

Women Contemporary Artists opens at Selby Gallery May 12th.

Opening with a public reception Friday May 12 from 5-7pm, the regionally-based Women Contemporary Artists end their 2005/2006 season with an exhibition at Selby Gallery on the Ringling Campus.

As with all member group shows, the 45 pieces vary in medium and content. What the pieces all share—what juror Mark Ormond was able to achieve—is a distinctive voice. “This year’s entries to the WCA exhibition demonstrated an extraordinary range of talent” noted Ormond, former Asst. Director at the Ringling Museum of Art. “In choosing work for the show I found it important to determine what path each artist had chosen for themselves in exploring their medium. Those who were the most consistent in the use of their chosen vocabulary made it into the show.”

Much of the work in the exhibit is figurative. Third place winner Peppi Elona coaxes a figure out of the ‘clay’ of the canvas with her distinctive brushstrokes in “Of The Earth.” The self-portrait is often an exercise in looking inward; merit winner Julie Hanson’s “Portrait of an Artist” exhibits a direct gaze of someone who is unafraid to look closely. Other pieces coolly reference the implied figure with collages of prints of clothing while Anita Wexler’s “Savor el Mango” celebrates the both the human figure and the longing heart.

Sculpture, too, makes a strong showing in this exhibition. Second place winner Amy Webber charms with her “One of Two Sisters” a ceramic sculpture that is, perhaps not unsurprisingly, distinctly figurative. Margaret Murphy-Reed rightly takes a merit award for “The Sound of Garlic Falling.” This white-on-white assemblage achieves the delicate mystery of the famous Cornell boxes. Melody Oxarart turns in a really witty steel/found-object sculpture titled “Armed and Dangerous” with the word ‘independent’ remaining from a commercial logo on the found metal remnant.

Contemporary realist Kathleen Piunti took first place with “Texaco.” Piunti takes a decidedly ordinary and unlovely scene--a corner Texaco station in a somewhat grimy downtown--and renders it with a lyrical crispness that turns it into something else again. Patricia Hanson rounds out the winners with a merit award for the vividly painted “Love me, love my dog.”

Women Contemporary Artists is a strong regional organization of vibrant professional women dynamically engaged in the visual fine arts. The group organizes several member exhibitions per year, as well as workshops on professional development in the arts. Additionally, the group annually grants two substantial cash awards to female students who are fine art majors in their respective schools.

The public reception to meet the artists for Selby Gallery is scheduled for Friday May 12th, from 5-7pm. For more information please contact the Selby Gallery at 359-7563. For more information about WCA or the exhibiting artists visit the website at www.womencontemporaryartists.com