

## Excerpt from “This Summer at The Art Spirit Gallery”

By Sheri Boggs

Elaine Green

(featured exhibit: July 14-Aug. 5, 2006)

At first glance, the inky charcoal darkness threatens to overwhelm you. Elaine Green's life-sized depictions of the human form – bending, curling, posing – have the same, slightly spooky and confrontational impact of a row of illuminated X-Rays. But on closer examination the darkness surrenders its treasures – the vulnerability and strength of a naked torso, the shapes of cows grazing paper fields, a bald forehead frowning in deep contemplation.

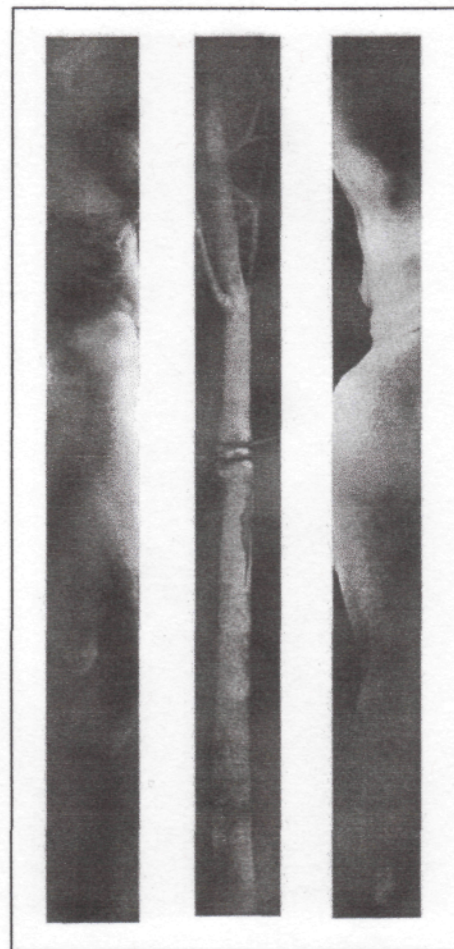
The images are familiar, and yet, not. Moscow artist Elaine Green uses the term “Unhomelike” to describe the feeling her paintings both depict and arouse.

“I remember coming across the German term *unheimlich* in different readings I had at the University of Idaho. Freud uses it in the sense of trauma experiences and he talked about the ‘uncanniness’ of the term,” she explains. “Martin Heidegger used it in the sense of something being both comfortable and uncomfortable at the same time.”

Green adds that this sense of familiarity is what she likes to convey when she makes the pieces life-sized, and that she also intentionally depicts ordinary images in unfamiliar contexts. In the case of her piece *Untitled #4*, a male torso is slightly twisted and posed in a way that could be suggesting anything from a runner's movement to the familiar contours of numerous artist renditions of the Crucifixion. And yet with no identifying features, with not even enough light to see the figure clearly, the piece is essentially a mystery.

“I really like working in black and white, which must come from years of being a calligrapher,” she says. “As for the figure, that's something I've been working with for five years or so. It isn't so much the subject that fascinates me – although it does – but the interplay of positive and negative. I'm interested in shape and how something with volume becomes very flat.”

After studying art at Spokane Falls Community College and Eastern Washington University, Green earned her MFA from the University of Idaho in 2005. And although Moscow sometimes gets a bum rap for being a “small town”, Green is in no hurry to leave.



*Unhomelike #2, Triptych*