

Undercurrents *A periodic look into Portland's offbeat galleries*

BY MARY PACIOS
CONTRIBUTING COLUMNIST

In Portland, a city teeming with artists, there remains a dearth of art galleries able to accommodate all the varied and often gutsy art work. Unique spaces such as cafés, churches, theaters and pot shops have stepped up to fill this gap. I have shown my work and curated printmaking exhibitions at a few of these venues. This art column will highlight some of the current work being shown and, I hope, inspire people to seek out the gems in off-beat locations.

■ **The Resiliency of Cambodia**, hosted by the ArtReach Gallery (First Congregational Church, Southwest Park at Madison) is, in part, a heartbreaking exhibit. "Surviving S-21", an emotionally devastating series of paintings by Cambodian artist Vann Nath, depicts his experience in a Khmer Rouge prison and stands in stark contrast to the spirit and renewal of life and culture captured by Cambodian photographer Vann Channarong, Swedish photographer Anderson Jiras, and Portland photographers Peter Im and Chanly Bob, a Cambodian refugee who became a naturalized citizen. This exhibit, rounded out with the meditative photographs of Angkor Wat by expat John McDermott and Portlander Sandra Banister, sends an important message of courage and hope. Ends March 25.



VANN NATH

■ **Torn Pages: A Sketchbook Show at Mel's Frame Shop** (1000 S.W. Morrison St.) offers a peek at the inner workings of 25 artists. These pages, literally torn out of sketchbooks, run the gamut from Claudia Nix's bold charcoal landscapes to Carly Larsson's spontaneous brush and ink figures, Jason Stewart's sensitive but angry fantasies and Ona Pitschka's deft pencil sketch, "The Mermaid." Ends Feb. 25.



ONA PITSCSKA

■ Emphasizing shapes and patterns, the austere photographs of **Doug Benz at the Energy Bar** (Southwest Park Blocks at Clay Street) bring a fresh look to familiar Portland buildings. "Ladd Tower with Daytime Moon" stands out for its Zen-like quality, while "Ghost in the Glass" shows a bit of playfulness and humor. Ends Feb. 28.

Mary Pacios is a printmaker, painter and published author living in Portland.

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Recycle

by Daniel Cox

Simply to love is the conquest,
death is at all doors of life to bring us down.
Hope's slumber lingers
but a moment, then it awakens
with the new sunrise.
Love unbound to be renewed.

Mission Statement

by Avendor

Upon this age
there is a thistle
as modern kingdoms
arm their missiles.
And noxious poisons
seep into the seas
as entertainment blinds us
to its severity
And the people are selfish
wickedly warring
while the diseases plan
slowly learning.
But still light remains
left over from our days
we spent contemplatively wandering
ever hopeful, often afraid.
For the greatness of our ancestors
is alive in us at this moment.
Yes this amazing place can be ours,
if we have the love to own it.

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