Femscapes

ON DISPLAY MARCH 31 - MAY 1
GREAT RIVER ARTS’ FRONT GALLERY
122 FIRST ST. SE, LITTLE FALLS MN 56345
I paint about the work of women’s lives, from the workforce to domestic labor. I am interested in how gender roles impact that work, the history of women’s labor and disparities in the amount and types of labor. I bring in mythical entities and archetypes to show both an historical and immediate context. I like to use dramatic poses reminiscent of classical art, juxtaposing the weaponry of such historic figures. Much of my imagery also reflects the items women touch or are responsible for every day that become gendered items as a result. Through this I am wondering what the women would be like if they were not subject to imposed gender roles, and a wilder spirit often emerges from the narratives.

The bodies are nude and transparent, showing an imagined biology. I do this to represent women without falling into an objectifying or male gaze. I also choose this to eliminate giving the figures a specific socio-economic identity, as occurs through clothing and facial features. I am hopeful to have the figures be more universal, so the viewer can see themselves in the imagery. To me these are not portraits, although they are autobiographical to an extent, they are narratives and personalizing the faces would detract from the viewers’ ability to see themselves in the image.

I developed this process by studying MRI images. I use this method to find a way to communicate the physical feelings of that body. I am very interested in how it feels to have a chronic illness or pain, or even a very healthy body, and how that can be communicated visually through expressionism. Some figures show strength through intricate linear systems, others emphasize illness or old age with engorged uncomfortable imaginary organs. I hope to help build compassion about the invisible physical pain people carry around with them for those who have not had such experiences.

CONNECT WITH THE ARTIST
Website: www.dhelenewoods.com/home
Instagram: dhelenewoods@instagram

GALLERY HOURS
WED. - FRI, 11-6 PM
SAT. 10-2 PM