



SUBMITTED PHOTO
 "Towel on the Back" by Mabrie Ormes of Ashland. "I am focused on creating nudes who express themselves as subjects," she says. "The 'Bathers' are nudes busy with their toilettes. They are not 'posing' in the traditional sense: The display of their naked bodies to the eye of a viewer is not their primary purpose. In this work, I take a page from Edgar Degas."

ARTISTS' RECEPTION

6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 9

CCC Royal Nebeker Art Gallery

1651 Lexington Ave., Astoria

Awards to be announced

Free

dynamics, aging, mental and physical health, etc." Perhaps, but art historian Sir Kenneth Clark put it in simpler terms: "The nude does not simply represent the body, but relates it, by analogy, to all structures that have become part of our imaginative experience."

Lawrence Mannato's "The Sign: When My Life Was Ebbing Away, Then I Remembered" and Nick Reszetar's "Excepatum" combine realistic drawing with dense layers of indistinct abstraction, struggles of human interaction without and the mysteries of the soul within. Stephanie Silco's "Humanoid," on the other hand, is all abstraction, a posed shell of the soul.

The triumph of drawing in this show continues with portraiture, in particular Paul Barton's "Lioness," Patrick Deshayé's "Model Hiding a Tattoo," and local favorite Robert Paulmann's "Reclining Nude."

The gesture of the model before a burned landscape across a body of water, in Brad Gooch's "After the Burn," exhibits a poised tension that balances on the edge of surrealism. Edi Franc's "The Day I Lost My Head" goes

right over the edge, as does Mike Southern's flaming landscape, "Burn." Southern's torch-bearing nude in the foreground tells a story, but what might it be? Franc, of Ka'a'awa, Hawaii, paints realistically a subject she describes surrealistically as, "giant, headless figures suspended in space, dysmorphic, depersonalized creatures floating above the ocean seem to exist in a new, unearthly realm, the one created in dreams or our subconscious."

Pierre-Auguste Renoir said that he always wanted to paint nudes "as if they were some splendid fruit," but the nudes in internationally recognized Portland-based artist Henk Pander's three large paintings appear overripe. The works, Pander says, "Echo the decadent period of the 1960s still lingering, while recognizing aging, mortality and existential

loneliness." These are also the paintings that may raise eyebrows in this show, for many will consider them not only decadent but erotic or pornographic.

Erotic art has been with us at least since mesolithic times, but for most of history it has existed on the fringes of art, in the bath house murals of Pompeii, say, or in ceramics, sculpture or paintings exhibited in intimate contexts. Today the erotic has become more mainstream, more accepted whether it is art or not. And how to distinguish? U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart famously couldn't define pornography, "but I know it when I see it." That was in 1964, and times have changed.

"The living model, the naked body of a woman, is the privileged seat of feeling, but also of questioning," Henri Matisse said. In superficially divulging the intimacies of sex, does erotic art achieve something meaningful? Or does it sacrifice the intimacy of mind and soul, the body in relationship to self and surroundings, for what is simply vulgar?

This year, "Au Naturel" gives you a chance to decide for yourself.



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 Stephanie Silco's "Humanoid 12," is all abstraction, a posed shell of the soul.