

Sketches of Women



Pen & Ink & Pastels by
HOWARD HOUSEKNECHT
March 2-April 28, 2007
Tuesdays-Saturdays 10am-5pm

Proud participant in the
First Friday Artwalk April 6, 2007

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BY SUZI STEFFEN

Water Reeds

Pretty, Strong

Two photography exhibits in the Whiteaker share nature's bounty

JERRY JUMP

Oregon photography, like Oregon life, abounds with gorgeous nature shots. Heck, even I have taken a couple of decent photos of banana slugs or rocks threading their rugged outline into the Pacific. In the Whiteaker during the month of April, two photographers share their visions of our land.

First is Chuck Griffin at The Wandering Goat. The outside of the coffeeshop at 268 Madison looks crunchy-granola, but the inside's all upscale track lighting, comfy couches and low tables on one side with steely bright bar stools on the other. But turn your eyes to the art on the walls as well as the artistry of the building. Griffin's photos, framed simply, capture the traditional beauty of Western landscapes from Oregon, Washington and Nevada. Of the color shots, Griffin's tongue-in-cheek humor makes *Hobbit Trunk* as amusingly titled as the composition is balanced; the red tree seems both to loom and to invite in the midst of its green surroundings. *Morning Stretch* also brought me a smile of recognition with its deciduous tree, leafy and sunsaluting, silhouetted against stunning cliffs and rock formations in Nevada's Great Basin National Park. Other Nevada photos include several black and white images from Death Valley National Park.

remind a viewer of the chill that permeates Oregon forests even in August. The photo's perspective, a look down into the gorge as bonechilling fog and spray rise up the stone walls, dizzyingly dips into the fold of the earth. But as gorgeous as the color photos are, the black and white shots show an awareness of patterns and shadows. *Eddies*, an intense close-up image of whirled and whorled wood from Olympic National Park, plays with circles and spirals while the show's standout piece, *Reposing Dunes*, dominates the wall near the coffee condiments with its crisp shadows, stark lines and almost abstract waves of bright sand. Nature photography can be trite or boring, but most of Griffin's pieces show the strength and potential danger lurking in overwhelming landscapes even as his best pieces draw forth the wild world's beauty.

When you're finished admiring Griffin, grab an organic coffee with hazelnut milk (mmmm) and head down the tracks to 245 Blair. At Gallery 245, Jerry Jump's intimate pieces in "I'm Ready for My Close Up" reflect more common themes in Eugene life. Though the affordably priced flower and vegetable photos seem a bit too much like any Saturday Market snapshot, some of Jump's images rise above those pieces' mediocrity. In *Fused Glass*, bits of the three red rectangles in one half of the six-shot piece recall fish, red blood cells, worms and other organic bits of life while the middle of the beige/brown half resembles a cathedral. *Spindles'* intense, odd color and echoing patterns pop from the photo in its black matting and black frame and show the lonely appeal of human-made items, once functional, now abandoned.

A few photos show promise in Jump's feel for texture and line. *Water Reeds'* repeated diagonals of light rippling on a stream form a background and counterpoint for the strong verticals of the reeds stretching beyond the picture plane. *Gunnera* surprises with its sneaky perspective: From the small distance across the gallery, it looks like green hills, perhaps in a tropical rain forest; closer, the bumps and veins of the plant leaf emerge.

If you missed the openings of these shows at the Last Friday Artwalk, head down to Whiteaker and catch some natural warmth. Griffin's show runs through April 26 and Jump's through May 27.

Also of note: Hometown hero Jan Eliot, of "Stone Soup" fame, shows cells from the comic strip at Opus6ix, and the Springfield Museum hosts the delicately stunning creations of the Eugene Glass School.



CHUCK GRIFFIN

The Thaw, a piece taken in Oneonta Gorge, contrasts textures and colors. While the bright green ferns and soft moss look appealing on a warm day, the icy white cascades of waterfalls frozen in mid-stream

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