patrick betaudier &
the atelier neo medici
july 10 - august 14, 1998

patrick betaudier, toby lawrence boothman,
john s. deom, steven jones, laedimac, eddwin meyers,
marie-christine mourgues, gregory pelizzari,
christine poupéeau, arlette b. sandre, katherine smith,
nancy whitmore smith, harold sudman, dennis wojtkiewicz

This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.
The Community Gallery of Art is a project of the College of Lake County Foundation.
The French word “atelier” means an artist’s studio or workshop. Originating during the Renaissance and continuing through the 19th century, ateliers served as a place for master artists to create their own work and to teach a cadre of followers the “craft” of painting. This has all but disappeared with the advent of Modern Art where technique has been eschewed in favor of aesthetic theory.

The Atelier Neo Medici, under the direction of Patrick Betaudier, is an extension of this centuries old idea of master-student atelier. The name Medici is synonymous with the Renaissance. Betaudier stresses that just as during the Renaissance, painting must touch upon universal chords, that is, Art must transcend the merely fashionable. The foundation for this is a comprehensive background in traditional techniques and history. The quality of a painting can be assessed in terms of its underlying sense of harmony. Betaudier expounds an uncompromising sense of observation and rendering of forms coupled with a concordant composition. Space is further defined on canvas by the treatment of light through harmonious arrangements of color and tone. 

Betaudier teaches an approach to painting known as the “technique mixte” which has antecedents with the early Northern masters. The technique employs a tempera emulsion underpainting over which oil colors are glazed. Tempera is quick drying, lean, and has special optical and handling advantages as opposed to oil. However, oil is easily blended and has a certain depth of color lacking in tempera alone. Sixty-five years ago Max Doerner wrote of this approach, “What should here above all interest a practical painter is the discovery of a material which without much trouble and without special tricks will enable him to paint pictures equal in merit to those of the old masters.”

Born in Trinidad, West Indies, Betaudier traveled to England where he received his N.D.D. (1959) from St. Martins of the Field College of Art in London. Betaudier taught at Stan Hope College, London (1959-60) before being invited to Paris to reach. He worked at the Grande Chaumier, a renowned artists’ atelier in the Montparnasse district. Through his association with the Surrealist movement, his reputation as a painter began to emerge. After time spent in Israel and Africa, he was invited to Southern Illinois University as a visiting artist in 1969. He stayed at the University for five years with his final year spent in France running the art department’s extension site where the idea for the atelier was born.

The Atelier Neo Medici was first founded by Patrick Betaudier in a grand Norman style house in the village of Verneuil-sur-Seine, outside of Paris in 1974. Throughout the next fifteen years students from the U.S. and Europe came to study with Betaudier. The five American men in this exhibition, an early core group whose roots extend back to Southern Illinois University, have continued their friendships and occasionally exhibit together.

In 1989, like many French artists before him, Betaudier was drawn to the south. Avoiding Provence, he chose the more pristine region of the Southwest. The atelier relocated to the 13th century walled town of Monflanquin. The charm of this medieval village and the beauty of the countryside heighten the atelier’s continuity with its historical predecessors. The French and English artists, as well as the two American women represented in the exhibition are currently working there. Gregory Pelizzari, one of the first atelier students, is presently teaching there. The fact that some of these artists have been painting only a short while testifies to the practicality of the technique and Betaudier’s ability as a teacher.

The Atelier can best be understood by looking at what Betaudier himself paints. He has been at the forefront of a growing movement of artists who “celebrate technique as artistically liberating and beauty as a universal value.” Betaudier expounds that painting since Giotto is not trapped in the past but rather part of a vibrant, eternal present. His painting on the cover, Revelations 21:4, celebrates the universal spirituality of humanity through a blend of African and European imagery. The Biblical passage states. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. The rich textures of adornments and draperies are sumptuously painted in the manner of 15th century Flemish painter Jan van Eyck. The painting contains the artist’s self portrait (pointing heavenward) and the village of Monflanquin appears in the background.

Betaudier, like van Eyck, thinks that painting must strive to unite Heaven and Earth. The Atelier Neo Medici forms a bridge from painting’s distant past to its living present.


Edwin Meyers
American

Position: Instructor, Columbia College, Chicago, IL.

The Academic Exit of Art and Imagination, 1997, oil/canvas

Exhibited: Condillac Galerie, Bordeaux, Centre Cultural, Villeneuve sur Lot, Neo Medici Exhibit, Monflanquin, France, 1998.

Redemption, 1998, technique mixte (monochrome stage)


Purification, 1998, technique mixte (monochrome stage)

Education: Atelier Neo Medici, Monflanquin, France, 1995-98.

Education: B.A. (Fashion Design and Technology), 1995. Purdue University, Lafayette, IN. Atelier Neo Medici, Monflanquin, France, 1997-98.

Exhibited: Neo Medici Exhibit, Monflanquin, France, 1998.


Collections: Hyatt Corp., Chicago, IL, McDonalds Corp., Oakbrook, IL, Fundadora, Monterrey, Mexico.


Collections: Evansville Museum of Arts and Sciences, Evansville, IN., The Hoyt Institute of Fine Art, New Castle, PA.

Position: Asst. Prof., School of Art, Bowling Green State Univ., Bowling Green, OH.
EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Patrick Betaudier
Revelation 21, 4., 1996-98, technique mixte, 118 x 197 cm.
Collection of Mr. Adrian Smith, Lake Forest, Ill.

Patrick Betaudier
Yellow Rose of Texas, 1997, technique mixte, 114 x 146 cm.
Collection of William and Dorothy Mortell, Wilmette, Ill.

Toby Lawrence Boothman
The Chess Game, technique mixte, 94.5 x 139.5 cm.

Toby Lawrence Boothman
Life Class, technique mixte, 94.5 x 142 cm.

John S. Deem
Daffodils, 1998, oil on canvas, 179.5 x 119.5 cm.

John S. Deem
Still Life with Trumpet Flowers, 1996, technique mixte, 60 x 89.5 cm.

Steven Jones
Blue Glass and Oranges, 1995, technique mixte, 60 x 75 cm.
Collection of Anne Kratz, Montecello, Ill.

Laedimac
Young Woman with Drapery, 1998, technique mixte, 146 x 114 cm.

Laedimac
Young Woman Kneeling Down, 1998, technique mixte, 130 x 97 cm.

Eddwin Meyers
The Academic Exit of Art and Imagination, 1997, oil/canvas, 94.5 x 124.5 cm.

Marie-Christine Mourgues
Redemption, 1998, technique mixte, 82 x 164 cm.

Gregory Pelizzari
Silent Conversation, 1996, technique mixte, 130 x 162 cm.

Gregory Pelizzari
A Quiet Corner, 1996, technique mixte, 97 x 130 cm.

Christine Poupeau
Purification, 1998, technique mixte, 89 x 116 cm.

Arlette B. Sandre
Gourmandises, 1998, technique mixte, 89 x 116 cm.

Katherine Smith
The One That Got Away, 1998, technique mixte, 73 x 92 cm.

Nancy Whitmore Smith
Rothchild, 1993, 1998, technique mixte, 50.5 x 45 cm.

Nancy Whitmore Smith
Still Life with Family Portrait, 1998, technique mixte, 46 x 55 cm.

Nancy Whitmore Smith
The Seven Deadly Sins, 1998, technique mixte, 92 x 65 cm.

Harold Sudman
In Motion, 1993, oil on canvas, 60 x 150 cm.

Dennis Wojtkiewicz
Melon Series #4, 1998, oil on canvas, 120 x 120 cm.

Dennis Wojtkiewicz
Melon Series #5, 1998, oil on canvas, 89.5 x 179.5 cm.
atelier
neo medici

july 10 - august 14, 1998

patrick betaudier, toby lawrence boothman,
john s. deom, steven jones, laedimac, eddwin meyers,
marie-christine mourgues, gregory pelizzari,
christine poupeau, arlette b. sandre, katherine smith,
nancy whitmore smith, harold sudman, dennis wojtkiewicz

community gallery of art
college of lake county
19351 west washington street
grayslake, il 60030-1198
847.543.2240
e-mail: lrc382@clc.cc.il.us

gallery summer hours:

july 10-31
mon-thur 8:00 am-10:00 pm
Fri 8:00 am-4:30 pm
Aug 3-14
Mon-Fri 8:00 am-4:30 pm

atelier neo medici web address: http://spanton.com/art/