



Roger Hayes' artwork is on display now at Imogen Gallery in Astoria. Featured here, 'The Ridge' acrylic.

'A love song to Astoria'

Local artist explores environment, homelessness through art

BY KATHERINE LACAZE

The theme of Roger Hayes' fourth solo exhibition at Imogen Gallery is "Pacific Northwest Trees," but over time, the 57-year-old multimedia artist's interest in the local landscape has transcended the natural and delved into the social and political as well.

When it comes to his work with vulnerable populations and his art, he says it's impossible to "separate one from another."

An evolving artist

Hayes, who grew up in Detroit, has been painting since 1978, although he has "emerged and disappeared many times," he said. In the mid-80s, his art was primarily political, the type "that hits you over the head." From there, he engaged the abstract style of the international Neo-Expressionist movement. Now, he finds himself taking an interest in his natural environment and

returning to "representational art sans all the bombast."

Most of the 12 oil and acrylic paintings included in his current show — which opened Jan. 11 during Astoria Second Saturday Artwalk and is on display through Feb. 4 — were created on location. As Hayes states in a press release from Imogen Gallery, trees are linked in "complex networks with other organisms and form colonies," yet an image persists "of the weather distraught solitary tree on a perch, withstanding millennia of solitude."

A citywide view of homelessness

Although Hayes is an established artist in the community, having been involved with Astoria Visual Arts for about 20 years, he has simultaneously pursued other professions. He currently serves as a chef at the Astoria Senior Center.



See Page 9

Roger Hayes at Imogen Gallery.

Joshua Bessex