



Cassandra Rising is modeled after American Ballet Theatre soloist Cassandra Trenary, shown with Marc Mellon in his Redding studio.

*Exhibit features Marc Mellon, Jane Sutherland & Philip Trager*

# *'Dance' in Fairfield*

by Janis Gibson

The grace, exuberance, beauty, strength and emotion of dancers are on display in three media — sculpture, painting and photography — in a new exhibit at the Thomas J. Walsh Art Gallery at Fairfield University in Fairfield through Jan. 15. The respective artists presented in Dance are Marc Mellon of Redding, Jane Sutherland of Fairfield and Philip Trager, also of Fairfield.

A dozen of Mellon's classically styled bronzes are featured, ranging from seven inches tall to three over-life-size works, and include the first public exhibition of two of his recent pas de deux bronzes — Loft and Taking Flight — inspired by Christopher Wheeldon's After The Rain. Wheeldon won the Tony Award for Best Choreography this year for his work in An American in Paris. Also on view is the 30-inch-tall Cassandra Rising, modeled after American Ballet Theatre soloist Cassandra Trenary.

Regarding how or why he began using so many dancers as models, Mellon said, "While



Sculptor Marc Mellon, painter Jane Sutherland and photographer Philip Trager at the opening of their exhibition "Dance" at the Thomas J. Walsh Art Gallery at Fairfield University. Photo (c)Thomas J. Walsh Art Gallery

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# Dance

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I never took dance as a kid, I always loved watching dance. When I started sculpting, many of the school models were dancers ... when I hired my own models I gravitated toward the dancers. They were beautifully toned, hard-working and used to working with demanding dance teachers and choreographers, and eager to see their own personal quest for beauty immortalized in another medium.

“The process of working with my dancer models is truly collaborative,” he continued. “Dancers make dance their life, it is their core competency; I depend on their expertise to tell me what is right and wrong. I pick my models carefully. Lisa is my longest-term model; I began working with her at 19; she is now 53. I also work with young local dancers; my models for the pas de deux series were Isaac Lerner of Redding, now a senior at Hartt School of Dance in West Haven, and Margaux Amara of Ridgely, who is a sophomore at UConn studying pre-med.”

Jane Sutherland’s portion of the show comprises a suite of eight oil-on-linen

and one oil-on-wood paintings and four charcoal-on-Arches paper drawings titled Recasting Little Dancer, based on Edgar Degas’ renowned 1881 sculpture by of a young student of the Paris Opera Ballet dance school, titled Little Dancer Aged Fourteen. The original wax figure was tinted to simulate flesh, clothed in a real bodice, tutu, and ballet slippers and topped by a horsehair wig tied with a silk ribbon. It caused a scandal when first exhibited, and was out of sight for decades. It was only after Degas’ death that some 30 bronzes of it were cast.

Sutherland said she has been working on the series on and off for a long time and calls her work a familiar image in a different medium. “I was inspired by the image as a young girl, when I saw the sculpture at Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Later, I saw the original wax statue undergoing conservation at the National Gallery of Art in Washington and started researching it. It turns out that every museum or gallery puts on its own skirt and ribbon. I paint her to scale, but from different angles, bringing attention to the young girl, and even though the statue is the same, the differing costumes make the total look like a dance class.”

She noted that the model was a Belgian girl named Marie van Goethem, and the sculpture shows a figure on the verge of becoming a young woman. “Marie

wanted to become the most famous ballerina in the world,” she added, “...and I guess she has.”

Philip Trager has been among the foremost American art photographers for more than 40 years, publishing his first monograph in 1972, and 10 volumes to date, with two more slated by the end of next year. He was a pioneer in photographing modern dancers mid-dance outdoors and amid nature, capturing them seemingly suspended in air. He has 21 prints, primarily gelatin silver and platinum/palladium, in the show, taken between 1988 and 1994. Among the dancers and dance companies shown are Eiko and Komo, Bill T. Jones, Mark Morris, the Second Hand Dance Company and Jacob’s Pillow.

“I am especially pleased to be a part of in this exhibition,” Trager said, “since Fairfield University is such a vital and important part of our town’s cultural atmosphere.”

A number of events are

scheduled at the Walsh Gallery in conjunction with this exhibition, and the Regina A. Quick Center will also complement the exhibit with a series of ticketed contemporary dance programs. Performers include Evidence/Ronald K. Brown on Oct. 16, Emily Coates and Sarah Demers on Nov. 15, and Savion Glover’s Dance Holiday Spectacular on Dec. 6. Judith Jamison, artistic director emerita of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, will speak at the Open Visions Forum on Jan. 31, at 3 p.m. Tickets for these events are available through the Quick Center Box Office, 203-254-4010 or at quickcenter.com

The Walsh Art Gallery is located in the Center for the Arts on the campus of Fairfield University, 1073 North Benson Road. For additional information, visit fairfield.edu/walshgallery or call 203-254-4242. For more information on the artists, visit their websites, marcmlon.com, janesutherland.com and philiptrager.com.

Answers to Sudoku

9	4	5	7	2	6	3	8	1
2	3	8	4	9	1	6	7	5
6	7	1	8	3	5	2	4	9
5	9	7	3	8	2	4	1	6
4	6	3	9	1	7	8	5	2
1	8	2	5	6	4	9	3	7
7	1	6	2	4	8	5	9	3
3	5	4	6	7	9	1	2	8
8	2	9	1	5	3	7	6	4

Answers to Super Crossword

C	O	H	O	V	A	T	T	A	R	D	O	D	G	E							
A	B	U	T	S	E	D	A	A	L	I	E	S	L	O	P	E	R	S			
R	O	B	I	N	A	N	D	M	A	R	I	A	N	A	M	E	B	A	S		
E	S	C	A	P	E	T	R	A	C	E	T	R	A	C	E	D	E	R	I	D	E
G	E	E	S	M	Y	S	T	E	R	I	E	R	Y	D	A	T	E				
D	E	P	T	R	I	E	B	Z	E												
R	U	L	E	B	A	R	T	H	E	A	V	I	A	T	O	R					
A	R	A	C	H	N	O	P	H	O	B	I	A	S	E	C	R	E	C	E		
B	O	Z	A	E	A	G	U	L	M	S	C	R	E	E							
A	B	L	A	T	E	R	E	E	F	A	M	A	S								
M	S	A	T	H	E	B	I	G	S	L	E	E	P	D	I	N					
S	O	U	L	R	O	L	L	W	A	R	D	E	N								
C	R	I	B	S	C	I	A	O	R	O	O	A	R	T							
U	P	T	O	P	A	R	C	A	R	R	I	O	N	D	O	C	T	O	R		
T	H	E	A	C	C	O	S	E	D	C	A	T	M	O	O	S	E				
T	E	T																			
N	E	V	E	R	S	A	Y	D	I	E	S	I	R	S							
P	O	R	O	S	E	R	E	E	D	S	L	O	O	M	E	D					
A	W	A	I	T	S	V	A	L	L	E	Y	O	F	T	H	E	S	U	N		
L	I	S	L	E	S	E	S	T	E	O	D	E	O	M	A	N	T				
S	N	E	E	R																	
T	A	D	U	A	R	O	U	S	T												