

Painting from his heart... and his mind

● Oil-and-canvas prodigy Chris Parrott directs his discipline and passion toward an East Coast art education



Photo courtesy of CHRIS PARROTT

An untitled work by up-and-coming artist Chris Parrott demonstrates his early mastery of color and form.

By Michael Russell
The Clackamas Review

It would be easy—terribly, seductively easy—to dismiss 21-year-old painting prodigy Chris Parrott as a typical late-adolescent sports goof.

It's all there. The athletics-fixated family. The sweats. The close-cropped hair. The youthful awkwardness. Even the leisurely, almost half-awake cadence that typifies the speech of young men his age.

Then you listen to what he's saying.

"I'm excited about what's starting to happen in my black-and-white work. I'm trying to

solve a certain problem I've been having, and it's nice to get back to the structural/compositional aspects of drawing."

Excuse me?

"People in the art world have been trying to kill off painting for the last forty years. The arrogance of it just kills me."

Pardon?

"I'm just getting into Beethoven. It amazes me more than any other artistic accomplishment."

Huh? Where's the apathy? Where's the Gen-X disaffection? Where's the limited vocabulary and the simplistic tastes?

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MICHAEL RUSSELL/The Clackamas Review

21-year-old painting prodigy Chris Parrott poses against his untitled image—a black-and-white self-portrait.