

Christos Koutsouras puts coastal dark seasons on canvas

'Accessible To All' art show opens at Imogen Gallery and Carruthers Building

ASTORIA — Imogen Gallery announces a two-fold event. Artist Christos Koutsouras, who likes to work on a large scale, has put together a powerful body of work for his newest series, "Accessible To All." Because of the magnitude of this collection, the exhibition will be shown at two locations: at Imogen Gallery and in a pop-up space located in the Carruthers Building at 1198 Commercial St.

All are invited to a preview party from 6 to 9 p.m. Friday, Aug. 7 at the Carruthers Building pop-up space. Then, both spaces will participate in Astoria's Second Saturday Art Walk on Aug. 8 (see page 10).

Born in Greece, Koutsouras found his way to the lower banks of the Columbia River in 2010, in search of a place to create a series of work for his second solo exhibition at the Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art. His intent was simple: to stay six months for an intensive period of painting, creating a body of work inspired by the Pacific Ocean. This place of confluence took hold, and, like an anchor dropped from a freighter, here Koutsouras remains, still finding inspiration in the currents that move land, sea and sky. "Accessible To All" encompasses his visual notes of a landscape that has profoundly marked his work.



"Over the River" by Christos Koutsouras at Imogen Gallery.

Known internationally for his use of color to convey delicate yet dramatic atmospheric conditions, Koutsouras brings an extensive collection of large-scale canvases, small impasto paintings and graphite drawings on wood panel for his second solo exhibition at Imogen. Inspiration for this series comes primarily from his time spent at Fort Stevens State Park, with great focus on the permanence of man-made structures within the landscape.

Koutsouras' attention was captivated by one location of Fort Stevens, specifically the parking area near the famed shipwreck of the Peter Iredale. He visited this location

almost daily for nearly a year, taking in the first light of day or watching daylight slip into darkness. He studied the subtlety of concentration of light during winter storms. The dramatic unfolding of weather and dunes surrounded one particular building, seemingly caught in an eddy of unseen current.

Local collector Timothy Dalrymple was invited to write about the series. "It is here that the Columbia River collides with the Pacific Ocean, a place some say of mystery and secrets. Local residents and regular visitors to this historic place know the bright blues, greens, and sunny yellow whites of sands, sea, and the blacks of

color. But then there comes late fall, winter and early spring, with wild storms, winds, seas: the dark seasons. Fog, sheets of rain, Everest-high black clouds dominate these times. Koutsouras' recent work is his emotional response to this chaos expressed in masterful technique refined over decades of hard, tough, thoughtful work.

"These new paintings require that we look into them not as carnival-goers at a gallery opening. We must be collaborative with Koutsouras in nature's drama. These paintings demand our engagement. To appreciate the work we must do our own work, identifying important images, shapes, spaces that carry the artist's message and meaning."

Koutsouras' career has been as vast as the landscape he portrays. His desire to become an artist was apparent since childhood; however, that was not enough to convince his stonemason father it was a viable career choice. Subsequently, Koutsouras left his island home

of Samos to become a merchant marine and travel the world. He excelled in his chosen profession and quickly rose to the rank of 3rd mate on the ship he called home. Not feeling fulfilled with his life as a seaman, Koutsouras answered his true calling, and jumped ship while in port in Ireland. From there he made his way to Berlin and enrolled in art school, tipping off the beginning of a remarkable career.

He quickly became recognized and respected for his exquisite and subtle use of color and with that came commissions to do large-scale paintings for cathedrals, murals and other public art. One such project was a mural at the East Side Gallery, in Berlin, where a monument of freedom was established when the Berlin Wall came down. There he was given a 30-foot-long portion of what remains of the wall to create a statement of peace.

Imogen Gallery is located at 240 11th St. For more information, call 503-468-0620 or visit www.imogengallery.com

First Friday set at museum

Find music, food, activities and movie

ASTORIA — Join the Columbia River Maritime Museum during its First Friday Nights events on the Museum Plaza.

The next First Friday will feature music, activities, food and a movie on Friday, Aug. 7.

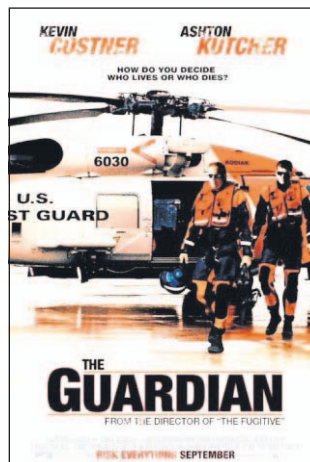
Listen to live music by Robin Bacior and friends beginning at 7 p.m. Find hands-on activities and games for all ages, making this an event for the whole

family.

Enjoy a selection of food and beverages, served by local vendors at a cash-only food court.

Then gather your lawn chairs and blankets for a 9 p.m. showing of the movie "The Guardian."

First Friday Nights are free of charge. The Columbia River Maritime Museum is located at 1792 Marine Drive.



Submitted photo

Watch "The Guardian" at First Friday Night.

the massive South Jetty in spring and summer," Dalrymple writes.

"In previous works such as 'Remains of The Day' and 'Kyma,' Koutsouras has captured these seasons through

2nd Saturday

ART WALK

5:00 pm

Downtown Astoria

Every month, year 'round!

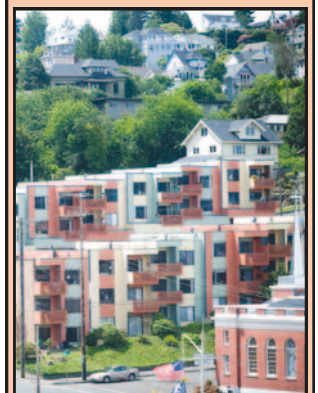
August
8th

Visit Downtown Astoria on the 2nd Saturday of every month for art, music, and general merriment!

Presented by the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association

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