DANIEL DALLMANN
Hat Trick, 2005,
Oil on linen, 48 x 54 inches

ARNOLDUS GRÜTER
Model with Horses, 2006
Mixed media on shaped canvas, 42 x 48 ½ inches

Go Figure: Works by Daniel Dallmann and Arnoldus Grüter

January 23—February 26, 2008

Opening Reception
January 23, 2008, 7–9 p.m.

Hillstrom Museum of Art

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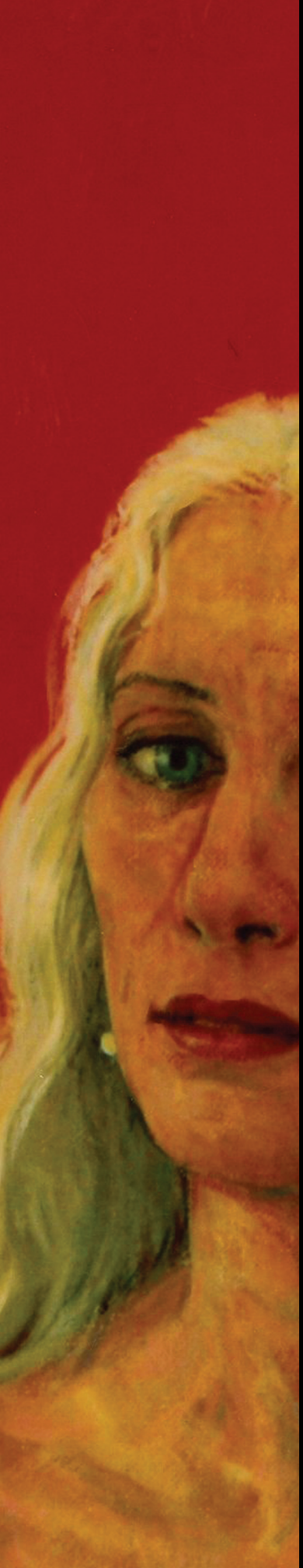

Go Figure: Works by Daniel Dallmann and Arnoldus Grüter

Introductory Notes

The Hillstrom Museum of Art is pleased to present this exhibition of paintings and drawings by two artists, Daniel Dallmann and Arnoldus Grüter, who both work extensively with the human figure, the nude in particular. Although their styles are very different, both artists consider the human form to be an integral part of their work, and this exhibition serves to take note of the importance the figure holds in contemporary art.

Arnoldus Grüter was born in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and his training in art includes a B.F.A. degree from the University of Manitoba's School of Fine Arts in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, and an M.A. in Art Education from Sir George Williams University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada (a degree equivalent to an M.F.A. in the United States). He also holds an M.S. degree in Counseling Psychology/Student Personnel from Mankato State University (now Minnesota State University, Mankato), and a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from The Fielding Institute in Santa Barbara, California. He was Artist-in-Residence at Mankato State University from 1968 to 1980, and served as a tenured faculty member there. He also served as Director of the Art Gallery at Mankato State University's Centennial Student Union for many years, and directed its Lincoln Art Gallery in the late 1960s. He was a member of the faculty of Mankato State University's Experimental University. Grüter served as a licensed staff psychologist for the Minnesota Security Hospital in St. Peter and originated the Art Therapy Program there. He has exhibited extensively in the region, and received two major sculpture commissions and one for a mural from Mankato State University.

Daniel Dallmann holds a B.S. degree from St. Cloud (Minnesota) State University, and an M.A. and an M.F.A. from the University of Iowa, Iowa City. He is a Professor of Art at the Tyler School of Art at Temple University, Philadelphia, and has taught numerous times for the Tyler School of Art program in Rome. He has exhibited widely, including at the Mint Museum of Art in Charlotte, North Carolina, the Robert Schoelkopf Gallery in New York, Davidson Galleries in Seattle, and Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. Dallmann's works are in the holdings of numerous collections, including the Art Institute of Chicago, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Yale University Art Museum, the Smith College Museum of Art in Northampton, Massachusetts, and corporate collections such as those of Citibank in New York, Mellon Bank in Pittsburgh, Price Waterhouse in Philadelphia, and Reader's Digest in New York.

Both Grüter and Dallmann use the human form frequently. Dallmann has noted that, even though he had something of a reputation as a landscape painter, by the late 1980s, he recognized "that [his] heart belonged to the figure, to the human image with all its dignity and foibles." He has worked with the figure almost exclusively since about 1990 (but recently, as noted in his Artist Statement, has experimented with still life). Grüter also has devoted his art to the human form for a number of years, though other themes often appear in his work as well, such as horses, columns, or the figure of Pierrot from the Commedia dell Arte. For Grüter, the female nude is a "welcome change from the banality of male dominated sports, politics or

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war." He sees the human figure, especially the female, as symbolic of the continuity of the human race, and of what is good and appealing to humankind. Dallmann states that a reason the human form is so important to him is that it is a subject to which all can relate, viewer and artist alike. He notes, "We all have many things we love, but usually it is the people, families, friends and lovers that are the major source of richness and fulfillment in our lives. Making pictures of people provides a link between the only life form that makes art and the only life form that appreciates it. In short, it is us."

Similar attitudes about and emphasis on the human form can be traced throughout the history of art. Some of the earliest known artistic endeavors, in fact, are depictions of human beings, such as the prehistoric *Woman from Willendorf*, a 4 ½ inch exaggerated image of a nude woman that dates around 22,000 to 21,000 B.C., or the occasional hunter found with animals in cave paintings, such as those at Lascaux, dating around 15,000 to 13,000 B.C. There are numerous periods in the history of art when the human figure is a primary subject matter, including not only the Greek and Roman eras, but also, after a diminished interest in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance. Indeed, Michelangelo (1475-1664) based his entire art primarily on the beauty and dignity of the human body. He felt, as had scholar and philosopher of art Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472), that the human form was a reflection of the character of its soul. The positive attitude of these Italians towards the figure is in consonance with that of the German artist Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), who wrote in the introduction to his study of human proportions that, "The sight of a fine human figure is above all things pleasing to us..."

The importance and appreciation of the human form in art was basically undiminished until the modern era, specifically the advent in the early twentieth century of abstraction and non-objective art, and the resulting hegemony of Abstract Expressionism around mid-century. Artist Frances Cunningham (b. 1931) recently published an article titled "A Vision of the Nude" (in *LINEA: Journal of the Art Students League of New York*, Fall 2006), in which he traces the decline of the study of the nude in the twentieth century, and notes that he and fellow artist Barney Hodes (b. 1943) in 1980 founded the New Brooklyn School of Life Drawing, Painting and Sculpture to address this situation. In his article (an unabridged version of which can be found online at *www.franciscunningham.com*), Cunningham describes how, when he studied at the Art Students League in the 1950s, the human figure, especially the nude, was being neglected, despite a long history of having been important. Painter Robert Henri (1865-1929), a fundamental presence at the League as an instructor there from 1915 to 1928, described the nude human figure as "exquisite" and "the most beautiful thing in all the world." Henri, whose thoughts are recorded in a book based on his lectures, titled *The Art Spirit* (1923), elaborated on his views: "There is nothing in all the world more beautiful or significant of the laws of the universe than the nude human body. In fact it is not only among the artists but among all people that a greater appreciation and respect for the human body should develop. When we respect the nude we will no longer have any shame about it."

When Cunningham was studying at the Art Students League, the importance of the nude had been much diminished from Henri's time. Echoing the sentiments of Grüter and Dallmann, Cunningham makes a case for reinstating the priority of the nude figure: "Each of us has a body, and embedded within its physical properties are its emotional, intellectual, and spiritual aspects. We are at once individuals but also members of corporate society—the human race." He continues: "Why the nude today? Stripped of every mark of rank and distinction, the nude presents us with our shared humanity. Something so simple can direct us past differences of a kind that lead to prejudice, injustice, and violence. As the embodiment of our humanity, the nude carries us beyond the parochial differences of class, creed, and nation."

Cunningham, and also Dallmann and Grüter, have embraced the human figure, in a return to the tradition of Henri. Dallmann notes that he appreciates the traditional in art, though not for the sake of it being traditional. He states: "Conventions are developed through time and attitude (we call that culture, I suppose) but conventional art is no more, or less, valuable as art, than is un-conventional art. I like to think that the wonderful stuff happens apart

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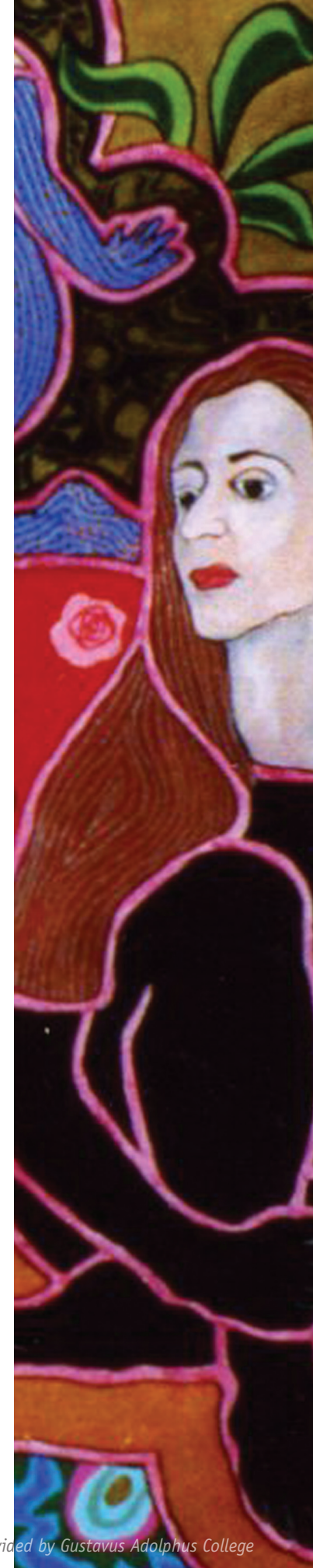
Artist Statements and Checklists



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Rapture of Winter Geraniums, 2005,
Oil on linen, 66 x 48 inches

Daniel Dallmann

Artist Statement

Figurative imagery has been central to my art for over forty years. There is a special drama that is imparted to a work with the presence of a human image. Why is that? Because it is us: you and I and all of us. Regardless of whatever else we love, usually it is the people, the families, friends and lovers, which are the major source of richness and fulfillment in our lives. The human image and the human condition has been the primary driving force for most art throughout the centuries. Can one imagine a Puccini opera about a potted palm, instead of a Madame Butterfly, filled with longing for the "One Fine Day?" I usually employ a rather high degree of representation; it reflects my idealism, inferring that special, wonderful events and situations are possible in our known world.

I am fascinated with how the presence of the figure activates my own thinking. I pay attention to the development of an expression, or a gesture, to become a touchstone for some connection that I make in my heart. The day by day work of making art requires countless decisions, mostly abstract, formal choices regarding elements like color, shape, space and energy. Underneath, however, is an unspoken murmur of associations, memories, projections and desires, all triggered by my responses to the figurative and formal elements; I think that is what is called the voice of the muse. Noticing and responding to that soft voice becomes the real challenge of the work, because it is there that I'll discover the statement that I didn't know I was going to make.

It is ironic that about the same time I began writing these paragraphs regarding the power of figuration in my art, I was also completing one of the very few still life compositions that I have ever made. I asked that *Puppet Show* be included in the show, even though it is tangential to the central theme of my work and to this exhibit, because I noticed an uncanny similarity to another painting, *Model/Artist,* done about ten years earlier. This metaphorical similarity, in both form and content, reveals to me the consistency and pervasiveness of my concerns.

Diver Series #1

Diver Series #2

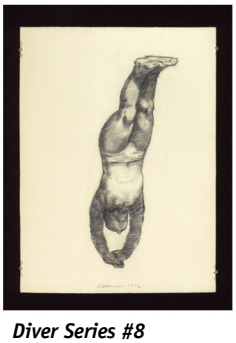
Diver Series #3

Diver Series #4

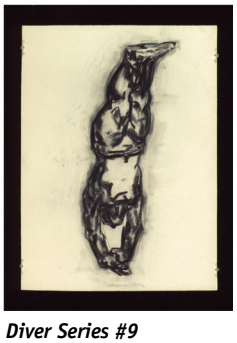
Diver Series #5

Diver Series #6

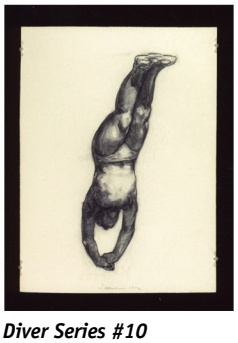
Diver Series #7



Diver Series #8



Diver Series #9



Diver Series #10

Dark Diver Drawings,
1992, Charcoal on paper,
30 x 22 ¼ inches, *(series of 10 drawings)*

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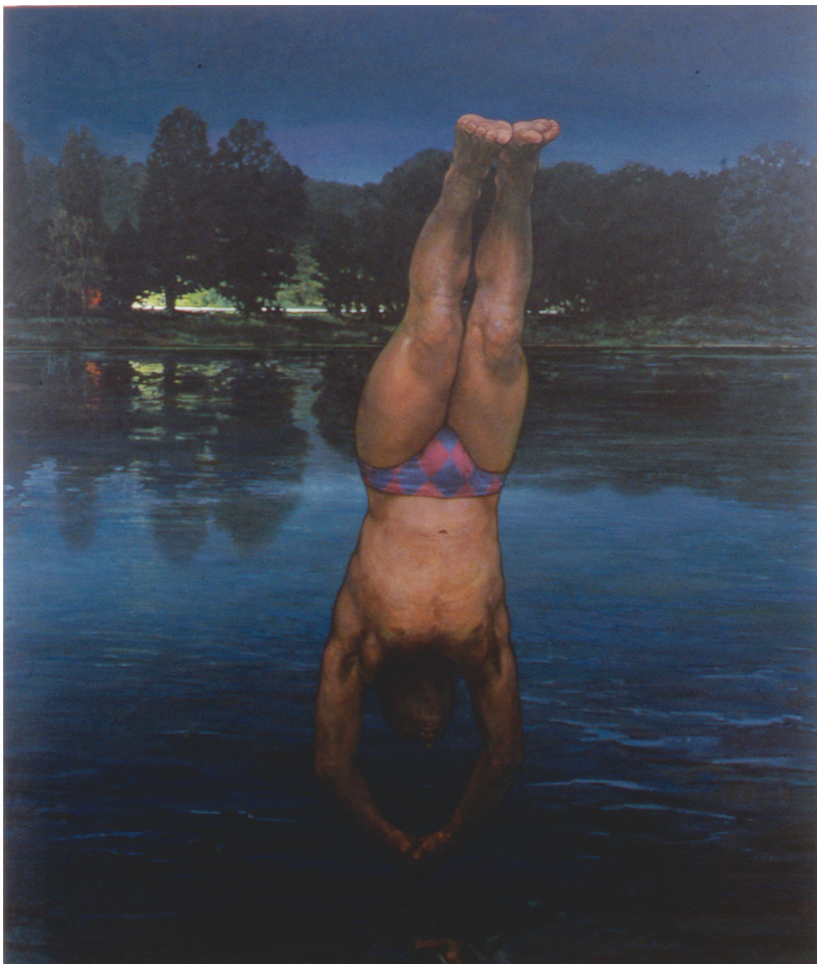
Daniel Dallmann



Dark Diver, 1992,
Oil on canvas, 102 x 88 inches, Private Collection

Dark Diver Drawings

In the early 1990s I made a large painting (102 x 88 inches) that presented an image of a man diving, at night, into the waters of a dark lake or river. (The place is not specific, but I grew up in St. Cloud and lived for many years only one block from the banks of the Mississippi). During the twelve to fifteen months it took to complete the work, I did many drawings of the diving man, some from the painting in progress, some from a model posed head up but lying on a tilted beach chair. The purpose of the drawings was to keep in touch with the various attitudes the figure could/would impart to the painting. Thus, some of these figures seem confident and some nervous, some fall like a rock and others seem projected like an arrow, and sometimes he seems to be held in place as if he's been there, and will be there, for all time.

I've heard it said that my paintings often seem to have a dark side. Although I didn't consciously think of it at the time, the *Dark Diver* was painted during a time when the world was absorbing the significance of the AIDS epidemic. I think, apart from the moral questions involved, that the cavalier notion of reckless (male) behavior as daring and devil-may-care was beginning to be re-evaluated—and I began to think of my diver as a conflation and contrast of both courage and carelessness. Is he a hero or a fool?

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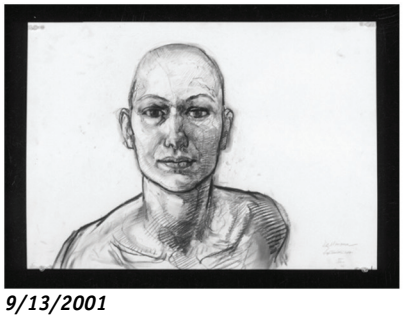
Daniel Dallmann

9/11 Drawings

These seven drawings were made during the strain of the days immediately following the 9/11 attacks. I was living in Rome at the time and I was struck by the kindness and caring of Italian friends and neighbors. They seemed to feel, as I certainly did, a combination of shock and anger.

In the studio on September 12 I looked at a drawing I had previously tacked on the studio wall of a woman with long, wavy, copper-colored hair. It felt wrong, just too luxurious, too rich and too colorful. Exasperated, I did a rough copy of my own drawing, minus the hair. It reminded me of the custom in some societies where the women crop their hair to stubble when faced with extreme grief. That seemed appropriate, and for the next 6 days I solicited the help of others who, like me, felt hollowed by that distant event. Shorn, figuratively, they appear like deer in the headlights, with subtle variations of fear, defiance and anger, but in the last drawing, *9/18/2001*, the cropped-hair woman looks to her right, outside of, and beyond our shared confusion.

9/12/2001



9/13/2001

9/14/2001

9/15/2001

9/16/2001

9/17/2001

9/18/2001

9/11 Drawings, 2001,
Charcoal on paper, 19 ½ x 27 ½ inches
(series of 7 drawings)

Daniel Dallmann Checklist

Couple, H & S, 1996,
Oil on linen, 16 x 26 inches

Little Sleeper 1, 1996,
Oil on linen, 15 x 21 inches

Little Sleeper 12, 1997,
Oil on linen, 16 x 22 inches

Artist/Model/Interview, 1999,
Oil on linen, 60 x 60 inches

Couple, J & J, 1996,
Oil on linen, 16 x 23 inches

Couple in a Red Square, 1997,
Oil on canvas, 20 x 20 inches

Couple with Three Pillows, 1998,
Oil on canvas, 19 x 25 inches

Second Storm, 1999,
Oil on linen, 13 x 12 inches

Artist/Model/Vistor, 2000,
Oil on linen, 48 x 48 inches

Couple, Shelter, 1996,
Oil on linen, 14 x 23 inches

Couple with Striped Pillow, 1997,
Oil on canvas, 17 x 26 inches

Cascade, 1998,
Oil on linen, 30 x 30 inches

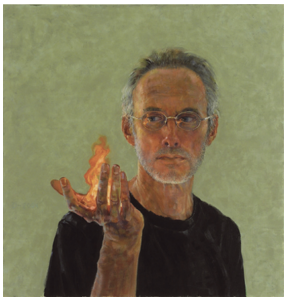
Model/Artist, 1999,
Oil on linen, 35 x 26 inches

Daniel Dallmann Checklist

Roberta della Luna, 2002,
Oil on canvas, 18 x 18 inches

Roberta del Sole, 2002,
Oil on linen, 18 x 18 inches

La Ponentina, 2003,
Oil on linen, 16 x 16 inches



Learning About Fire, 2004,
Oil on linen, 27 x 26 inches

Aperture, 2004,
Oil on linen, 36 x 27 inches

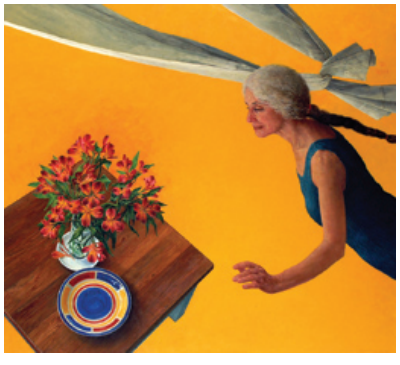
Study of Daniel, 2005,
Oil on linen, 16 x 14 inches

Study of Carol: Glancing Left, 2005,
Oil on linen, 12 x 16 inches

L'incontro, 2005,
Oil on linen, 44 x 32 inches

Rapture of Winter Geraniums, 2005,
Oil on linen, 66 x 48 inches

Kaleidoscope, 2006,
Oil on linen, 48 x 60 inches



Hat Trick, 2006,
Oil on linen, 48 x 54 inches

Puppet Show, 2007,
Oil on linen, 36 x 26 inches

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Jardin Trompe l'Oeil II, 2003
Mixed media on canvas,
40 x 30 inches

Arnoldus Grüter

Artist Statement

Having served the visual arts for more than fifty years in about as many functions as one can pack into a lifetime, as a teacher, painter, sculptor, printer, ceramicist, licensed Art Therapist, Artist-in-Residence, Art Gallery Director and general patron of the arts, I am currently devoting most of my studio time to painting and sculpting, with an emphasis on the female form. I place a natural emphasis on the decorative aspect of design, including frequently extending the picture frame beyond its borders. It reflects in part my philosophy of life: the need for structure based on science, law, tradition and other cultural aspects of life, yet at the same time realizing the limitations of such an approach and our responsibility to go beyond traditional mores.

The female form combined with an abundance of decorative detail is intended, besides satisfying my love for the luscious, as a pendant to the ugliness of war and destruction we are experiencing these days.

Models, 2005
Mixed media on shaped canvas,
38 ½ x 37 ½ inches

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Arnoldus Grüter Checklist

Lush Life, 2002,
Mixed media on canvas,
40 x 30 inches

Eden I, 2003
Mixed media on canvas,
30 x 40 inches

Joanie Trompe l'Oeil, 2003,
Mixed media on shaped canvas,
42 ¾ x 30 ¾ inches

Triptych in Gold, 2003
Mixed media on canvas,
40 x 60 inches

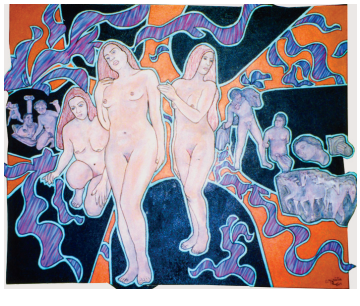
Jardin Trompe l'Oeil, 2003
Mixed media on shaped canvas,
45 ½ x 40 inches

Jardin Trompe l'Oeil II, 2003
Mixed media on canvas,
40 x 30 inches

Eden II Triptych, 2003
Mixed media on canvas,
40 x 60 inches

Twins, 2003
Acrylic on shaped canvas,
39 x 51 ¼ inches

Odalisque I, 2003
Acrylic on shaped canvas,
37 ½ x 50 ¼ inches



Three Graces, 2004
Acrylic on shaped canvas,
40 ¼ x 49 ½ inches

Presence, 2004
Acrylic on shaped canvas,
42 ¾ x 48 inches

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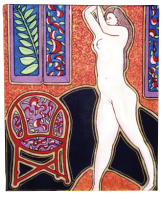
Arnoldus Grüter Checklist

Quo Vadis '04, 2004
Mixed media on shaped canvas,
51 ½ x 24 inches (each panel)

Models, 2005
Mixed media on shaped canvas,
38 ½ x 37 ½ inches



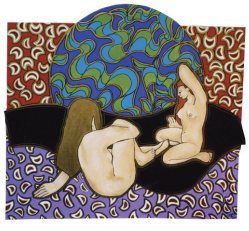
To Joanie (After Matisse: Nu Campé Bras sur la Tête), 2005
Acrylic on canvas, 23 x 19 inches

Sangre de Toro Rojo, 2005
Mixed media on shaped canvas,
34 x 44 inches

Ode to Matisse, 2005
Mixed media diptych on shaped canvas,
32 x 42 inches

On the Beach, 2006
Acrylic on shaped canvas,
33 ¼ x 42 ¼ inches

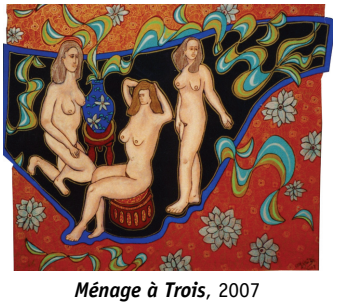
On the Beach II, 2006
Mixed media on shaped canvas,
43 ⅛ x 31 ¾ inches



On the Beach III, 2006
Mixed media on canvas,
35 x 39 ½ inches

Model with Horses, 2006
Mixed media on shaped canvas,
42 x 48 ½ inches

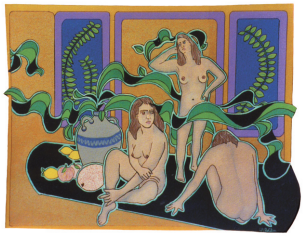
Nude/Bouquet, 2006
Mixed media on shaped canvas,
36 x 39 inches



Ménage à Trois, 2007
Mixed media on shaped canvas,
37 x 42 inches

Icon, 2007
Mixed media on shaped canvas,
26 ¾ x 33 ½ inches

Icon II, 2007
Mixed media on canvas,
40 x 31 inches



Three Icons, 2007
Mixed media on shaped canvas,
31 x 40 inches

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from the issue of conventional or unconventional: historically, what is valued is the invention within the convention." Grüter's philosophy is similar: "I believe that artists should not deny themselves the opportunity of extending their artistic vocabulary when an opportunity presents itself during the formal years and indeed study the human form in all its complexity." Thus, neither Dallmann nor Grüter embraces the use of the human figure simply for the sake of tradition, but instead find it a valuable tool in their art.

Not surprisingly, many of the artists Dallmann and Grüter note as being of influence or interest to them are ones for whom the human form is or was an important element. Dallmann cites his appreciation, as a young man, of the art of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901) and Auguste Rodin (1840-1917), both of whom created many figure-based works, and notes that his early interest in the figure was confirmed by contemporary artists working with the human form in a realistic mode, such as Alice Neal (1900-1984), Lucian Freud (b. 1922) or Antonio López García (b. 1936). García, whom Dallmann finds especially interesting, was praised by prominent art critic Robert Hughes as a "master realist," and has a style sometimes termed "hyperrealistic" and that at times borders on Surrealism. Dallmann remarks that his own work as a mature artist has been called realistic, and he states that, while he's become less interested in reality *per se*, he does "want the notion that the events portrayed are possible in this world, our world, even though the spirit of the picture may point to, or suggest, a value that would be other than conscious, objective reality. Would that make it 'sur-realism?' Perhaps."

Grüter cites several important influences on his work. For his use of gold in his paintings, he has drawn from Symbolist painter Gustav Klimt (1862-1918), and has also been influenced by Russian icons. Grüter is an art collector and owns numerous such icons, as well as an extensive collection of African art (featured in an exhibition at the Hillstrom Museum of Art in 2002-2003), and he has been influenced by that type of art, too, especially to be noted in his tendency to stylize the human form and its facial features. Grüter also points to the phenomenal drawing technique of his fellow Dutchman, Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669), and to the painter Henri Matisse (1869-1954). As with Klimt, the influence of Matisse can be seen in Grüter's embracement of the decorative in his art, which leads to the use of gold, and the patterning of forms such that, for instance, parts of the human body are related to other decorative elements in a painting, so that a breast or a jaw line might take on the same curve and crescent of a leaf. One might also cite the works of Italian painter Sandro Botticelli (1444/45-1510) in considering Grüter's style, especially in that artist's use of patterning on garments, or the shaping of the nude female form found in Botticelli's great Neo-Platonic masterpiece *The Birth of Venus* (c.1484-86), which the artist manipulated for an elegant effect, to give to the goddess Venus a beauty that is meant as an indication of the purity of the soul and the desire to unite with the divine. Despite Grüter's use of patterns and his stylizing of form, his approach, like Dallmann's, is generally realistic, and this is a positive statement for him: "Much of my work in a sense is a reaction against Abstract Expressionism and the `anything goes' attitude so frequently observed in the literature these days."

Artists dealing with the nude human form are confronted, to a greater or lesser degree, and dependent on the cultural climate of the time, with issues of obscenity. While in the context of "art" there has been a general tendency to overlook nudity, this is certainly not universal, neither today nor in the past. Mark Twain famously railed against the popular painting by Titian (c. 1489-1576) in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, his *Venus of Urbino* (1538). That painting, which is given a veneer of respectability by being associated with the classical goddess, seems actually to be a sensual image of a contemporary woman painted for its patron, Duke Guidobaldo II della Rovere, leader of the Italian city Urbino from 1539 to 1574. It depicts the nude woman staring a bold invitation at the viewer, with her fingers at her genitalia. Twain, recognizing the painting as the sexy picture that it truly is, described it in *A Tramp Abroad* (1880) as "the foulest, the vilest, the most obscene picture the world possesses," noting that if he, as a writer, were to create such an image in prose, he would be charged with

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obscenity (which was surely Twain's real concern). He continued by noting that the *Venus of Urbino*, because it is a painting, was exempt from such consideration.

There have, however, been many instances, throughout history, of art being criticized or attacked as obscene, including physical attacks against prominent works. For example, a painting of a nude Venus by Diego Velazquez (1599-1660) known as *The Rokeby Venus* (after Rokeby Park in Yorkshire, England, where it hung for much of the nineteenth century) was slashed in 1914 with a meat cleaver while on view at the National Gallery in London. The perpetrator of this vandalism was a suffragette named Mary Richardson, who later stated that she didn't like the way male visitors to the museum would stare at the painting. And there have been many instances of pressure to cancel art exhibitions because of obscenity, as with the controversy in the late 1980s over an exhibit of homoerotic and sometimes very explicit photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe (1946-1989). Baroque painter Pietro da Cortona (1596-1669) felt that obscenity was **usually** present in depictions of the nude, writing in his *Treatise on Painting and Sculpture* of 1652: "Images of the nude are not *per se* obscene, for in many men's judgment many such images have been painted without obscenity. But, for my part, I think this happens rarely and in practice does not ordinarily succeed, because more often than not the painter of nude images designs them with some immodesty."

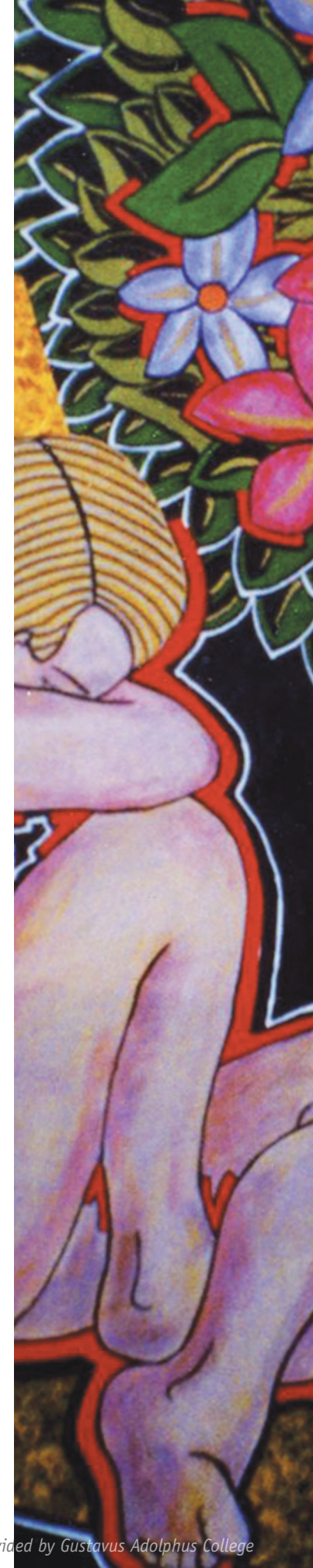
The question of whether or not there is something sensual or sexy in particular images of nudes seems, therefore, worthy of consideration. Art historian and one-time Director of London's National Gallery Kenneth Clark, in his influential study *The Nude* (1956), did not mince words when he wrote that "no nude, however abstract, should fail to arouse in the spectator some vestige of erotic feeling, even though it be only the faintest shadow—and if it does not do so, it is bad art and false morals." Clark was provocatively reacting to a pronouncement exactly to the contrary made by British philosopher Samuel Alexander (1859-1938). Clark's words have the effect of throwing down the gauntlet: the nude human figure, while an acceptable and beautiful subject in art, will often be vested with the weight of eroticism and sensuality, at least to some degree; and Clark believed this to be desirable.

For Arnoldus Grüter, the sensuality of the nude is relative. He states, "Whether the nude figure is inherently sexy depends on how it is used. As the ultimate human symbol there is practically no limit to the number of feelings that can be expressed or projected [on the human form], including sexual attractiveness. As the science of psychology teaches us, many objects or designs can be considered sexy, depending on the observer." Daniel Dallmann, when asked if the nude figure in art is inherently sexy, states his opinion boldly: "I hope so! Whatever else it might be, it should be that as well (not in the fashionable sense, but in the human sense). I have said that my little paintings of couples sleeping are attentive to the geometry of the intimate situation. In every case, THEY [the models] chose the poses and positions. I was interested in the way they negotiated the space available, to be close yet each requiring his or her acreage. I hope they [the paintings] are also sensual, and charged with the potential of intimacy."

The goal of this exhibition is to present two artists with very different approaches who have in common a strong affinity with and reliance on the human figure, especially the nude. It is hoped that their fine works will provoke a consideration of the role the human body plays (and has played) in art, whether it be used in a decorative manner, as a near-surreal emblem, or as an often sensual part of our common humanity.

We are very grateful to Daniel Dallmann and to Arnoldus Grüter for their enthusiasm about this exhibition and for generously sharing their efforts, time and, especially, their beautiful art with us.

— Donald Myers, Director, Hillstrom Museum of Art



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Hillstrom Museum of Art

Events are free and open to the public.

Museum Hours
9 a.m.–4 p.m. weekdays, 1–5 p.m. weekends

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