



THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

Bountiful Harvest by Local Authors

Books Aplenty for Fall Reading

By Olivia Boler

Noe Valley has always been a hotbed of creative types, with writers and artists forming the core. At least six new books have been released in recent months by authors in the neighborhood. Almost all of the books are available on 24th Street, so after you check out the previews below, run down and buy copies for your bookshelf.

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DON McCUNN

Revisiting the Classics

Castro Street resident Don McCunn found inspiration in the artwork of the masters to create his own works of art in his self-published book *Revisiting the Classics*. Taking well-known paintings, drawings, and sculptures from 1600 BC

to the 1960s AD, McCunn mixed digital photography images of the art and live models.

With a background in pattern-making and costume design—McCunn, who turns 69 in December, published a book, *How to Make Sewing Patterns*, in 1973 that is still in print today—his interest in the arts is no surprise. Still, he approaches his new book with modesty.

"I have always had a love of fine art but never the talent or patience to pursue it, other than for my own amusement," he says. "The art classes I've taken over the years always emphasized the importance of studying the classics. So, I thought what better place to explore the art of photography than working with these brilliant masters."

Many of the models in the book are nude in the classical way. Some of McCunn's interpretations are almost direct replicas, such as Sir Edward Poynter's *Cave of the Storm Nymphs*. McCunn's version with photographs is called *Siren's Cave*.

Others merge two works of art together, like Michelangelo's *David* sculpture with Osmar Schindler's *David and Goliath*. McCunn's resulting art piece is called *Last Laugh*. In others, McCunn adds his own touch. For example, the painting *Spirit of the Night* by John Atkinson Grimshaw depicts a flying fairy. In McCunn's piece, titled *Faerie Magick*, he adds a seated fairy looking over her shoulder at the one in flight.



Don McCunn

"I was concerned that what I was doing might be perceived as painting mustaches on the *Mona Lisa*," says McCunn, who has lived in Noe Valley 37 years. "But having spent the majority of my life doing theater, I felt reinterpreting classical art was really no different than doing a current production of Shakespeare."

In November and December, the art from *Revisiting the Classics* is in a solo exhibit at Castro Tarts, on Castro at 19th Street. McCunn will also be participating in the City College of San Francisco Christmas Art Show at Fort Mason from Nov. 30 to Dec. 2. The book is available at Phoenix Books. For more information, go to www.Revisiting-the-Classics.com.

Revisiting the Classics

by Don McCunn

