



Smithsonian
National Portrait Gallery

**PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST
TERESA KIRCHNER**

Teresa Kirchner cannot remember a time when she did not draw or paint. “The figure has always been a central focus of my paintings,” said Kirchner, “so I knew I had to enter the National Portrait Gallery’s portrait competition... especially since a competition of this caliber will prove that representational painting is not a lost art.” Kirchner is the sixth in a series of contemporary artists to be featured on the Gallery’s innovative “Portrait of an Artist” Web site, as part of the Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition 2006.

Currently the head of the drawing department at the Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, TX, Kirchner hails from Murphysboro, Ill. “I moved to Texas to teach drawing and painting,” says Kirchner. “I’ve had some great teachers, in particular, Zhi Lin at Missouri State University in Springfield, Mo., who introduced me to the figurative world. Another great teacher was Barry Gealt at Indiana University at Bloomington, IN, where I earned my MFA in Painting. Now I want to share what I have learned from them.”

Kirchner paints representationally from direct observation. “To get an idea of the painting issues that are important to me,” she says, “you might combine Caravaggio, Lucian Freud, Paula Rego, and Balthus together. I like lots of figures, chaotic compositions composed through the figures, narratives, as well as a meaty paint surface.”

Kirchner’s competition entry, “Texas Transplant,” is evocative of being an outsider as, indeed, she intended it to be. “When I started painting after I moved to Texas,” says Kirchner, “I began thinking about who I was in this strange, new place. It became apparent that my sense of self wasn’t just internal but directly related to my new friends, home, and experiences. Every aspect of this self-portrait comes from my view of Self adjusting to life as a ‘Texas Transplant.’”

Kirchner lives in Nacogdoches with her husband, Russell. Part-Latina, she speaks Spanish fluently, and enjoys playing the fiddle, mandolin, guitar and piano.

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Media: For more information or to schedule an interview with Teresa Kirchner, please contact Vicki Moeser at (202) 357-2627 Ext. 111 or Shonali Burke at (202) 974-5027 or burkes@ruderfinn.com. For more information on the Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition 2006, please visit www.portraitcompetition.si.edu.