

DIVA Hits on Four Burners

Photos and prints show off area talents

The Downtown Initiative for the Visual Arts fills many roles, with its six galleries, noise concerts, art classes and more. But hey, we're not community cheerleaders, or rather we're not *only* community cheerleaders. We're Art Critics. So, on to four of the shows in the galleries in May and June.

"Selected Vision," a show of Michael Northup's work, hangs in the small Members' Gallery. In his artist's statement, Northup writes that he studied at the UO in the 1960s but is largely self-taught and influenced by Edward Wilson and Ansel Adams. The sweep and, yes, the beauty of Northup's eye for pattern and grand landscape makes the comparison explicit. Stand in the middle of the Members' Gallery, and you'll feel parched, the moisture seeping out of your body in the midst of desert scenes. Even the two water shots — including the swirling *Chewaucan River*, which gives the look of a firefly skating on top of the trout-filled water — don't quite quench thirst brought by the photos of Death Valley. Even *Rail Signal*, a stunning little flight of fancy in which a balletic graffiti sinks into the flaking paint of a rusting metal box, looks like the dry, cracked sands of *Mud Cracks* and *Racetrack Sliding Rock*. *Sand Wing*, a fantastical piece, catches the full meaning of Northup's artist statement that he "abstracts an image from the field which attempts to repre-

sent or reproduce the original response."

In the other photographic exhibit, Portland's Scott Rook uses skills gained in years of commercial photography to manipulate photographic images of his travels. The show is called "All Trains Go to Embankment," but few images of London line the walls. Instead, there's a humorous shot, *Stonehenge*, with the ancient and massive stone circle balanced with a contemporary, if broken down, implement encased in a box. In *On the Shelf*, busts of Lenin lie abandoned across an old shelf in Bucharest, Romania, where they're no longer needed. In the goofily titled *Coming and Going*, two Parisian bikes stand next to each other, locked up in opposite directions. And the softly focused, gorgeously colored *Old Europe*, the Louvre looms on either side, its Pei pyramids inviting the blurred, indistinct figures into the center. The material, giclée on watercolor paper, gives the work a wistful, misty quality, but it's a fun little show, affectionate and lovely.

The travel theme dominates Jayne



(left) *Rail Signal* by Michael Northup
(above) *Painting* by Erik Johnson

Cookson's "Some Incredible Journeys." The artist, a printmaker whose work in this show comes from lino-reductions, left to study in Paris after she graduated with a B.A. from the UO. On her way back to Oregon, she stopped in New

York to study with the director of graphic arts at NYU. So this show is almost entirely dominated by prints depicting Paris, New York and a few other sites in France and Italy. In *Vue de Mon Appartement II*, Cookson's Matisse-like rendering of flowers and the contents of her

Parisian room struggle for unity with a yellow spire just outside the window. It's powerful and not quite unified, but Cookson was learning: Works like *The Avenue* and *The Village*, in her group called New York Suite, nod to Stuart Davis' New York prints (in a more orderly style). Pastels balanced with touches of bright warm colors dominate the highly patterned works; a staircase in *The Village* plays its saturated yellow thread against a blue background. And in *Siena*, deep orange and yellow permeate the print, with soft muddy purple providing the contrast for this terra-cotta warmth.

A sunnier yellow dominates the room next door, where Erik Johnson's "Recent and Early Images" hang. Johnson is a former digital animator who said at the opening that if we had seen any cartoons or animated movies, we had undoubtedly seen his work before. But not like this. Bright yellow frames bring forward his 1970s sketches, scanned for laser printing in the mid-2000s. Some of the most delightful pieces include *Line Dancing*, a lyrical bow to Matisse and a picture of kinetic joy, and *Floating*, a tiny work that intensely conveys its subject matter. *Milking* and *Painting* (the man likes his verbs unadorned) show off Johnson's mastery of draughtsmanship with the solid figures of workers at their jobs. Two older works, large-scale oil paintings, hang opposite the prints, and both of them project the early 1970s loneliness and disconnect that filled, for instance, the movie *The Ice Storm*.

"Selected Visions" is up through May 26; the others stay up through June 30 at DIVA, 110 W. Broadway. **ew**

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