



JUDY NIMTZ

Fabric and Flesh

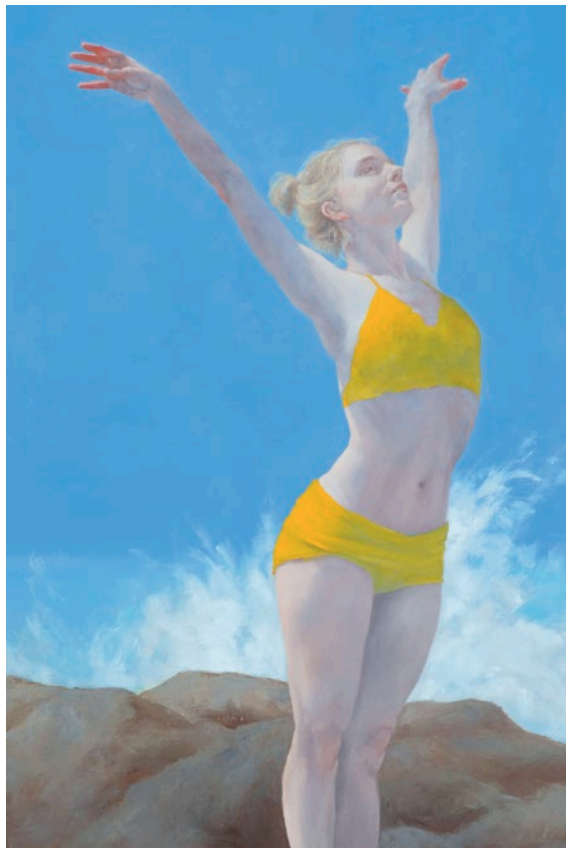
For her newest work, California painter Judy Nimtz went big. Life-size big.

"I've always loved the larger-scale paintings, the society portraits by John Singer Sargent, Thomas Eakins and even earlier with Anthony van Dyck. I'm not so much painting society portraits, but I loved that scale of the figures," Nimtz says from her Venice Beach studio, adding that she's creating works as tall as 72 inches and beyond. "It was nerve-racking going that large. Even physically, just getting your arm to the top of the painting is a new thing

for me. It's very physical painting that big. And the brushstrokes that would work on a small painting don't work anymore on a large canvas. They don't convey the energy, so you have to translate everything you do to a bigger piece. It had a learning curve, but it was worth it. I came out of the studio thinking I could paint anything."

Nimtz will show her new, large figurative work beginning June 7 at Koplin Del Rio in Seattle. The paintings feature female figures, with many of them in dramatic poses in coastal scenes. Nimtz, who was

born in Taiwan and raised in Hawaii, says she has always been obsessed with the anatomy of the human form. "Muscles and flesh and bone...these are the reasons I love painting dancers in motion because you get to paint all this wonderful anatomy. I feel like I'm sculpting in paint," she says. "I'm drawn to the emotion of the figure, which is often quite melancholic. I was aiming for this moment right before or after they've made a decision on something, a more celebratory emotion, but also one that's more lighthearted, but also more wild."





3

In her new works, Nimtz paints women in swimsuits, which allows her to show off the anatomy of her subjects—toned arms and legs, milky-white skin, delicate facial features—as well as women in long flowy outfits that essentially hide all of their anatomy. These clothing choices, particularly a long, hooded dress in a black-and-white striped pattern, allow Nimtz to drape the fabric over her subjects' bodies and to capture anatomy in an entirely different way.

New works include *Crescendo*, showing a figure holding a gymnast-like pose amid ocean spray on a coastal rock; *Levitas*, another dramatic pose, this time on top of a rock that calls out to Michael Heizer's *Levitated Mass* installation at LACMA; and *Formae (Lithos)*, its main subject wearing a striped dress that permeates with a Zen-like quality, like

freshly raked sand in a rock garden. Many of the works have Latin titles that reveal deeper meanings in the translation: *Līneae*, which relates to linen threads, plumb lines or even boundaries; *Litore*, which means beach; and *Littoral*, the title of the show and one of the works, meaning something that takes place near the shore.

"I love this idea of exploring and venturing out into words," she adds. "I keep several things near me in the studio: a Latin dictionary, a Greek dictionary and a thesaurus. As I'm painting I can go down into this little wormhole to find different meanings that excite me as I paint." ●

Koplin Del Rio, 313 Occidental Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98104 • (206) 999-0849 • www.kopлиндelrio.com

1
Crescendo (detail),
oil on panel, 32 x 16"

2
Litore II, oil on panel,
72 x 36"

3
Formae (Lithos),
oil on panel, 48 x 48"

Images courtesy the
artist and Koplin del Rio,
Seattle, WA.