

Celebration of the Arts

The Mayor's Art Show

Heralded with the Mayor's Art Show and Salon des Refusés openings, the Eugene Celebration honors the arts in Lane County with good reason: The amount of creative energy in this community is extraordinary.

Even though not all local artists participate, 477 pieces were submitted to the Mayor's juried event, and 56 selected by jurors Judy Howard (Ashland painter and gallery owner), Megan O'Connell (print maker and UO faculty), and David Turner (director of the UO Museum of Art).

Despite being smaller than usual, this selection spans a broad range of media, genres and styles, although three-dimensional arts are underrepresented, partly because of fewer submissions.

The Mayor's Choice Award went to Jon Jay Cruson's large-format acrylic painting. This vertical landscape provides a bird's eye view of a long and narrow reservoir meandering down toward the viewer between rolling hills. Striking are the stylized treatment of the landscape and the strong emphasis on composition and color design. Earth and water contours create a rhythmic pattern balanced by broad, peaceful areas of color applied without visible brushstrokes — except for the slightly incongruous impressionistic handling of the trees. The painter has achieved a work at once vibrant and serene.

In contrast, Kathleen Caprario's *Radiant Evening* is a tiny, dreamy landscape in pencil. A small white house perches on top of a towering cliff overlooking a plain bound by mountains. Sun shows through the clouds and a subtle luminosity pervades the lit areas, contrasting with the shadowed side of the cliff and creating a chiaroscuro effect. The drawing is exquisite, and the surrounding coppery metal leaf on red-toned paper adds a glow to the soft pencil texture.

Portraiture also is strongly represented. Jerry Ross' *La Vedora di Guerre* won a Juror's Award. Ross paints with elegant simplicity, using few colors — black, blue, russet and flesh tones — to remarkable effect. The economy of the composition,

with broad areas of single color, contributes to the mood of the painting and allows the woman's face to become the focus of attention. Her expression stays with the viewer: wistful, sad yet accepting. There is poise and self-possession in her bearing, but softness too, and a sense of mystery because of her expressive restraint.

In Euphemia Wesley's *Young Woman Seated, with Fruit*, quiet hues and the subject's expression convey a pensive, serene mood, while in Michael William Lane's arresting large-format *Portrait of Esther Garcia*, the model's expression is more enigmatic. Though her gaze and body stance come out strongly, her lower face remains ambiguously without detail. The contrast between her red dress and the blue-green background contributes to the tension.

Virginia Mae Sands' *School Picture*, a series of Prismacolor pencil variations on the second-grade school picture of the artist's sister, was awarded Best of Show.

Amateurs of watercolor still lifes will enjoy the strong composition in LaVonne Tarbox-Crone's *Seven Cherries* and Yachiyo Beck's *Afternoon Pears*, and Emmaline Stevens's light, joyful touch in *Tulips*.

As for non-representational art, another Juror's Award went to Jonathan Chiarella's mixed-media piece *Tonight*, a riot of colorful marks and textures on a wood panel left blank and burnished in places. Combined with her choice of colors, Jennifer Fogerty-Gibson's use of acrylic, wax, scraps of paper, writing, sgraffito and a glued number 8 in *Fragments* made me think of a palimpsest of posters, paint, and graffiti on a well-used city wall dimly-lit at night.

In Daniel Peabody's *Residue Panel II*, a rust-colored residue of burnt powder traces a few parallel lines joined at right angles against a cream background, resulting in a piece of starkly elegant minimalism with great aesthetic power. In contrast to Peabody's use of geometry, ceramicist Jocelyn McAuley in *Nebulous Diptych* used an innovative technique — ceramic glazes on canvas — to create fluidity and

movement with glass-like depth and texture: two soft brown geysers erupting in a sea of blue.

Examples of whimsicality and playfulness cut across categories. Denis Mortenson's acrylic painting *Lazy River Blues*, an homage to Eugene guitarist Don Latarski, has an upbeat sense of movement and unusual perspective, as if the scene were viewed through an extreme wide-angle lens — fittingly so, since the delightfully idiosyncratic painting illustrates Latarski's journey from youth to middle age. Scott Boyes' drawing, *Pages from the Family Album*, derives its appeal from a playful cast of characters.

Most of the few sculptures also exhibit whimsicality in concept and choice of material: Stephanie Robison's *White Forms Coupling on a Black Cushion*, created out of fabric and foam as a nod to stone sculpture; Shawn Weber's *Concrete Soul: A Vase*, mischievously combining a found trumpet and poured concrete painted black; and Annette Ooyevaar's *Lamb Cloud*, with a long list of media that includes children's underwear.

Stephen White's light sculpture, *Kaimana*, possesses at once playful asymmetry — it could be the lunar ghost of a swollen pumpkin — and the grace and lightness of an aerial vessel.

A few pieces openly seek to challenge us or make us re-evaluate our views. In Libby Wadsworth's oil painting *Insinuate*, the title word is parsed as "in sin u ate," and next to the letters stands an apple. Word and image interact to open up new meanings that echo off each other and question the patriarchal insinuation of Eve's sin.

Rex Morningstar's mixed-media shadow box, *Blind Men and the Elephant*, is a witty statement about human beliefs that provides us with only a limited and distorted idea about the world, in parallel with the fable of the blind men and the elephant. Each niche at the periphery is devoted to one of the world's belief systems, bar one that cleverly remains "available." An iron eye with a convex mirror as a pupil occupies the center of the piece, together with elephant figurines: I am shown that I see

only a reflection of my own psyche.

This year's selection of photographic works is larger than usual.

A Juror's Award went to Shelley M. Forster's set of four photographs, *Boulder Dreams*. The focal point of each image is in the far distance, providing the viewer with a mostly blurry image and thereby subverting expectations, though I found little reward for the trouble. Examples of digital prints were also underwhelming in terms of composition and print quality.

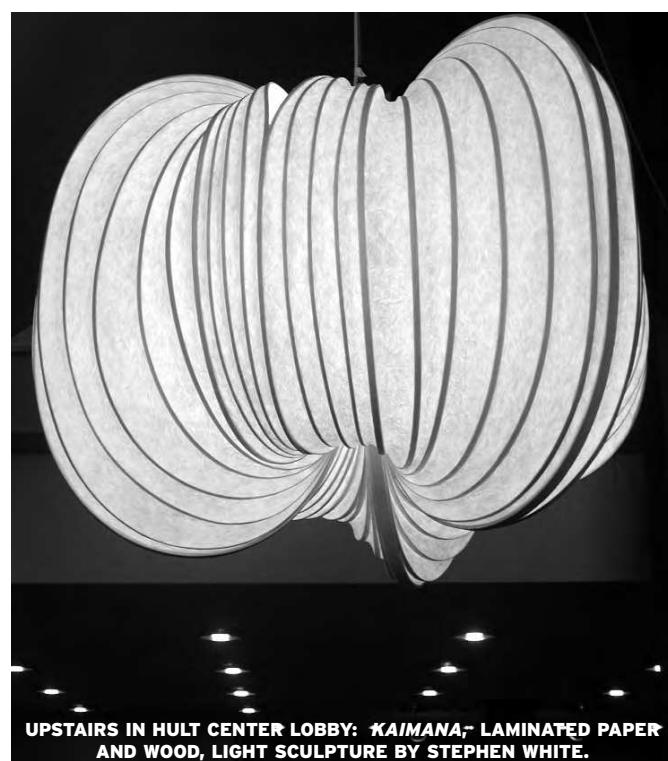
Classic, beautifully executed black and white images include Michael Hanner's panoramic view of the *Jardin du Luxembourg*; Garry Fritz' *Clouds*, whose greys, upon close observation, are subtly toned with green and purplish casts that lend the work a watercolor quality; and Bob Sanov's high-quality print *Abbey Country*, a crisp view of a canyon and wide sky in which flying clouds provide drama and contrast with the severe lines of abrupt cliffs.

In a less traditional vein, Shiley M. Collins's *Winter Sunset*, a Polaroid enhancement, is a painterly triptych of icy tree branches against a sun setting in cool tones of blue, pink and purple that reinforce the winter mood. Robert Schofield's *Secret Life* gives us a mysterious, romantic vision of a woman standing underwater next to the long stem of a lily pad.

Terri Warpinski's *Ripple Effect* is a panoramic collage representing a canoe scene on a lake surrounded by woods. The canoe in the central image creates ripples that extend to the photographs on either side. Words written in a circular pattern on the lower margins prolong those ripples and trigger a rippling effect in the viewer.

Also notable is Lawrence Getubig's large-format *Iconoclast, Series #3*. The contrast between the white angel figure and its background painted over in black acrylic heightens the emotional impact of the photograph, and the brushstrokes add turmoil and texture to the monochrome background.

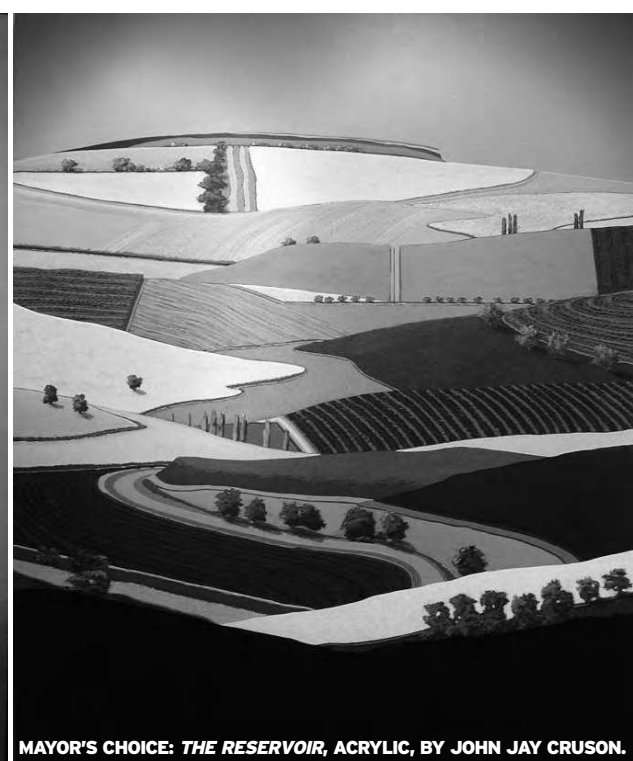
The Viewer's Choice Award will be announced during the First Friday Art Walk, October 3. **ew**



UPSTAIRS IN HULT CENTER LOBBY: *KAIMANA*, LAMINATED PAPER AND WOOD, LIGHT SCULPTURE BY STEPHEN WHITE.



LA VEDORA DI GUERRE, OIL ON CANVAS, BY JERRY ROSS.



MAYOR'S CHOICE: *THE RESERVOIR*, ACRYLIC, BY JOHN JAY CRUSON.