggs, was tops among 92 works that were ultimately selected for exhibition from more than 1,000 entries.

Van Hart and Nguyen's prize is an exhibition at Triton in November. For that, Van Hart is building on the theme of Possibilities Abound, one of several abstract nest paintings she has all over her home.

For Van Hart, it's the

symbolism that draws her to the subject matter. Nests, she said, represent our homes, and eggs stand for lives yet to be hatched and the possibilities they have ahead of them.

Eggs also signify self-invention, a concept that Van Hart applied in her personal life in June 2013 when she quit her job at Microsoft to pursue oil painting full time.

It's a decision she has not regretted, she said.

