

Ceramic and clay exhibition examines masculinity

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Neufeld

Record staff

Art by Clint Neufeld, titled, *Sad Seahorse*, on display at the Clay and Glass gallery, in Waterloo, until June 30.

Foulem

Record Staff

Art by Leopold L. Foulem on display at the Clay and Glass gallery, in Waterloo, until June 30.

Segan

Record staff

Art by Srdjan Segan on display at the Clay and Glass gallery, in Waterloo, until June 30.

Waterloo Region Record

WATERLOO — Despite its confusing title, *Man or Myth: Explorations on Masculinity* is an engaging exhibition that examines three perspectives on traditional notions of masculinity.

On view at the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery through June 30, the three-man exhibition shares the gallery with *Fireworks 2012*, a biennial travelling exhibition organized by Fusion: the Ontario Clay and Glass Association; and *Earthborn 2012*, an annual exhibition of work by members of Waterloo Potters' Workshop.

Man or Myth is predicated on a weak curatorial premise which, in itself, is a narrow, oversimplification.

"Most North American men still measure their sense of their own masculinity against an outdated 1950s construct — one practically unreachable and (that) holds little relationship to what is actually going on inside," opines curator Christian Bernard Singer.

Nonetheless, Singer has invited a trio of interesting artists — Serbian sculptor and painter Srdjan Segan, Quebec sculptor Leopold L. Foulem and Saskatchewan sculptor Clint Neufeld — to offer their highly personal insights into masculinity.

Neufeld is the most accessible.

His ceramic representations of automotive engines and transmissions, not to mention outboard motors, sitting on Victorian chesterfields playfully subverts Popular Mechanics magazine notions of masculinity. With such cheeky titles as *Golden Tranny*, the pastel-coloured engine parts are adorned with delicate Rococo filigree and ornamentation.

At a quick glance, Foulem's tabletop figurines appear to have been rescued from Baroque parlours.

On closer inspection the figurines, a combination of ceramics and found objects, draw on classical mythology and art history to wryly challenge conventional notions of sexual politics.

Segan's work is the most visually powerful.

The artist spent a week prior to the opening of the exhibition in the gallery making a site-specific sculpture of raw, unkilned clay. An emaciated, skeletal, elongated (9.7 metres) male figure lies on his back. The construction process was recorded with time-lapsed video.

Accompanying the sculpture is a trio of 9.1-metre drawings of elongated, male figures incorporating snakelike images.

Segan lived in Croatia until the Serbo-Croatian war and his emaciated figures are undoubtedly a response to the horrors of war, with a nod to 20th-century Mexican artist Jose Clemente Orozco and 20th-century Swiss sculptor Alberto Giacometti.

Earthborn 2012 features the best works from members of the local potters' co-op. Most of the works are functional, encompassing cups, jugs, plates, bowls, vases, jars and bottles.

Vlodek Tydor won the Fusion Award for his mixed media sculpture *Clay-O-Genetically Altered Moss II*.

Fireworks exhibitions have been touring the province for more than 35 years showcasing the best handcrafted works in clay and glass by members of the provincial ceramics association.

rreid@therecord.com

Clay and Glass

Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery

Man or Myth: Explorations on Masculinity

Fireworks 2012

Earthborn 2012

On view through June 30

Information and gallery hours available at 519-746-1882 or online at www.theclayandglass.ca