

The *art* of the NUUDE

BY JOHN O'HERN



The great Canadian architect Arthur Erickson said, “Vitality is radiated from exceptional art and architecture.”

With the resurgence of traditional academic training—drawing and painting from the figure—many young artists have become masters of technique but have missed the link to vitality.

The supernaturalism of the Middle Ages gave way to the humanism of the Renaissance, which now coexists with scientific modernism. The best of today’s young artists feed on all these aesthetic traditions—borrowing, blending, advancing. Their development of technique and their investigation of the past combine with a determination to be relevant in a complex 21st century.

Teresa Oaxaca was inspired by the pose of one of Michelangelo’s *ignudi* in the Sistine Chapel to pose her tattooed model *Patrick*—a classical pose painted in mannerist chiaroscuro. She explains that the stark lighting of chiaroscuro “lends a lot of gravity to subjects like this.” The playful tree house design winding its way up the model’s body is a vibrant expression of self that might have appeared merely as a curiosity in less capable hands.

Brad Reuben Kunkle references Albrecht Durer’s etching *The Fall of Man (Adam and Eve)* in his painting *The Proposition*. A painting of

Opposite page: **Brad Reuben Kunkle**, *The Proposition*, oil on canvas, 52 x 32". Private collection, courtesy Arcadia Contemporary, New York, NY.

Left: **Teresa Oaxaca**, *Patrick*, oil on canvas, 64 x 42". Private collection, courtesy Principle Gallery, Alexandria, VA.





Adam Miller, *Apparition*, oil on canvas, 30 x 40". Courtesy Copro Gallery, Santa Monica, CA.





Shane Wolf, *Voici l'Homme*, oil on canvas, 88 x 62". Courtesy the artist. Wolf is represented by S.R. Brennen Galleries.

Jason Bard Yarmosky,
The Boxer, oil on canvas,
72 x 60". Courtesy Bertrand
Delacroix Gallery, New York, NY.

Eve and Eve, it was inspired by the passage of Proposition 8 that stated "only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California." He explains, "It was challenging because I was tackling a very controversial topic and I wanted to make sure it was a beautiful painting first and foremost."

In making a beautiful painting, he experimented with a reductive process of removing paint in the leaves and vegetation with rags and Q-tips to create a more abstract setting for his finely painted figures. He has experimented as well with gold and silver leaf that shifts as the light changes or the viewer moves. That and the abstracted fields create a play between the real and the surreal.

Shane Wolf's *Voici l'Homme* is from *The Eidolon Series*. In Greek, "eidolon" can refer to a phantom as well as to the image of an ideal. Wolf's painting exists and pleases on both levels. The handsome figure declares the vitality of humanity while it refers to Jesus and the cross and Pilate's presenting Jesus to the people exclaiming "Ecce Homo" (Behold the man!). The figure represents these things but Wolf reminds us that this figure is *paint*. The voluptuously painted figure emerges from a field of abstraction. His right hand is silhouetted against an area of paint applied with a nearly dry brush, boldly declaring that it represents nothing but itself. It causes us, however, to look more closely at how the same material has been manipulated to express the vitality of human life in the figure.

The "intersection of the battered body

and the vibrant soul" has inspired Jason Bard Yarmosky. He quotes Madeleine L'Engle who wrote, "The great thing about getting older is that you don't lose all the other ages you've been." Yarmosky has painted his 85-year-old grandparents in a series of portraits called *Elder Kinder*. Also painted in dramatic chiaroscuro, the figures stand out against the darkness in the harsh light of reality. His grandfather acknowledges that in aging, the body changes but the 18-year-old is still there and appears in a lasting sense of humor.

Adam Miller declares that he takes old Humanist ideas such as beauty, painting, and composition and applies them to contemporary mythology. *Apparition* sums that up. He describes the narrative succinctly,

"She has been digging through their trash and found flowers. The hunter on the left (Brad) wants to exterminate a pest. The hunter on the right (Martin) has seen a vision of beauty in the most unlikely of places." Brad and Martin refer to his models and fellow artist friends Kunkle and Martin Wittfooth.

Miller's palette has lightened and broadened in his recent paintings. The impending apocalypse is no less threatening but he presents it with a nod to romanticism and with bits and pieces of hope—vitality amidst the decay.

These exceptional young artists and their peers attest to contemporary figurative art having finally come of age. ●





MARTIN EICHINGER

Eichinger Sculpture Studio
(503) 223-0626
www.eichingersculpture.com

Price Range

\$2,500 to \$120,000

Martin Eichinger's narrative, romantic sculptures grace numerous private and corporate collections around the world. For more than 20 years this dynamic, visionary artist has produced limited-edition sculptures that engage the minds and hearts of collectors and resonate within our larger social and political culture. His work is grouped into themed series that chronicle the eternal human pursuit of meaning, happiness and growth.

Eichinger invokes a collective conversation about the human spirit in his thought-provoking, emotionally moving bronze sculptures. His sculptures enchant the viewer and delight the eye. He invites us to look within ourselves, and asks us to re-examine our view of the world.

"I am interested in having my sculptures say more about us as a people, about our spirits or our aspirations. Although most people see me as a figurative sculptor, I prefer being thought of as a narrative artist. It's this quality of my work that connects my heart and soul to others who are looking at it or, preferably, feeling it," Eichinger shares, as he further expresses, "I feel that my artwork is complete once I sense that it has entered someone's life in a meaningful way. Art that becomes part of our shared culture is more meaningful than the aesthetic experience alone."

In addition to university degrees, Eichinger undertook independent studies in classical sculpture throughout Europe. He is an elected Fellow of the National Sculpture Society. His most recent bodies of work, *Meditation Series* and *Post-Modern Series*, can be seen on his website or in any of the many galleries featuring his work across the United States.



One With the Universe, bronze, ed. 75, 60 x 20"



Threads, oil on linen, 24 x 30"



ERIC WALLIS

(303) 619-8188
wilsonartsales.com

Price Range
\$2,000 to \$25,000

Eric Wallis learned to paint as a boy in the art studio of his father, Kent. Every day after school Wallis spent time doing chores such as cleaning, organizing and filing. He then spent an hour painting with his dad, often working on the same scene. On Saturdays Wallis would go with his father, his brothers Jeff and Sean, and Scott (Kent's brother) to paint on location.

"Coming from an artistic family has forced me to look deep

within and find my own voice. What has emerged, after years of exploration, is the love of figure painting," says Wallis. "I find the nude to be the most intriguing subject simply because it's different each time. People vary not just in body type, skin tone or hair color, but also in personality. Capturing the essence that makes someone unique is a challenge and also the joy of my work."

After Wallis graduated from high school, he took his first figure drawing class with a nude model taught by his father. Wallis volunteered for a Mormon mission and spent the next two years in the Fiji Islands. When he returned home he enrolled at

Utah State University and studied art, graduating with a bachelor's degree in fine art in 1992.

Wallis started painting for galleries while still in college and that launched a full-time career that continues today. He is represented by Galerie Züger in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Dallas, Texas; Aspen Grove Fine Arts and C. Anthony Gallery in Aspen and Beaver Creek, Colorado, respectively; M. Phillip's Fine Art in Las Cruces, New Mexico; Gallery of Modern Masters in Sedona, Arizona; and Repartee Gallery and Wilson Art Sales in Utah. His work also is shown internationally in England, Germany, and Switzerland.



PAUL KELLEY

(902) 693-3400
www.paulkelley.ca

Price Range

\$2,000 to \$20,000

Paul Kelley was born in Nova Scotia in 1955. He attended the BFA program at Mount Allison University from 1973 to 1975, and currently resides in LaHave, Nova Scotia, with his wife and family.

Kelley's professional career began in 1980 and he has held several successful solo exhibitions in Toronto. He also has shown with galleries in New York, Nevada, California, and South Carolina, as well as representing his own business affairs. Kelley's artwork hangs in collections throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe.

"A painting's greatest gift to humanity is its ability to provide us with a window into a different world into which we can step, like Alice through the looking glass," says Kelley. "My greatest desire as an artist is to create a painting that no one can pass without stopping and stepping through to that other world."

Each painting involves the careful manipulation of light and form, color and composition, to create a balanced image that is powerful and sensual, mysterious yet inviting. Kelley paints in oil and his work adheres to the tradition of a full monochrome underpainting, followed by glazing, and then a light impasto (no airbrushing). He uses whatever combination of manual techniques that come to mind to convey the "feel" of the object being painted and approaches each new creation as a new "learning curve," rarely relying on "formulas."

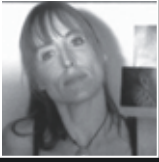
A painting measuring 20 by 30 inches generally takes Kelley between 400 and 600 hours to complete, and is treated as a labor of love.



Study for Summer's Supine Eve, oil on panel, 9 x 12"



Study for Magic Violin, oil on panel, 12 x 9"



REBECCA GUAY

(413) 586-3964

www.rebeccaguay.com

Price Range

\$3,500 to \$26,000

During her 20 years of painting professionally, Rebecca Guay has built a formidable reputation in contemporary and pop culture art. Her work focuses on emotionally charged themes that echo elements of the symbolists and orientalist as well as undertones of pre-Raphaelites with a contemporary surreal twist.

She has exhibited throughout the United States and in Japan, Australia, France, and Spain. Her work has shown at the Allentown Art Museum, The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, and has been acquired into the permanent collection of the American Museum of Illustration at the prestigious Society of Illustrators in New York City.

An Art Renewal Center 2012-13 finalist, Guay also has been the recipient of many significant awards and honors, including numerous gold medal awards from the Spectrum Annual and a recent gold medal from the SOILA Annual for Best in the Original Works/Gallery category.

Her work has been acquired by private collectors internationally. A solo exhibit will open September 21 at R Michelson Galleries in Northampton, Massachusetts.



Love Poem, acryla-gouache on paper, 11 x 8 1/4"



Little Fish, oil and 23-karat gold leaf on canvas, 60 x 144



JANET A. COOK

(917) 747-6565
www.janetacook.com

Price Range
\$350 to \$20,000

Janet A. Cook is one of a growing number of women painting the nude. Her work has a contemporary edge, and her goal is to intrigue and engage viewers while leaving enough room for them to create their own narrative.

Originally from Britain, Cook studied at the National Academy in New York City, and is now represented by Dacia Gallery in New York. Her work has been published in many publications and is held in the Trenton City Museum permanent collection where she participated in a four-person invitational in 2007. Her next solo show will be at Dacia Gallery in 2014.



Phaethon's Fall, oil on panel, 48 x 48"



WILLIAM A. SCHNEIDER, OPA, AISM, PSA-M

(815) 455-4972
www.SchneiderArt.com

Price Range
\$1,375 to \$7,600

Painting from life, William A. Schneider seeks to capture the truth of a particular moment and place. Sargent, Zorn, and Sorolla have been influences.

Educated at the American Academy of Art in Chicago, he studied figure drawing with Bill Parks and oil painting with Ted Smuskiewicz. He continued his education through workshops with artists such as Daniel Gerhartz, Harley Brown, and Richard Schmid.

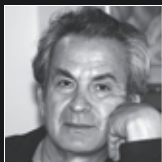
Schneider's work has received awards



Too Hot to Sleep, pastel, 12 x 16"

in exhibitions of NOAPS, Oil Painters of America (OPA), Pastel Society of America (PSA), Portrait Society of America, and at *Salon International*. He is represented by numerous galleries across the country.

Schneider is a signature member of OPA, and a Master Signature member of PSA and American Impressionist Society. His instructional videos are distributed by Lilledahl Video Productions.



MIGUEL PAREDES

Richardson Gallery of Fine Art
(800) 628-0928
Mark@RichardsonFineArt.com

Price Range

\$3,500 to \$18,500

A master of classical art techniques, Miguel Paredes' portraits capture the essence of an individual's character. Whether he is painting a memorable moment in the playful heart of a child, the depth and character lines that express wisdom and experience in an older person, or the quintessential beauty and mysterious allure



Playful, oil on board, 18 x 35"

of a female nude, he creates images that resonate in a powerful manner.

A perfectionist by nature, Paredes tweaks each painting with meticulous attention to detail. His work emulates subtleties that distinguished the figurative masterpieces

of our most revered classical artists. Paredes says, "I strive in all my work to create timeless pieces, which will endure beyond you and I...that they will be works that will become tomorrow's classics." He seems to connect on a deep emotional level

with the viewer, transcending conscious thought.

Paredes specializes in custom portraiture. His work skillfully captures the individual nuances and subtleties that turn his portraits into enduring family treasures.



BRIAN KEELER

(570) 746-1187
www.briankeeler.com

Price Range

\$1,000 to \$12,000

Brian Keeler's concern is finding the right combination of elements and organizing them into a harmonious unit. "For example," he explains, "finding the subject is a very active process of looking, then finding where land, light, buildings, figures and atmosphere coalesce to provide the motif."

Keeler's initial interest is to express an abstract relationship based on observation. Although his work is representational and realistic, it's the formal elements of design, relationship, intervals, paint quality, and others that he is bringing into harmony.

Keeler is represented at West End Gallery in Corning, New York; Laura Craig Gallery in Scranton, Pennsylvania; and Rodger LaPelle Gallery in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



Harvest Bacchante, oil on linen, 40 x 30"



August Afternoon, oil on canvas, 20 x 16"



Tessa with Jewels, acrylic on 100 percent cotton canvas, 20 x 15"



JOHN R. SCHNURRENBERGER

(250) 375-2293
www.jrsfineart.com

Price Range
 \$500 to \$12,000

Born and raised in Switzerland, John R. Schnurrenberger has lived in western Canada since 1965 with his wife, Antje. The pair left their homeland to pursue their dream of living the "Western" lifestyle.

He first worked as a draftsman, commercial artist and technical illustrator. In 1974,

after leaving a job in a newspaper art department, Schnurrenberger began not just painting the cowboy lifestyle but living it. He has spent time on some of the largest ranches in Canada, gathering ideas and experience.

After a rewarding career as a Western artist, Schnurrenberger now devotes the majority of his time capturing the beauty and mystique of the female figure in a series of drawings and paintings.

He also paints plein air landscapes, miniature oils, and does some commissions. Schnurrenberger has established a loyal following during his long career, particularly with those who appreciate the integrity and authenticity of his work.



PETER BAGNOLO

(630) 510-7979, x-1
www.ABagnoloart.com

Price Range
 \$500 to \$10,000

Peter Bagnolo had planned to paint *Tessa with Jewels* in oil but the model said she was allergic to petroleum distillates, so he painted the piece in acrylic. He did several smaller studies

before she donned the jewelry, which Bagnolo believed added a new elegance to her pose.

He has several other poses of this new model in his coming October exhibition. Sprinkled among the myriad figures and portraits are many surprises in style and theme for his collectors to consider.

The model is one of several excellent new discoveries that Bagnolo has found recently. *Tessa with Jewels*, a 20-by-15-inch work on 100 percent cotton canvas, can be found on the artist's website. Bagnolo also welcomes gallery inquiries.



IRINA KIRIENKO MILTON

(425) 308-8184
www.irinamilton.com

Irina Kirienko Milton is an explorer in life and art, which leads to her unique perspective. She always seeks to find new aspects of her subjects that she can incorporate into her artwork.

Milton explores the human condition, human-made objects, and the natural world in all its manifestations. She pushes the limits of what is possible in her painting, seeking



River Nymph, oil on linen, 24 x 28"

challenges, and learning from the experience. Her subjects include portraits, figures (clothed and nude), and the world in which she lives and

visits (cityscapes, landscapes, seascapes, etc.).

Her painting *River Nymph* was done from value and full-color plein air studies and

photos that she took. Sketches helped her to play with the composition until a sense of balance was somewhat achieved.



E.L. STEWART

(509) 327-2456
www.elstewart.com

Price Range
\$400 to \$6,000

DELILAH. LITTLE SISTER

is an example of E.L. Stewart's current direction with the stylistic and social convergences that characterize her work.

"The realism and my delight with the figure are the ground to the larger metaphor," says Stewart. "*DELILAH. LITTLE SISTER* in its social commentary pushes toward abstraction. The



DELILAH. LITTLE SISTER, acrylic on canvas, 15 x 30"

painting is an emotional combination of words and sighs. I love to explore this in my work and I am continually rewarded with glimpses of discovery."

Stewart has been creating work that encompasses both of her loves: a love of rendering the human figure

in narrative context and an expressive abstraction, working back and forth between the two. She is looking for a balance between the hard physical world and the intimacy of the soul.

Stewart's work was included in the Santa Fe, New

Mexico, exhibit *ART OF LOVE*, and the Davis, California, show *ART OF WAR*. Her work also hangs in many private collections throughout the United States, and is included in the art collection of Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington.