

*The Mesabi Range College Art Gallery Presents....*

# “Expressive Portraits”

An Exhibit of Oil Paintings by

**Ann Solyst**

Exhibit dates: April – May, 2012



*“Bambina” by Ann Solyst*



*“Old Man” by Ann Solyst*



*“Patty” by Ann Solyst*

## *About the Artist, Ann Solyst...*

Excepting a brief period in preschool in during which I wanted to be a ballerina I have always wanted to be an artist of one kind or other. Be that painter, fiber artist, costume designer or even blacksmith the driving force in my career choice has always been a creative one.

I went to College at Concordia in Moorhead where I was encouraged to develop my loose vibrant style full of thick strokes and a bright, limited palate. My junior year of College was spent studying art in Florence, Italy where I spent hours, days, and months wondering the historic city, drawing inspiration from everything from the narrow cobble stone streets to Botticelli's *Primavera*.

Because of Florence's rich history in the Italian renaissance my artwork while studying there took a turn towards a more classical realistic style. I learned to paint not relying on energy of stroke alone, but with correctness of line and shape. These influences gave my paintings a much more believable feel and I learned the importance of skill and technique.

It was also during my time in Florence that I started setting up my own compositions rather than rely on snapshots I took of people in their everyday lives. Setting up my own scenes brought great freedom to my artwork. I no longer was tied to the quality or number of photos I took but could set up any scene I wanted and paint whatever moved me. My imagination was freed and painting a scene from real life no longer mattered as much as painting ideas and feelings.



## *The Artist's Statement...*

I am a figurative painter. Working on a large scale, my paintings take on a narrative quality. I like working with the human figure because it is relatable to all people.

I usually paint photographs I take of people in very spontaneous moments. These paintings are completed in an expressive, painterly fashion using vibrant, exaggerated colors. For the past two years I have been developing a more refined style, still loose, but with more care for detail.

I approach painting in a fairly academic way. Working from my sketches and from photographs I begin a painting by blocking out the main elements with a rough outline. I simultaneously add color and develop form with loose, thick strokes. Once this loose layer of pure color and form is dry, I develop the more detail-oriented places such as faces and hands. Throughout the process I keep the whole painting in mind, making sure no one element distracts from the painting as a whole

I am currently working on composing pieces more deliberately. Rather than taking spontaneous snapshots and using what happens to make a good painting, I have begun setting up specific scenes of a surreal or mythological nature.

## *About the Mesabi Range College Art Gallery...*

The Art Gallery is situated within the Mesabi Range College Library, on the Virginia campus, located at 1001 Chestnut St. West. Recent remodeling has provided the Gallery with an open and light-filled space for displaying the works of local and regional artists and art groups.

Richard Saukko, Art Gallery director, installs four to six different shows in the course of an academic year. Artwork displays in the past have included paintings, photography, drawings, fiber arts and ceramics. Art work done by students in Mesabi Range College's art classes is the focus of the final show, held the last few weeks of each spring semester. A Gallery Reception is sponsored for some featured shows, and offers visitors a chance to meet and speak with the artist.

Between Art shows, the Gallery is filled with art works purchased by the college and funded through the "Percent for Art" initiative; art works that have been donated to the college by various artists throughout the years; and works with historical significance, such as paintings produced in the 1930's through the WPA program.

The public is especially invited to come on campus to view the works on display and enjoy the Art Gallery experience!

## *Art Gallery Hours and Location...*

**Monday-Thursday 8:00 am To 7:00 pm**

**Friday 8:00 am to 4:00 pm**

**Closed weekends and holidays**

**Located in the Library at Mesabi Range College,  
1001 Chestnut St. West, Virginia, MN 55792**

