

Dear Auseklis,

A couple weeks ago I was reminiscing about growing up in Trenton and you as my Latvian friend. I still live in the Trenton area – 20-acre farm. We attend events at the Trenton Museum in Cadwalader Park where we are members.

I googled your name and was overjoyed to locate your Online Gallery website and read about your life, history, and beautiful works as a Realist painter in the Philadelphia tradition and as Founder of the New Orleans Academy of Fine Arts.

Leona said your **Bonne Carré Spillway Oil on Canvas** is a Louisiana history lesson as well as visually amazing to see. Then there's charming "Tunias" accompanied with photos of your work in progress!

Leona researched further and located The Ozols Collection Facebook and posted a comment. Indra then messaged and said you'd like to hear from us.

I shared your website with my sisters, Charlotte in Maine, and Sarah in Maryland.

Our first meeting was in 3rd grade at the original Cadwalader Elementary School, 21 Boudinot & Gilbert Alley, Trenton, NJ. The replacement school is located at 501 Edgewood Ave, Trenton.

We had an assignment to draw something on a piece of paper. I drew a ship – it looked like a stick-figure. You then helped me by turning it a "realistic" 3D drawing! Your artistic future was "in the front of my nose"! And this week I recalled the drawing. Auseklis, I wish I had that drawing today!

I fondly remember your home and family at 532 West State St. (Dr. Lord, was the owner). You served me delicious pumpernickel bread and cheese. I lived up the street at 626 West State St. My backyard bordered on Gilbert Alley at the fence of our school. Our past homes are still there today, and in good condition.

I remember meeting your parents and sister, also, when you moved to Hoffman and Stuyvesant Ave. when I'd visit you.

Our teacher was Miss Claire T Mellmann, and her parents were from Germany and could speak in German. Claire lived all her life at 33 Richey Place, and she was 2 blocks from your West State St. home.

Another of our teacher's was Miss Frances M. Ottobre in 4th grade. She passed in 2010 at 82. Our Cadwalader School Principal was Miss Moffatt.

You and I were close friends and shared a wonderful time growing up at the age of 9, with our future ahead of us.

My birthday is September 12, 1941, and yours Sept 22, 1941. Two Virgos!

I would like to talk with you when you have time. H: (609) 259-3734 C: (609) 947-1831

Best regards,

George & Leona Fluck
229 Sharon Rd
Robbinsville, NJ 08961-2314

**Auseklis Ozols, born September 1941, Strenči, Latvia.
Friends from 1949, Cadwallader School, Trenton, NJ.**

[THE OZOLS COLLECTION: A Museum of American Painting and Pedagogy](#)

In his work, the artist should be like God in creation: invisible and all-powerful . . . felt everywhere and seen nowhere – Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880)

Auseklis Ozols is a consummate painter who is drawn to the beauty found in simple flowers, in the nuances of the human figure, or in the warm watery afterglow of a sunset in a misty Louisiana cypress swamp. “The world around me is what fascinates me the most,” he once explained. “Nature is found not only in the depths of a swamp but in still lifes, portraits and figure paintings. They’re all part of nature and make up the world around us.” Ozols’ philosophical mind is absorbed by the world’s metaphysical shadows, and, at the same time, it is an analytical mind that continues in what Nobel Prize winning writer Saul Bellow once described as the endless search “to find in the universe . . . what is fundamental, enduring, essential.”

Ozols’s colorful story and journey began in Strenči, Latvia, where he was born in September 1941 during the early years of World War II. His father worked as an agronomist for the Latvian government and his mother was a ceramicist and pianist. The almost genocidal war in Eastern Europe between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union forever changed life for the Ozols family. In 1940 the Soviets annexed the Baltic republics and began banishing Latvian political officials, professionals and teachers to Siberia. The German army invaded the following year and occupied the country until the Soviets retook the Baltic states in 1944. With their return, Auseklis’s father, fearing deportation to Siberia, fled to Germany just ahead of the advancing Soviet army. Trying to reach the Americans and British, they got as far as Dachau in Bavaria where they were detained for a short time and then released. The family waited out the war behind Allied lines, all the while hoping to return to a liberated and independent Latvia. But that was not to be. The Iron Curtain fell across Central Europe. In 1949, after four years in Wurzburg in the American Zone of war-torn western Germany, the family moved to Trenton, New Jersey, where the young Ozols grew up during the 1950s and the heady years of post-war America. In later life, he recalled those early years in Trenton and his introduction to art:

“After a year or two of acclamation and language adjustment, and with the help of excellent public schools, my interest in the arts was born. It was well stoked by the teachers and artists of the Trenton area. The Bucks County and Delaware Valley School of American Painting in the Trenton area was to be my first general influence and guide in my artistic career. After high school, my choice of further education was urged by many to attend the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts [PAFA], the oldest art

school in America and the alma mater of my mentors. My aesthetic sensibilities were awakened at PAFA along with the University of Pennsylvania and the Tyler School of Art at Temple University.”

