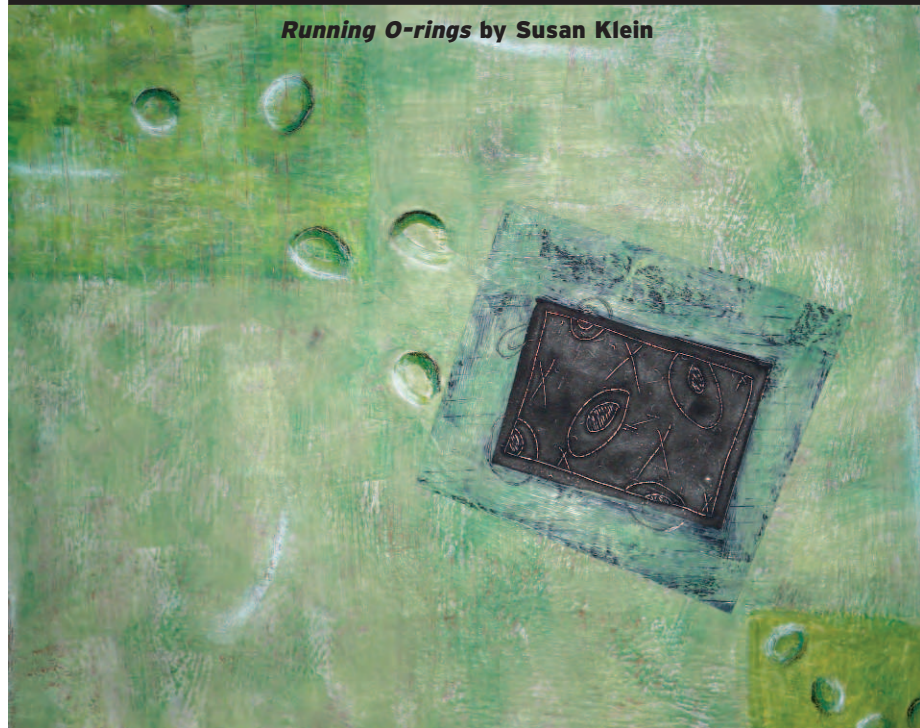




Running O-rings by Susan Klein

Refused! But Unbowed

The Salon des Refusés turns 17

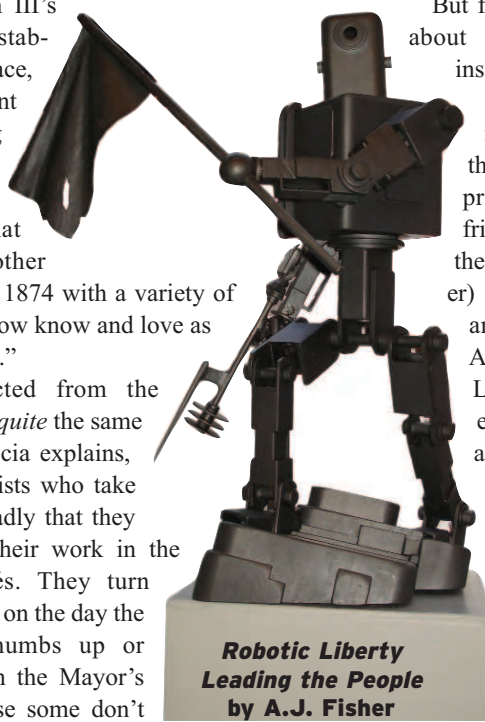
The day before the hanging of the Salon des Refusés, New Zone art collective treasurer and Salon curator Steve LaRiccia sits at a long table, contracts in hand, surveying his terrain. Paintings, tiles and textile works lean against the freshly painted walls of New Zone, which has been located at 164 W. Broadway since late last year, and sculptures poke up above the colorful fray. Artist Nicola Noetic wanders the show, looking at the layout, finding her own work in the front room.

LaRiccia looks content. For a man who has to hang a 271-piece show the next day with some volunteer help, he's quite calm. "The hanging part shouldn't take too long," he says; that's because he has spent all day today determining where the works should go.

By this time, one wonders if anyone in Eugene hasn't received a crash art history course about the original Salon des

Refusés in 1863, when those rejected from Emperor Napoleon III's official Salon established their own place, a space for the avant garde including Edouard Manet and James Whistler. That inspired another "rejected salon" in 1874 with a variety of other painters we now know and love as "the Impressionists."

Is being rejected from the Mayor's Art Show quite the same thing? Well, LaRiccia explains, there are many artists who take that rejection so badly that they don't even want their work in the Salon des Refusés. They turn down his entreaties on the day the works get the thumbs up or thumbs down from the Mayor's Show jury "because some don't



Robotic Liberty Leading the People by A.J. Fisher

want to be associated with losers!" he says, rolling his eyes. "People take their art serious," he adds.

Actually, much of the refused art isn't bad; the Mayor's show had over 400 entries, but the Jacobs Gallery's exhibition space will be crowded to the point of agony by the 58 works the jury selected. More would have been out of the question. That doesn't mean every work missed being in the show for space reasons — some aren't presented or framed well, LaRiccia says, and frankly, some just aren't very good — but other work, like New Zone president Susan Klein's *Running O-rings* and Steven Weeks' gorgeous, contingent *Sometimes separation is natural and necessary*, stands out, even lying on the floor. Of course, some artists want into the edgy cachet of the Salon; answering those who think it's an all-comers event, LaRiccia gently reminds them that the point of the title is for those who were *refused* from the Mayor's Art Show, not simply those who want to be as cool as the other "rejected" kids in the Eugene art world.

But for those who feel OK about being in the Salon instead of the Mayor's show, other rewards may await. For one thing, there are the \$5 prize ribbons, which friends and family (and the occasional well-wisher) may bestow upon the artist of their liking. And for another thing, LaRiccia, among others, buys some of the art each year. Last year, he decided to call his pick the "Purchase Award."

The New Zone location, which was rented for the Salon last year and then turned into New



Ten Minutes Till Bedtime by Michael Walroth

Zone because the landlords were impressed with the ability of the art gallery to draw an arty crowd, locates the Salon within the heart of the Celebration. And despite rain and booths blocking the site last year, not to mention an inaccurate Celebration map that pointed people somewhere else for the Salon, the place was packed in 2006, LaRiccia says. This year, before you head over to the juried show in the Jacobs, check out those denied by the jury, hand out a ribbon and find out who's winning LaRiccia's Purchase Award ... or give the artist the best gift, a purchase award of your very own. The show opens Thursday, Sept. 6 with a reception starting at 6:30 pm, and runs through Oct. 20, so there's also plenty of time to take in all of the art. **EW**

Note: The usually interesting Mayor's Art Show, which we'll review in a future issue, opens at 5:30 pm, also on Thursday, Sept. 6, in the lobby of the Hult Center. Jury awards totaling \$1,000 will be awarded at that reception. You can hit both receptions and celebrate all of the artists with a little creative foot-or-wheel transportation.

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