

'Au Naturel' opens at college art gallery

ASTORIA — The ninth annual international juried exhibit "Au Naturel: The Nude in the 21st Century" is on display now through March 5 at Clatsop Community College's Art Center Gallery, located at 1799 Lexington Ave. Gallery hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday.

An artists' reception will be held at 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 29. Awards to be announced include cash prizes, purchase awards, a solo show award and workshop awards. Bridgewater Bistro and Dairy Maid will provide hors d'oeuvres for the event. This reception is free and open to the public.

A no-host Post-Reception Party at Astoria Coffeehouse & Bistro, located at 243 11th St., will immediately follow the reception.

This year, artists from 28 states, the District of Columbia, and Canada, Turkey, New Zealand, and South Africa submitted over 500 images for consideration. The 2015 exhibit will represent 41 artists from 14 states in addition to an international artist from South Africa. Note that the artist from South Africa will be represented in the online gallery only at www.aunaturelart.com

This year's juror, Barbara Shaiman, an independent curator and art consultant based in Seattle, will be present to give a gallery talk during the reception. Shaiman was the artistic and managing director of the Seattle Art Museum's SAM Gallery for 24 years.

"It was a great pleasure to serve as the juror for 2015 'Au Naturel' competition and to see



Submitted photo

"Apparition Number Four" by Reed Clarke of Portland.

such a variety of compelling and high-quality work interpreting the theme of the nude," Shaiman said. "It was difficult to narrow down such a large group to the 56 pieces I eventually chose in order to create a coherent exhibit."

Each year, a different juror is invited to select the work for the show, and each juror brings his or her own perspective. "I look for artwork that has strong visual appeal and is rooted in ideas I find compelling, stimulating and challenging," explains Shaiman. "I also look for work that in some way pushes boundaries, reflects a unique vision, or pushes the medium in different areas. The work should be technically proficient, experimental and passionate about its subject matter."

Portland artist Reed Clarke, also a part-time resident in Gearhart, has been invited for the fifth

time to exhibit in "Au Naturel." Clarke points out that while his two oil paintings "Apparition Number Four" and "Woman Standing With Man" may be considered to be portraits, the design elements of line, tone, color, shape and form are equally as important as the subject matter. "It took me a long time to become aware of how painting people/figures sets up the need to solve certain types of problems encountered in the act of painting," he admits. "I hope to find some solutions to these problems that I can feel are authentically mine."

James McComas of Superior, Colorado, who has exhibited in "Au Naturel" several times, explores design concepts in his paintings from the standpoint of the fascinating relationship between visual art and music. "I

perceive art as a visual melody, which can be as simple as a song, or as complex as a symphony," he states. "Somewhere in the music — in the image — is an expression of the human condition, be it narrowly focused or grandly sweeping. Along those lines, I see the role of the figure in my art much as the role a dancer plays in a ballet: profoundly moving in and of itself, yet a cohesive part of a larger story."

Seattle artist Chris Sheridan looks to the past for inspiration in "early myths, traditional folklore, the histories, and the classics." At the very heart of his work is storytelling, which he describes as "the foundation upon which my paintings are built."

Portland artist Patrick Kernan creates all his work from life and counts painting the human figure among one of his greatest passions. Rather than focusing on accuracy, he believes his work is successful if the artwork "becomes a journal of my observations, emotions and reactions to the model, at the specific, shared moment in time."

The rigorous discipline of drawing and painting from figure models has also been a passion of artist Patrick Deshaye of Hillsboro. Deshaye maintains that this practice embodies everything worthwhile about art-making, which includes "centuries of tradition, an endless array of media and techniques, a subject of overwhelming expressive potential ... what's not to love?"

On the other hand, Nicole Jeffords of Austin, Texas, works from a photographic reference, since for her, "a live sitter's energy would be too much." She describes her process as a slow and silent dialogue that progresses "until bit by bit a picture emerges, almost as if a channel opens and the person steps forward, allowing me to see some part of them that is real and true. In that way, hopefully, the painting becomes revelation."



Submitted photo

"Beyond the Boundary of the Hedge: Margarita and His Errand," an oil painting by Chris Sheridan of Seattle.



Submitted photo

"Diana" by James McComas of Superior, Colorado.

Astoria hosts drag dance party Get down with DJ, cast of 'Dragalution!'

ASTORIA — The Astoria Arts and Movement Center will host a Drag it Out Dance Party at 9 p.m. Friday, Jan. 30.

Arts and Movement Center co-owner Marco Davis' birthday with Daylight Cums and the cast of "Dragalution!" Surprise performances are sure to please, and at-

tendees can get loose to the beats of DJ imcodefour.

Costumes and drag attire are highly encouraged. The party is 21 and over only. There is a \$5 cover and a bar available. The movement center is located at 342 10th St.

For more information, visit www.astoriaartsandmovement.com

Artist Reception

6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 29

CCC Art Center Gallery

1799 Lexington Ave., Astoria

www.aunaturelart.com