

GIFT IDEAS

Share The Exceptional Work Of Extraordinary Artists

(NAPSA)—You can be known for having a gift for giving if you heed four hints:

1. Tailor your gift to the person. Books for book lovers, for example, especially young readers, or art prints for anyone who loves beautiful pictures—or needs to decorate. For those with a busy life or bad memory, consider a birthday book or address book. People who prefer their communication on the formal side might like exquisitely decorated note paper, while the clever may be pleased with an attractive jigsaw puzzle.

2. Your gift can brighten the lives of friends and family who enjoy genuine, original fine art and help people who inspire in their battle with adversity. How? By getting and giving cards and calendars created by a group of professional artists who are severely disabled and so paint with the brush in their mouth or their foot.

One example is Cindi Bernhardt, an L.A. college girl practicing gymnastics when her back handsprings took her straight through an open, second-floor window, resulting in her finishing up a quadriplegic and losing the use of her limbs for life.

Even the simplest tasks such as signing letters had to be done by gripping a pen between her teeth and using an “X” as her signature. Bernhardt was devastated but went on to develop a talent for painting by mouth, commenting, “I wasn’t meant to be an ‘X’ for the rest of my life.”

Bernhardt even produced a painting called “Crying Eagle” to honor the emergency rescue service people of 9/11.

One of the high points of her life was to carry the Winter Olympic torch on the back of her wheelchair through the streets of Pasadena. She was nominated to



Artist and former gymnast Cindi Bernhardt carries the Winter Olympic torch through the streets of Pasadena.

do it by a friend who explained, “Cindi captures perfectly the spirit of the Olympics.”

Now she and 70 of her U.S. colleagues at The Mouth and Foot Painting Artists (MFPA) are celebrating the 50th anniversary of their organization. To mark the occasion, they’ve produced a special 2011 desk calendar featuring their artwork.

3. Make gift giving an occasion. Taking the time and the trouble to wrap up a present prettily is usually recognized and appreciated by the recipient. Get attractive wrapping paper and add the finishing touch with a colored ribbon or cord.

4. Find gifts for the creative. Consider a book about the lives of the MFPA artists and their inspirational work.

There are three ways to get the calendar, greeting cards and other products featuring the works of MFPA artists. You can respond to a national mailing sent out every October, visit www.mfpausa.com or call (877) MFPA-USA.