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Sep
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2011

Figures abound, but only until September 16

Exhibition Critique

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By **CHRISTINA LAUREL**

Written for Artkestry



NYFSG Entrance

Although there is no way for the eye to take in the full offering of the **New York Figure Study Guild's (NYFSG)** 2011 Annual Exhibition, there is an imbued flavor. According to Guild member Rob Carpenter, many of the artists are former students of Steve Carpenter, in whose gallery in the Neighborhood of the Arts the group convenes and exhibits. Hurry, though, if you are to catch the 84 works in time for the official end of the show – Friday, September 16. As artist Rob Carpenter says, the visual palette will change although many artworks will unofficially continue to be on display.

While the exhibit's descriptor – "...original works...expressing beauty and magnificence of the human form. Established and emerging artists alike will astound you with their insight, talent and extraordinary vision," did not totally measure up to such grandeur, it is an exhibit worthy of viewing and one of which the 3-year-old Guild can be proud. Oils, acrylic, watercolor, pastel, charcoal, graphite, and digital media are represented, with the scales tilted

in favor of the oils. And the oils themselves are executed in styles that range from the fresh impressionistic *alla prima* such as Kathleen Bolin's *Dialogue*, to Todd Ryan's thick *impasto* in *BodyScape IX*. Jono Peterson's mixed media *Nikki* adds an element of mystery to the model; Richard Harvey pushes the edge of the envelope with his fired and glazed red clay portrait *Stoneface*.

Males and predominantly females are represented as both human sculpture and as personalities. Particularly interesting is the treatment by different artists of the same model, such as the portly Harold with his wild eyes, full scruffy beard and backwards baseball cap. Jodi King captures the model in her charcoal *Harold*

Study; Barbara Doyle interprets Harold in oil as an *American Worker*; while Rona Poss also casts Harold in oil, but this time as *The Poet*. Unfortunately I missed the September 11 drawing expo where Alan Brewen, Jan Davidson, Larry DeKock, Anne Jurgens, Axel Kaires, and Pat Lesniak focused on the same model for a 3-hour period, producing discrete stylistic works that further the point that we all see and experience life differently.

Steve Carpenter has been focused on the human body for decades, with a recognizable style that he surprisingly keeps fresh. In *Study #1* the viewer moves from a facial portrait to layering of recumbent body poses, and a splash of color that deviates from his previous palette. Speaking of palette, a trio of portraits share such a similar warm hues and play on light that I thought they shared the same authorship. It turns out that the artists, the 15 year-old Julia Maddalina and her mother Laurie Maddalina, do indeed influence one another. Julia's *S Portrait* is reinforced by Laurie's portrait *Julia*, and vice versa. Bin Zhang's subjects are contemporary but treatment is classically refined, as in *The Red Shawl*. Suzi Zeffing-Kuhn's *Derek* and Kevin Feary's *Unex Journey* both capture their respective models' personalities and literal life energy.



NYFSG Bolin



NYFSG Drawing Expo

Several works either credit or mimic the style of a late master are reminiscent of internationally-known contemporaries. Braun's *Untitled* is a large canvas where the landscape body melds into the landscape of the background in a Diebenkorn way; David Huebsch's nude in *Behind the* sprawls in a Henri Rousseau-esque pose; and James R's *Bad Day on Wall Street* brings Alex Katz to mind.

There is an intimate quality to the majority of pieces, and a scale that does not affront our own sensibilities or those of the model. There is variety and there is talent. What we lack is so do hasten to see the NYFSG exhibit before its too-short over. Steve Carpenter Gallery & Art Center is located at 17 Anderson Ave., Rochester, NY 14607; studio phone 585-71410. Gallery hours: 1-4pm.

For more info: www.nyfigurestudyguild.com.

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