



Beauty in form

BY JULIETTE LORD

While tall and thin may be the fashion aesthetic, artists have had a long standing love affair with the voluptuous. The Flemish Baroque painter Rubens (1577-1640) was so enamoured by the curvaceous female form that he now lends his name to an adjective, Rubenesque, which conjures up images of delightful full-figured women.

Contemporary Toronto-based artist Malinda Prud'homme has also been captivated by the curvy female form. Her "Curvy Beauties" series, a collection of four paintings, was created in order to celebrate the "beauty of soft voluptuous women."

"We live in a time where the media is constantly pushing thin women into the spotlight in hopes of brainwashing us into thinking that only thin women are beautiful and sexy," Prud'homme said. "I feel

that this is the case because many corporations have a lot to gain from women with low self-esteem. Women who feel poorly about themselves are more likely to buy more makeup, hair dye, gym memberships, weight loss gimmicks, corsetry, and so on."

Prud'homme wants to prove just how beautiful and sexy larger women can be, and inspire them to wear their skin proudly.

Prud'homme is a mixed media artist who works with oils, charcoal, watercolour and her homemade encaustic (wax) paint. She also designs jewellery, some of which feature a small high-quality print of her artworks. Her current Chainmaille jewellery range is based on ancient Greek and medieval jewels which she designed to be "not only beautiful and feminine but make a statement about the strength of women."

But at the end of the day, be-

ing captivated by the curves of the female form is an inspiration drawn from real life so Prud'homme's paintings in the "Curvy Beauties" series are all based on real people.

Tara Lynn is a beautiful plus size model who featured on the cover of the French Elle magazine not once, but twice in April 2010 and March 2012. Marilyn Monroe, of course, requires no introduction as possibly the most iconic hourglass figure of all time. The third beauty is the stunning Christina Hendricks who plays Joan Harris on the AMC cable hit series Mad Men. The name of the lady in the final painting of the series is unknown. Prud'homme discovered an image of her posted on a website that celebrates curvy women and felt compelled to capture her likeness, inspired by her "true and natural" beauty.

The majority of Prud'homme's work is inspired by beautiful women.

"I have and still do paint men on occasion but for some reason men are not as inspiring to me," she said. "I have always had a great appreciation for female beauty and when I was a child my first drawings were created using magazine ads as inspiration. I do find painting and drawing women to be more interesting and it is all in the features. Painting beautiful natural and, above all, unique female facial features is what truly sings to my soul." 



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