

February 2015

Event News from the Jacobs Gallery at the Hult Center for the Performing Arts

For use: **NOW** through closing date of exhibition

Please Note: The Jacobs Gallery is closed for installation of this exhibit from Monday, March 16 – 18

Exhibit:

The Macchia Six - Landscape Painters

March 27 – May 2, 2015

Participating Artists:

Jerry Ross, *Curator*

Victoria Biedron

Jean Denis

Jaqueline Hamer Lukowski

Patti McNutt

Sally Schwader

They believed that areas of light and shadow, or “macchie” (literally patches or spots) were the chief components of a work of art. The word macchia was commonly used by Italian artists and critics in the nineteenth century to describe the sparkling quality of a drawing or painting, whether due to a sketchy and spontaneous execution or to the harmonious breadth of its overall effect.

At the Jacobs Gallery:

FREE EVENTS

• **OPENING RECEPTION:** Friday, March 27, 5:30 - 8pm ~ *Jerry Ross speaks at 6pm*

• **SPECIAL TALK BY JERRY ROSS AND ARTIST DEMOS:**

Saturday, April 4, 2 – 4pm ~ Jerry Ross will talk on the Macchia process, followed by informal artist demos throughout the gallery. Come and learn from the artists!

• **FIRST FRIDAY ARTWALK:** Friday, April 3, 5:30 - 8pm

Statement from Jerry Ross, Curator of the exhibit: *The Macchia Six - Landscape Painters*

My work is strongly influenced by Italian painting theory, especially the ideas of macchia, chiaroscuro, effect, and surprise made popular by the Italian I Macchiaioli.

I name my signature painting style “American Verismo” which is somewhat akin to contemporary “atelier realism” but the latter has been criticized for an academic uniformity and its over attention to details. My approach is experimental and exploratory, introducing abstraction into my realism.

American verismo is more poetic and linked to post-impressionism, the Milan-based Scapigliatura (‘wild hair’) movement, and the I Machiaioli’s commitment to social issues.

My images are spread equally into categories of portraiture, figurative, and landscape.

American verismo is associated with a painterly sketching style, use of broad and calligraphic brushstrokes, and the alla prima, “direct attack” technique of painting.

It is also linked to all’aperto (open air) impressionist-style landscape painting. In short, to pleinairism which has become widely popular in recent years.

In portraiture I seek to reveal the model’s personality and situation in simple shapes with bold, direct painting. As in all my work, these differ depending of the type of macchia used as the approach: mass, line, or color macchie (sketches).

I prefer “non finito” or an “unfinished” look sometimes leaving underpainted areas to show through brushstrokes that ride on the surface. Areas may be scraped off and left in a raw, simplified condition which creates texture and shape.

Victoria Biedron

For me painting in the Macchia style is keeping the painting fresh, direct, and in the moment. Utilizing a few shapes and values ranges to convey the landscape in minimal gestural strokes, Macchia can have an unfinished, raw and sketch like look. In that form it can exist as a complete painting without a lot of detail. Using shapes, contrast and broad strokes to convey the essence and feeling of the landscape, buildings and people, Macchia brings a spontaneity and immediate quality to paintings that is exciting!

Jean Denis

In the late 19th century, a group of artists gathered in Italy and decided they wanted to do something different. They wanted to break from the norm and paint in their own way despite the possibility that this might create controversy or even be unacceptable to academia or fellow artists; something that they would decide upon rather than be told what and how to paint. They would push their art beyond the current rules – based upon what they saw in the world, which, for them, consisted of common people and real nature rather than the idealized paintings being produced by the Italian Academy of Art. Thus they painted working people, farmers, soldiers, and women’s conditions as they were, using natural light, shade and color. They saw and included animals in their world and prisons and children and hospitals. It was a political statement that required courage and daring and true creativity. It was a rebellion.

So how is our new group, which consists of 5 women and one man, identifying with this group of men who lived over 100 years ago? I think the agreement that it is important to portray the world as it is, in its beauty and angst and the beauty that lies within the angst. To be moved by a tree or person or scene and reach for its energy which does not necessarily include the portrayal of perfection, but the capturing of its essence.

The original group often did this by honoring the 'stain' or Macchia of the first impression or impulse that can be lost with too much refinement. Our group consists of plein air painters working primarily alla prima. I have included social commentary in many of my paintings despite a seeming lack of enthusiasm for this kind of work in our present day society. I believe this is a crucial element and opportunity for artists to portray our world as it is. Often it is so subtle or such a normal part of every day living that it is hard to see. It becomes more apparent as the world changes over time and speaks to the importance of recording our world as it is for future generations.

Jean Denis was born in Washington D.C. and grew up in a suburb of Chicago. She was influenced by her great aunt, Ted Vognild and grandmother, Vera Denis who's art work led her to major in art history and painting at Southern Illinois University. She left the Midwest and came West, living in the San Francisco Bay area for many years and then pursued her dream of being close to nature in Fall Creek Oregon which is the subject of many of her paintings.

In Oregon, she met and was influenced by many fine artists, including Adam Grosowsky, D. Brent Burkett, and Jerry Ross.

Jean paints landscapes, seascapes, interiors, and portraits, incorporating social commentary into many of her paintings.

Jaqueline Lukowski lived in the Eugene, Oregon area for over 35 years. She now calls Vancouver, Washington home. She works in oil, watercolor, and other aqueous media. She is a member of the American Impressionists Society and has been an active participant in the Plein Air Painters of Lane County and Club Macchia.

Plein air oil landscapes are what she loves most with a special place in her heart for the wetlands areas of Oregon and Washington. Throughout the year she can be found setting up her easel to capture the beauty of those places. Those small studies that are completed on site then may be used as reference for larger studio paintings.

Education: Studied drawing, painting, design and photography at Lane Community College with instructors Richard Quigley, Harold Hoy, David Joyce and Adam Grosowsky.

Studied watercolor with Jeanne Dobie, Ron Ranson, Pat San Soucie, Carla O'Connor, Judy Morris and Frank LaLumia; acrylic painting with Marcia Burt and Erik Sandgren; oil painting with Gene Costanza.

Patti McNutt

I was born in Dayton, Ohio and moved to Eugene, Oregon in 1985. Although traveling is a joy, living and painting in the Pacific Northwest is my dream job.

Some, not all, of my artist idols and influences are:

Mitch Albala, Sarkis Antikajian, Mitch Baird, David Chen, Scott Christensen, Mark Clarke, Margaret Coe, Bets Cole, Gene Costanza, Farley Craig, Eric Jacobsen, Carol Marine, Robert Liberace, Susan Ogilvie, Jerry Ross, Erik Sandgren, Sarah Sedwick, Randall David Tipton and Yer Za Vue

I have taken instruction from most of these artists. I would heartily recommend ALL of them as instructors or someone whose work should be viewed as a resource.

Macchia

One of the biggest influences on my art is the artist, Jerry Ross, and his teachings. I attended his workshops at Maude Kerns Art Center for so many years. His teaching the art of Macchia, and the basic principles of painting, made me feel like I had found “my people”. Later, I chanced upon an exhibit in Florence, Italy of The Macchiaioli group who founded the Italian movement (several years before French Impressionism). It showed the emergence of this technique from realism to Macchia. These two events have had a profound impact upon my art.

Jerry Ross

B. Buffalo, N.Y. 1944. Attended Buffalo Art Institute (Albright Art School). Studied privately under Anthony Sisti. Involved in political activism while at the University of Buffalo. Moved to Arizona to teach grade school on Arizona-Mexican border. Arrived in Eugene in 1974 and became an arts activist as President of New Zone Art Collective and later co-founding the Salon des Refuses. Frequently traveling to Italy with his wife Angela Ross meeting WWII GIs in Livergnano near Bologna and later making a film of interviews of WWII vets at WWII Museum in New Orleans. Exhibits in Rome, Florence, Milan, Bologna, and Terni in Italy. Recently collaborating with Italian film makers in Milan on a documentary film for the 2015 Expo. Created a style called “American verismo” based on dal vero (after life or truth) and founded the Club Macchia group of artists exhibiting in Oregon.

Sally Schwader

The Macchia style energizes me to express the landscape I inhabit and my place in the Universe. By painting in a direct, fresh, forward approach, I am freed to capture the eternally forever-changing light. I feel a deep spiritual connection with the sky and land and express it by painting plein air. In the direct Macchia approach, nature’s formidable fleeting moments can be exquisitely expressed.

• *Images attached:*

More images available upon request.

• WORD Doc attached of text in email

Jacobs Gallery Contact:

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Location of Event: Jacobs Gallery, lower level of the Hult Center

Gallery Hours: Tues. – Fri., noon to 4pm, Sat. 11am – 3 pm,

and one hour prior to and during all Hult Center Performances.

The Jacobs Gallery is a not for Profit gallery, funded through private donations, exhibit sponsorships, grants, the City of Eugene and the sale of artwork.