

Celebrating a Profusion of Art

The Salon des Refusés runs through Oct. 22 at DIVA.

Profusion in and of itself projects a kind of raw power and once more endows the annual Salon des Refusés with that peculiar energy born of sheer abundance — abundance of works, colors, genres and taste.

With its 306 pieces distributed over DIVA's six galleries and connecting halls, the 14th Salon's atmosphere is informal and celebratory. Hierarchical distinctions between high and low art are put aside; refined and kitsch, serious and camp, mature works and beginners' pieces elbow each other on an equal footing. Viewers may approach the exhibit as a treasure hunt or simply enjoy the variety in forms of expression. I recommend several visits, with surprises guaranteed each time. Few of us can see everything in a single viewing.

Representational paintings and drawings abound, and the human figure is approached from many angles. Examples of radically different approaches and moods include **Annette Gurdjian's** oil on photograph, *Seated Gargoyle*, in which the gray, stone-grained Gothic creature, its beaked but human profile starkly delineated against a red background, peers into the double outline of another. **Willie Paradis'** acrylic-and-oil portrait of Eugene artist Tom Blodgett, whose gaunt white face emerges, spectral, out of dark, dripped layers of color, as if the paint had been thrown against the propped-up canvas and allowed to run down its length.

The oil *Portrait of Carlo Giuliani* by Salon founder **Jerry Ross** is both a sensitive study of a young, open, human face and a political reminder: The 23-year-old Giuliani was shot by the Italian military police during a demonstration against the 2001 G8 summit in Genoa. "The painting style of my *Carlo* draws from that of the *Macchiaioli* of Italy," Ross said. In the second half of the 19th century, these Tuscan painters revolted against academic conventions and replaced traditional chiaroscuro with dabs (*macchie*) of colors to produce a more naturalistic effect without abandon-

ing solidity of form, unlike the later Impressionists.

Jo Dunnick's watercolor, *Fancy Dancers*, with its fluidity and movement and only the faces of its Native American dancers detailed, everything else suggested, shows the painter turning incompleteness and white space into assets. Contrast it with **Gene Care's** oil, *Trinity*, whose highly stylized, static figures bear nonetheless the levity of humor, enhanced by a pink color-scheme.

Nudes are few this year. **James Rich's** acrylic, *Unfolding*, has a science-fiction, special-effect feel to it. His female nude reminded me of the second Terminator reconstituting itself ("morphing") out of its liquid metal phase.

Next to imaginary worlds, viewers will find realistic scenes such as **Euphemia Wesley's** *Ice Cream Shop* and **Perry Prochet's** *Open*, both oils on the street-and-café theme. In the first, cool outdoor tones and the greens of a truck and trees contrast with the light inside the ice-cream parlor with its welcoming figure behind a counter. Prochet's rigorous composition, almost abstract despite its realistic subject matter, is based on strong horizontal lines enlivened by the smaller verticals of the windows and doors on the coffee shop's façade. A simple color scheme juxtaposes cool blues and grays with warm oranges and yellows. Here too the light beckons one inside, where a single person sits, while outside the street is empty. Both works are strongly reminiscent of Edward Hopper's street scenes, yet both eschew the mood of barren loneliness conveyed by Hopper's paintings.

Overt political statements include, among others, **Jean Denis'** large oil, *Blowing in the Wind (How Many Deaths Will It Take?)*. This dramatic public scene of mourning reminds us of the death and pain brought about by war. Its title, out of a Bob Dylan song, establishes a parallel between the current war and that of Vietnam. **Thomas William Baxter's** *Management*, a graphite triptych and environmental manifesto, describes convincingly the results over time of man's mismanage-

ment of the natural world.

Carolzoom Patterson's wood-block print, *These Stairs*, illustrates with vivid directness, and allows us to visually experience the impassable barrier of stairs and the feelings these arouse when we're wheel-chair-bound.

Among landscapes, I particularly enjoyed **Pam Enberg's** *Guanajuato — Three Views*, three lively watercolor-and-pen studies matted together. **Sandra McCourry's** acrylic, *Earth Rhythms*, received Jerry Williams' QuARterly award.

The *Salon* includes some unusual takes on the still-life genre. The most delightful for its humor, wit and originality, and one of my favorite works in this Mayor's Art Show season, is **Suzi Marquess-Long's** watercolor, *What's the Point*, an exquisite life-size rendering of the common wooden pencil with its yellow coat, green trim and pink eraser. The pencil is placed on the lower right corner of an otherwise blank 16 x 20-inch sheet of paper. What could be more to the point?

Two staples of still-life, the bouquet-in-a-vase and fruit-on-a-tablecloth, are given unconventional treatment. **Christopher Bates's** stylized, faux-naïf acrylic, *Flowers for Sybil*, offers a fresh look on the first in a simple, dynamic composition. The second acquires a surrealistic cast in **Rod Gillilan's** pastel, *Cosmic Pair*. Two pears tinged with bluish shadows, bathed in white otherworldly light against a uniformly black background, appear to stand on the barely-suggested surface of a planet — the light curvature of its horizon sufficient to tip our sense of scale.

Do Mi Stauber's colored-pencil portrait of an elephant, *The Landscape of Patience*, was previously reviewed in conjunction with **Eric Pederson's** *African Bull Elephant* at the Mayor's Art Show, which has since received the Viewer's Choice Award. Stauber's work deserves mentioning again for the luminous depth of its colors and its exquisite rendering of texture.

In **Merideth & Don L. Ferrell's** *Ancient Horses: Journey to Lascaux*, a silk scarf beautifully displayed on a copper-and-wood stand, the horse motifs are delicately painted in nuanced tones, while their bold forms expertly echo those of the original cave paintings.

Among non-representational works, **David P. Miller's** *As Above So Below*, a simple composition of black wax dots enclosed in a circle within a white rectangle, is striking-

ly effective. **Karen Hustwaite's** grid of squares, *Radiant Reflection*, unites the cool touch of enamel with the sensuality of iridescent colors, while in

Infinity Starts Here, a green-tile mandala set against a square black wooden support, **Don Prey** opts for sobriety of color and design. In her *Untitled* mixed-media, **Yona C. Riel** combines hints of bodily forms, sewing patterns and a seamstress' blue chalk over reddish browns to create an abstract tapestry.

Don't miss **Steve LaRiccia's** tiny, painterly, SX-70 Polaroid Manipulation, '46 *Packard Clipper*. **John Powers'** silver-print *Dove* harks back to Edward Weston's *Bird Skele-ton*. Here the bird, half-buried in sand, appears reconstructed out of dismembered parts. In *With the Angels*, **Patrick Ezard's** large transparency lit from behind, a plane's blue fuselage and red helix become a lyrical abstraction. **Christian Field's** *Rachel* portrays a young woman sitting barefoot by the side of a warehouse or factory.

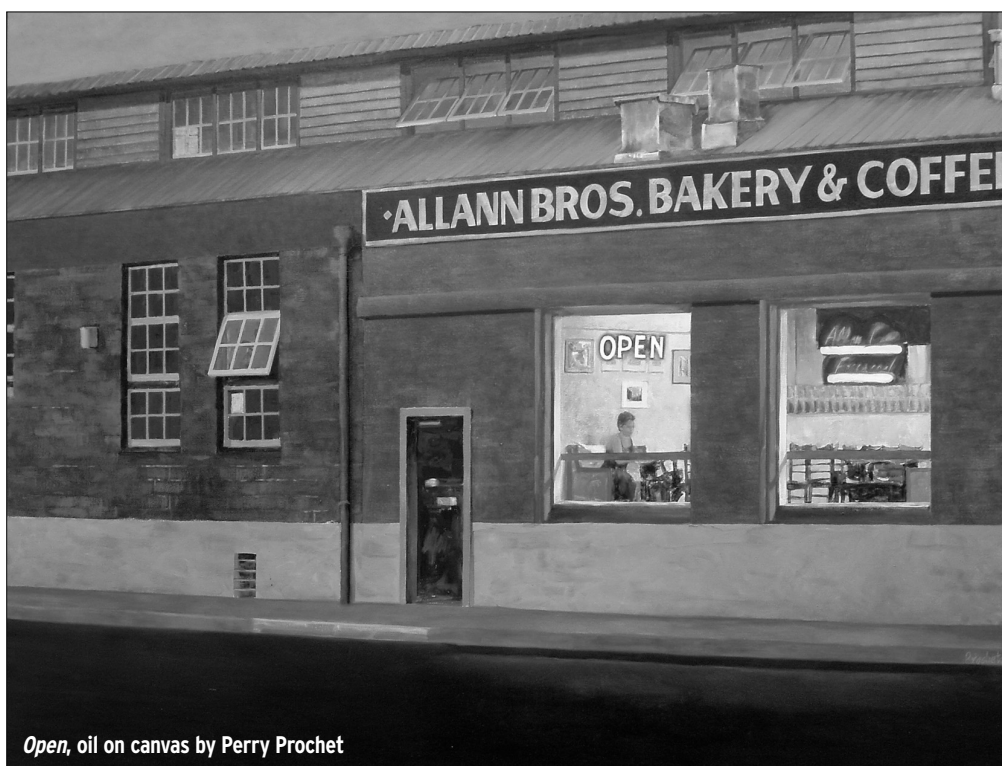
Its disquieting mood is the strength of this B&W photograph. In *A Madonna in Exile*, a digital painting, **William Kasper**, puts pixellation to good use in a large, striking composition.

Within the three-dimensional minority, **Jim Miller's** great functional sculpture, *Musical Hangups (100-year-old Pipe Organ Coat Rack)*, stands out for its resourceful humor, **Jim Boyden's** *Heart of the Tree* for its sensuous use of wood and stone, and **Jud Turner's** untitled welded-steel sculpture of a slightly fantastic creature's spine for its strongly-crafted evocativeness.

L. Talaba's surrealist ink-and-wood assembly, *Forks in the Road*, evinces a ferocious humor. Inside a house, a couple sits on either side of a table, eating, he an apple, she a miniature bull. Outside their door awaits a hungry world, represented by an oversized mouth holding an apple core in its bared teeth, and a forest of forks.

The 2004 *Salon* is hosting more than 80 percent of the works not included in the Mayor's Art Show, a higher ratio than in 2003. According to LaRiccia, the *Salon's* indefatigable exhibit coordinator, last year's total sales were matched this year within the opening week-end, which included an impromptu "re-opening night" following the official one. The extended hours and longer duration of the exhibit are a welcome change this season.

Ross and LaRiccia will facilitate at DIVA a community discussion of issues and themes surrounding this year's Salon des Refusés and corresponding Mayor's Art Show at 7:30 pm on Oct. 15 at DIVA. **EW**



Open, oil on canvas by Perry Prochet