

YOGA FOR THE MIND

URBAN ARTIST

A MAGAZINE OF BALANCE & SELF EXPRESSION

QUARTERLY APRIL-JULY 2024

ISSUE NUMBER 2

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Laura Wambsgans

Capturing Beauty

Art Reflects Life

Elizabeth Mackey

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**YOU DON'T FINISH
SOMETHING BECAUSE YOU
NEED TO GET IT DONE. YOU
FINISH SOMETHING BECAUSE
YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO
SAY. - SARAH MCLACHLAN**

Letter from the Editor

The latest edition of Urban Artist showcases two exceptional artists whom I had the pleasure of meeting and getting to know beyond their artwork. Mary Neville, a mixed media artist from Ojai, California, draws inspiration from life and world events, creating art that is both simple and intricate, always gazing "Toward the Horizon."

Laura Wambsgans, renowned for her en plein air landscapes and remarkable sculpting, brings a sensuous touch to marble, and paintings capturing the beauty of the world.

Through my interviews with them, I discovered the profound similarities in their artistic vision – both paint from their souls, viewing the world through a poetic lens. I invite you to delve into the interviews with these talented women in this issue of Urban Artist.

A warm welcome to our new contributing writer, Elizabeth Mackey, who enriches us with her insights into art history, drawing intriguing parallels between history and life, much like our featured artists. Look for her article titled "Art Reflects Life."

It is always a joy to shine a spotlight on local emerging artists. Aaron MacDonald and Zoe Van Beurden are currently being showcased at the Santa Paula Art Museum in the "30 under 30" exhibition until May 5th. Explore Aaron MacDonald's journey in "Chasing The Masters" and Zoe Van Beurden's exploration of "Finding Nature's Rhythm."

Nathy Gonzales

Watercolors by

QIANA TARLOW



Liquid Botanicals

Reception: April 6, 2024, 3-6 pm
Show runs from March 23rd - April 28th

Canyon Theatre Guild
24242 Main St. Newhall, CA. 91321

LOOKING TOWARD THE HORIZON

Article | By KGonzales

Ojai Mixed Media Abstract Artist

Mary Neville





Mary Neville Ojai Studio, this is just a portion of her working space.

Artist Mary Neville is a contemporary mixed-media abstract artist who lives in Ojai, California with her husband Dave. They have two grown children, two dogs Alice and Kona, and a cat named Miss Kitty.

I learned of Mary when she had her solo show “Field Trip: 30 Days at Higher Elevation” at the Santa Paula Art Museum in January 2023.

I landed an interview with her for the second issue of Urban Artist Magazine.

When I arrived at her home, Mary greeted me at the door. She had a friendly smile that made me feel like an old friend coming for a chat.

Mary’s home is an extension of her warm personality, it is beautifully

decorated and there is a relaxed feeling throughout her home and studio.

We settled in with conversation about the construction of her studio, a topic that she is very proud and excited to discuss. I loved the way the morning light casted its way about the studio, and how the large open doors filled the room with cool air.

Sitting in Mary’s studio, I can see why she loves it. The serene space provides the right environment for self-expression and creativity. Her creative process is well established, it allows for a balance to her life and art.

The importance of finding a mindful balance in our creative self-expression is significant.

I point this out because the premise of Urban Artist Magazine is finding what makes you happy and releasing thought through journaling or creativity. Creating art seems to bring peace and simplicity to Mary's life. Life is referenced in her work through a variety of symbols and colors. She says "Painting is a meditative process for me, the simpler I can be, I can feel peace. Smooth seas, painting helps me even if it is only for 20 minutes. Activities that keep you in the present are valuable, such as writing and art."

Mary uses journaling to inspire her work. "My art is sort of how I process things that are going on personally and globally. I admire the artists that can take the current events and make beautiful art, but also make a statement of what is going on. I don't think I do that very overtly, but inside I do it for myself."

One feels grounded by Mary's work and gains a sense of peace and insight into her thinking. The key to this is found in the layered compositions of each piece. I personally connected to the color palettes, her choice of symbols, numbers, geometry, and found objects. She creates intricate combinations of these elements to reflect her emotions.

One of the reasons I like to interview creatives is because I am fascinated by the start and stop process, the creative

spark. I want to know how artists find renewal when they feel stuck in the creative process.

What do you do when you get into a lull, when it just doesn't happen, you're stuck?

"Oh yeah, I don't think there is an answer, just keep doing it. Keep showing up. I mean, I'm not going to write the first book on how to get over your roadblocks. I have a big show I am preparing for right now and I had zero point of reference to look at, I had no North Star for this. It's just coming out and it's thinking about color. So, we go back to the basic steps, where do I want to start? Color, line, composition, theme, mood, you can pick one of those."

Mary references magazines, books, anything, and everything, to start building a story with her artwork.

"...Painting helps me even if it is only for 20 minutes. Activities that keep you in the present are valuable..."

"I like to create a series of paintings that talk to each other. They coalesce with color, lines with numbers, so that is important, it's funny for me to make a one off piece, sometimes I do. Occasionally, something pops out and it is just over there like a black sheep."

Mary Neville

She laughs at her comment as she points to the only piece of work in the studio that is black.

She found a sense of beauty in a story she read about a group of MIT mathematicians who still solve tough equations on huge blackboards and created a piece from that narrative. "I am always experimenting; it's hard to get out of an expectation, I want to experiment



All Things Considered

sometimes to keep it fresh. I would be bored to tears creating the same things for 20 years!

I still do my color fields because I still love this horizon line. One of my challenges is to get away from the horizon line. I need to challenge myself to not put it in there, cause it's easy to." It seems that the horizon line adds yet another transcendent aspect to Mary's work.

When she explains the horizon line in her creative process, you hear a deep spiritual thought about its meaning. It shows her reflection on life and the excitement of what is out there and what is just around the corner. She says we never quite get to that point in the distance, what is important to her is the here and now.

When do you know that you are done with a piece?

"It has a voice, there are closing credits running when you step back, it's this feeling of satisfaction. I could look at that all day. I collaborate with my art, I am not very prolific with my art, although you would think that I am because you are walking into all these pieces.

I work on all these pieces at the same time. I must allow the pieces to talk to me, to talk back to me, and so they must be put up and I let them hang around sometimes for a year. I will walk in and say, 'Oh okay, I need to put a red spot right there!' Sometimes that is all I will get from a piece and so I will move on to the next.

This is why I like to work on multiple pieces that I can keep painting. If I worked on only one, I would never get anything done. I found if I force it the piece would never be as good as it could. There are distractions all the time, so activities that keep you in the present are valuable. Painting and writing are two things that keep you in the here and now.

It is hard for me to paint, it is not easy, I have to show up. I have a bag of tools that work for me, sometimes it's cleaning my studio that will get me in here or coming in and sitting doing a crossword puzzle. Then I stare at my work and see something that inspires me to do something."

Do you find intuition or spiritualism plays a role in your art?

"I find that writing every morning helps me to coalesce my thoughts. I often write questions and answer myself; 'It's not me'. Topics in my head range from working on paintings or what I want to say about what I am working on currently, my family, my childhood, so it is a big part of my life; but I also really like reading the ideas of other people about intuition and spirituality.

It is such a common language, you know every book you read, it really has a thread that is very similar, very much like religion. All different religions have a common denominator: a belief in faith, trust, and hope."

In a recent series, I saw the number three repeated in your work. Is there any significance in the meaning of the number three for you? Is it tied to a spiritual belief as to the choice of number?

"It's huge, that's a good question. The numbers started appearing when I worked on the Santa Paula exhibit, it

started popping up, and I turned sixty last year in June. Before turning 60, I was really kind of obsessed with this idea that oh my God I have a third of my life left, basically it was this thing that was coming at me. So, the number three represents, kind of the third trimester of life.

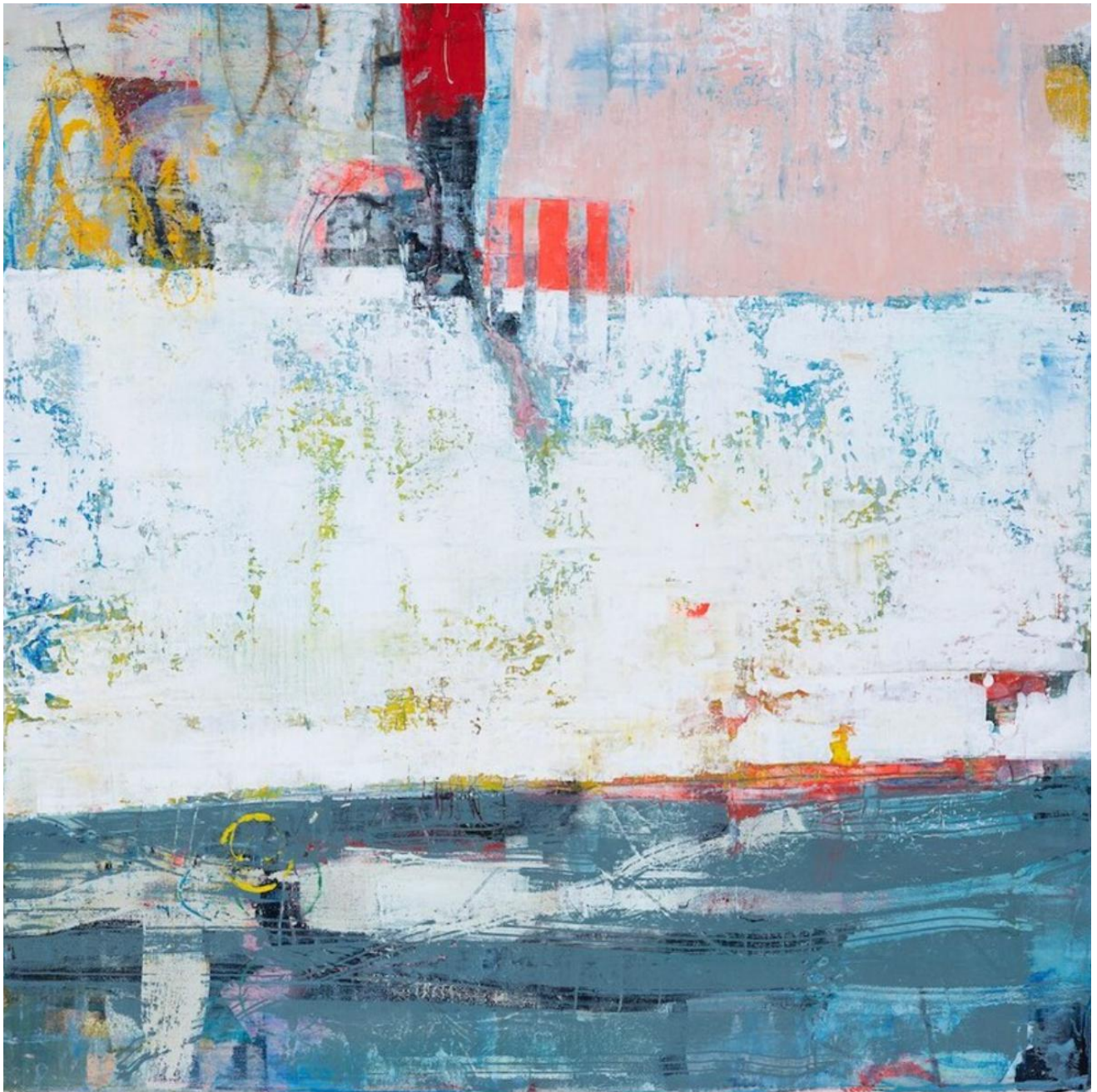
"I am always experimenting; it's hard to get out of an expectation, I want to experiment to keep it fresh..."

But then for fun I looked up numerology and 'I'm a number three, which is totally intuitive'. I am really attracted to three, so I did a whole series in the spring.

I went through numbers 1 – 9 in my work and I thought about the numbers. I thought how important numbers are to us, it's weird that numbers have a hold on every aspect of our life. But then it was interesting to do the numbers graphically in the art; not all the numbers like to play well and blend in. The numbers one and four are very difficult, they resist assimilating into a piece. Whereas three and five are fabulous it's half and half, it's literally the halfway point. The number five is half linear, half curved, which is very interesting. They add some angular lines to a flow, the three are very special."



Hidden Places Mixed Media on Canvas 12x12, Mary Neville



Phosphorus 24x24 Mixed Media on Canvas

Mary Neville

In Mary's studio there is a small image of Georgia O'Keeffe, given to her by her husband. It used to belong to his father, and he thought Mary would love it. It sits on a shelf in her studio. This image of Georgia O'Keeffe, while small, played a big role in setting Mary on a life path that will forever define who she is as an artist. She refers to this image of Georgia as 'a little angel that had me go to this land and how significant it was.' She is referring to her residency at Ghost Ranch, which became a full-circle moment for her.

The story of how Mary came to her Ghost Ranch residency has a sort of synchronicity about it. She set out thirty years ago with her best friend to travel around the country and they ended up in Abiquiu, New Mexico. While in Abiquiu they looked for Georgia O'Keeffe's Ghost

Ranch, but for some reason they were unable to find it. Jump to some thirty years later, a woman walks into Mary's studio, sees the little picture of Georgia O'Keeffe and asks her if she likes Georgia's work.

The woman explains that her friend, who lives in New Mexico, is the director of Ghost Ranch and that she will be in Ojai to visit Mary at her studio. Mary says, 'What are the chances that this woman, who lives in New Mexico, will come to Ojai to visit my studio?'

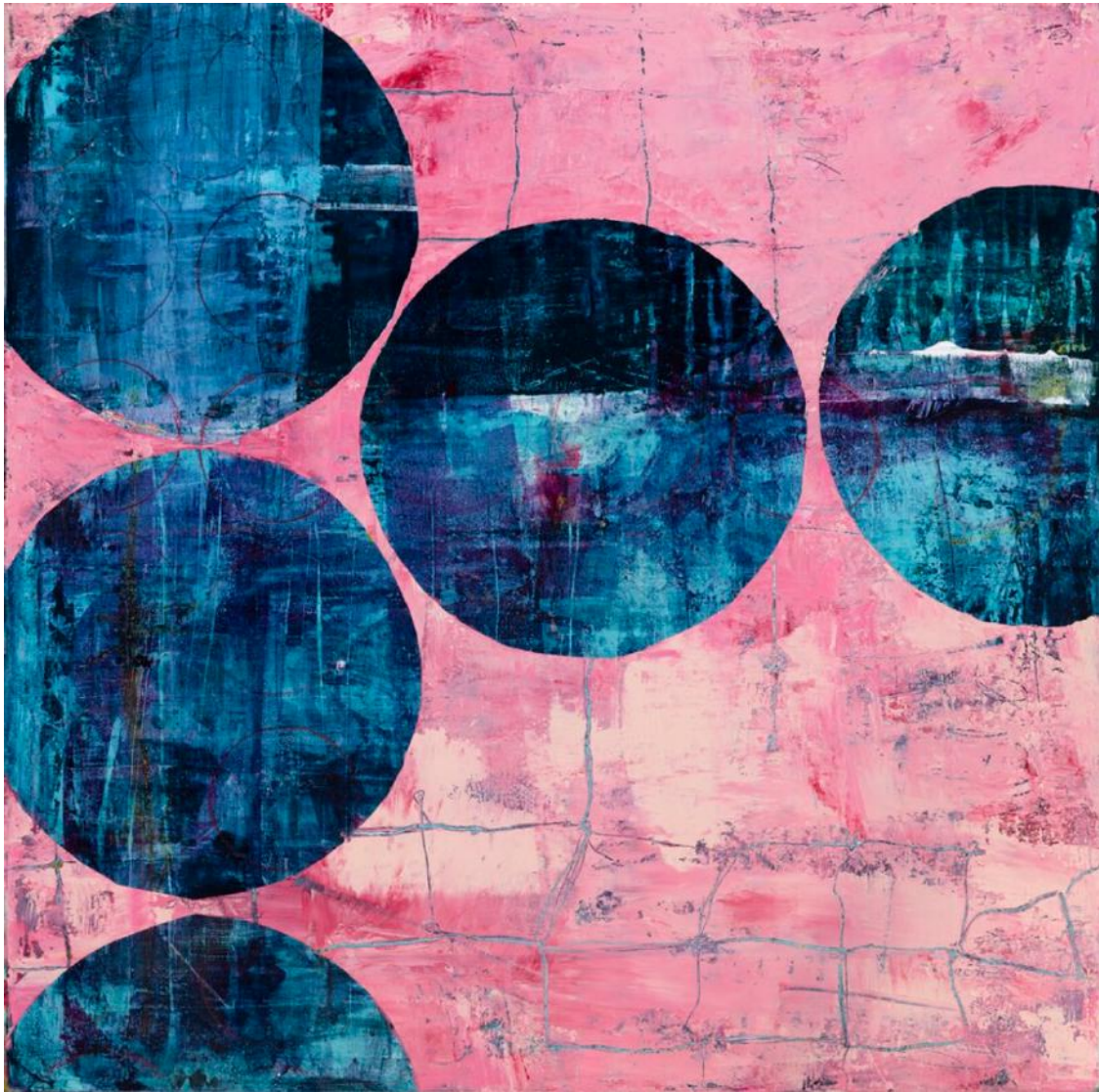
That little picture of Georgia O'Keeffe plotted out her path in life. Mary says, "I think I'm doing exactly what I'm supposed to do," and destiny came to find her. Something or someone guided her to this predestined moment.



Ghost Mixed Media 12x12 by Mary Neville



Photo by M. Neville of her photo of Georgia O'Keeffe



Rising Waters, Mixed Media 24 x 24

FOR MORE INFO:

<https://www.marynevilleart.com/>

MARY NEVILLE'S UPCOMING SHOWS



SPIRIT OF PLACE

Artists Mary Neville
&
Emily Thomas MaHarry

Art Reception
April 13, 5-7 pm at
Fox Fine Jewelry
560 E. Main St. Ventura ,CA
93001

805- 652-1800

Art will be on display from
4/11 - 7/6

Mon-Thurs 11AM-6PM
Fri-Sat 11AM - 7PM
Sun Closed

Foxfinejewelry.com
@foxfinejewelry



MAY 11, 2024
Second Studio Tour
Open Studios in Downtown Ojai

5/11/24
10:00 AM - 05:00 PM
Get your free tickets
at
Ojai Studio Artists

FOR MORE INFO:

<https://www.ojaistudioartists.org/all-tours/may-second-saturday-studio-tour>

A R T R E F L E C T S L I F E

Article By Elizabeth Mackey

Art is a reflection of life. Viewers bring unique perspectives to their experiences with works of art. A comparison of life between Neville and Bruegal.



Pieter Bruegel the Elder, The Harvesters, 1565

Artworks discussed:

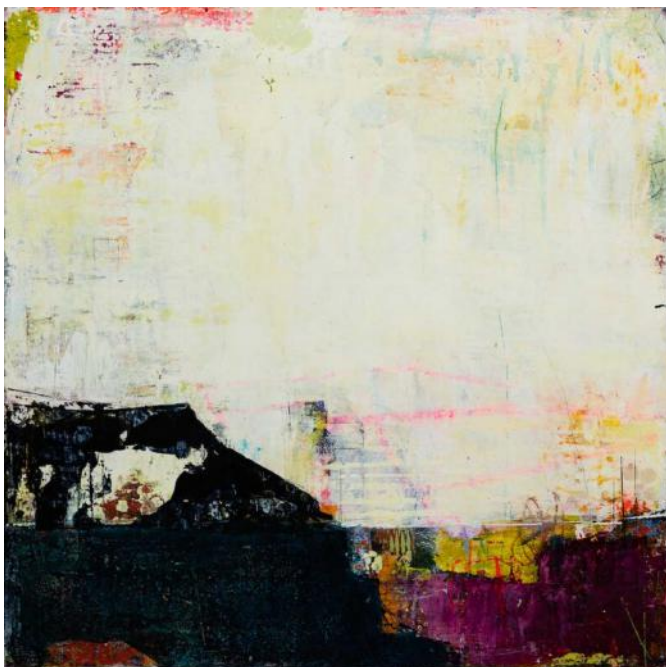
Pieter Bruegel the Elder, The Harvesters, 1565

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/435809>

Mary Neville, Fall, 2019

<https://www.marynevilleart.com/projects/seasons/view/7033506/2/7033534>

Art is a reflection of life. Viewers bring unique perspectives to their experiences with works of art just as artists make ideas and opinions tangible in the work they create. Artist Mary Neville, whose paintings are highlighted in this issue, says the process of painting makes “tangible representation of understanding life.” Her abstract paintings are often grounded in interactions with nature and are meant to inspire curiosity about humanity and the human experience.



Mary Neville, Fall

Neville often works on several paintings at once, nurturing connection and dialogue between them. Her series of four paintings titled Seasons, reflects this organic approach. Upon first glance, blocks of color and areas of light and dark become apparent but, a closer look reveals that layer upon layer of paint, pencil, chalk pastel and scraps of paper are combined to capture the nuance of each season.

The subtle colors of Neville’s Fall point to the process of decomposition and release that underlies the warm glow of the season. Her tactile compositions, filled with bold color and shape, are more than simple representations of nature. They ask the viewer to contemplate their engagement with place and the passage of time.

Pieter Bruegel the Elder, a celebrated Netherlandish artist who was active in the mid-16th century, was guided by a similar interest in cultivating intimate relationships between the viewer and his works of art. He was known to paint with honesty and regularly avoided idealization or formal beauty in his representations of humanity.

In 1565 Antwerp businessman Nicolaes Jongelnick commissioned Bruegel to represent the seasons in a series of paintings. Bruegel made six paintings in a single year that capture the beauty of the landscape beyond

Antwerp and reveal his interest in nature and rural working life. Just as Mary Neville's layering of color and media in her Seasons series suggest the cycles of nature and human life, Bruegel's realistic style and incredible eye for detail makes tangible the spirit of the Dutch countryside and the people who lived and worked within.

Bruegel depicts the fall landscape in *The Harvesters*. It would have been hung at eye level in the dining room of Jongelnick's country home, along with the other paintings in the series. Imagine the effect of seeing them together in one room and experiencing the changing of the seasons with each step.

The Harvesters is infused with the warmth of relationship and the lingering heat of summer. We are invited into the painting by a group of men and women sitting on sheaves of wheat gathered around a white cloth in the shade of a pear tree. A woman with a white headscarf smiles as she spoons porridge from her bowl, while the man beside her seems to be laughing before taking his next bite. Bread, cheese and pears are also part of their simple meal. This group of eight is jovial and content despite the heat and their exhaustion, note the man in a deep sleep on the other side of the tree.

A wheat field surrounds the group who, upon closer look, appear to be

taking a break from harvesting the field behind them. Workers cut the wheat and pile stems into neat stacks that are then tied into sheaves seen to the right. If we allow our eyes to wander farther along the foreground, we see someone near the top of another pear tree hanging upside down, tossing pears to the women below.

Lush green grass and trees extend from the middle ground and lead our eye to a church, partially hidden from view, and into the distance. This expanse of space is filled with roads, a pond—further examination brings into focus two monks who have removed their habits to go for a swim—houses, neighbors gathered for a game, and the distant bay open to receive incoming ships. Village life unfolds before us.

Pieter Bruegel the Elder and Mary Neville capture unique visions of the natural world and the human experience. Although separated by time and place, both artists examine the universal human experience of change, transformation, and the passage of time. Their detailed compositions invite the viewer in to see, explore, and reflect.

Capturing Beauty

Article By KGonzales

LAURA WAMBSGANS







“CAPTURING THE LIGHT WITHIN THE LANDSCAPE, NATURE’S PALETTE, AND THE TRUE SENSE OF A PLACE IS OUR DESIRE WITH EACH LANDSCAPE PAINTING. IF WE ARE SUCESSFUL, THE VIEWER WILL FEEL THE SUN AND WIND AND FORGET WHAT IS ON THE WALL OUTSIDE THE FRAME.”

The Golden Season
on view at Santa Paula Art Museum



I met Laura Wambsgans in December 2023 at an outdoor painting event. It was a windy and cold day. Laura wasn't ruffled by the weather and set up quickly, she was used to working in this type of climate. Laura is a member of the PAC6, a group of six women who came together over ten years ago, with the intention to travel to wilderness areas throughout the western United States and paint the most spectacular landscapes they could find.

I sat down with Laura to discuss her work with the PAC6 and learn more about her style. When looking at her work, the sensitivity she brings to her art is immediately apparent. She captures the light and mood of nature in her paintings. Laura's images of the sunset or mountain trail have the capacity to stir emotion within the viewer. Whether you believe in a supreme being or not,

Laura's paintings reflect something spiritual and distinct about the landscapes she observes. En plein air is poetry for the eyes and Laura is the poet.

Laura is a native Californian. She started her career as a managing director of a major recording studio. In the two decades that followed she was a sculptor and created formidable works out of alabaster and marble.

Laura is a member of California Art Club, Oil Painters of America, Allied Artists of Santa Monica Mountains and Seashore, and Santa Clarita Artist Association. She studied with noted artists Matt Smith and Scott Christensen. Her art has won numerous awards.

In this article, I wanted to focus on Laura's plein air landscapes as well as her sculptures.

Which of the two media is your true love? Sculpting or Painting?

“That is a very interesting question. My initial thought is that it’s akin to asking which of your children you love best. Both mediums present challenges, discoveries, joy, excitement, and even dreams at night, along with profound sense of accomplishment. As I paint and sculpt, a deep motivation to start the next piece steadily grows. Before finishing one work, my mind is already exploring the possibility for the next.

Ultimately, I find that both painting and sculpting fuel my creative drive. The never-ending path to more knowledge that both mediums offer keeps each day exciting. Decades ago, I had no idea how deep and complicated the creative process would become. What a ride!”

Laura’s ride started from a long line of artists in her family.

Your mother Carolyn Gravatte, was both an oil painter and sculptor, but are there more artists in your family?

“I do have other family members who were artistic. My grandfather, Grantham, was a scene painter for Republic Films after migrating to California during the Dust Bowl. My grandmother Gravatte was a concert pianist. Although my dad wasn’t a fine artist, he was an artisan. He built our home, furniture, functional mosaic pieces and even our pool table.

Additionally, he restored antique cars, winning the Concours d’Elegance at Pebble Beach in 1970 with his restored 1940’s TCMG. My childhood was filled to the rafters with sculptures, paintings, and projects in progress. I thought everyone lived this way until I was older and visited my schoolmates’ homes.”

It’s no wonder art plays a huge role in Laura’s life; for her family, it was essential. From a young age, Laura harbored a passion for archaeology, expressing her interest by requesting rocks as gifts, a testament to her fascination with geology.

Her ardor for rocks led to her receiving an award for the exceptional presentation of her rock collection. Subsequently, her journey led her to the art of sculpting, introduced by her mother through the gift of alabaster. Armed with hand tools, she delved into stone carving, embarking on a transformative artistic path.

Over the following twenty years, she delved into the essence of the stones she worked with, be it alabaster or marble, crafting magnificent stone sculptures.

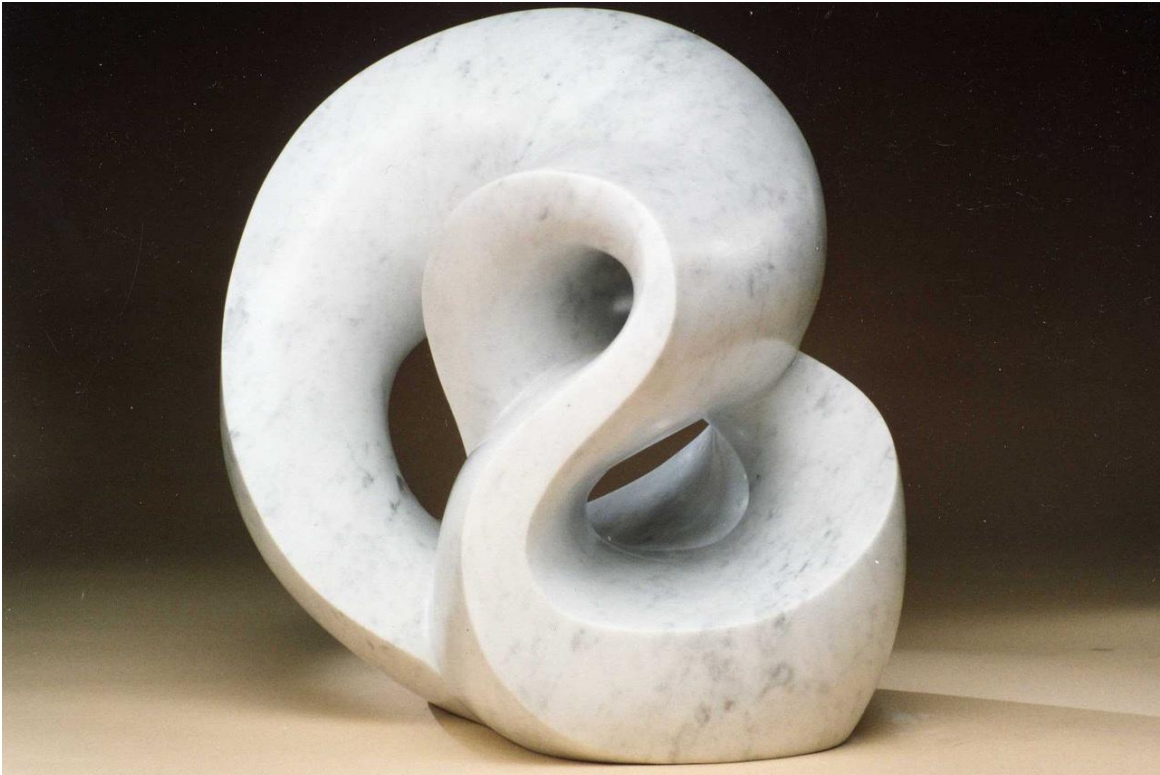
**“ULTIMATELY I FIND BOTH
PAINTING AND SCULPTING
FUEL MY CREATIVE DRIVE.”**

Laura Wambsgans

I marveled at the stories Laura shared about the history behind her sculpting. From traveling to quarries on her own to selecting and bringing home a large piece of marble on the back of a car trailer, to studying in Italy to learn Italian sculpting techniques, and how the Italians transported large sculptures across the cobblestone streets of Europe.

Ellipse, Alabaster 18x10x8





Italian Twist, Marble



Finding Grace, 18x9x7 Yule Marble

How do you balance life when it becomes overwhelming and keep being creative?

“Absolutely, there have been numerous occasions over the past 30 years when I had to navigate challenges and find a balance. One significant instance occurred when I was sculpting full time and swamped with shows and commissions. While deeply engrossed in carving, I began to feel sick and weak. After a visit to the doctor, I discovered I was pregnant.

Given the potential harm to the baby’s hearing from the noise of the power tools, I was advised to halt sculpting until the baby was delivered. Despite the initial shock, I decided to pivot and began carving movie studio foam, casting bronze pieces as an alternative. This unexpected pause turned out to be a blessing. It led me in a new direction with my stone sculptures incorporating insights gained from working with foam. The outcome was not only a rejuvenated artistic approach but also a late-in-life surprise – sparkling daughter.”

Listening to her reflect on her artistic practice told me how much she loved sculpting. Unfortunately, due to the physical toll of working with stone and hand tools, Laura’s hands began to decline and she had to pivot once again. Enter her next phase, en plein air oil landscapes.

Can you describe your painting process?

“My painting process is rooted in tradition, particularly when working with oil paint. I follow a systematic sequence: starting thin and progressing to thick layers, working from dark to light values, and from large shapes to small. I employ a range of brushes, from large to small, using both synthetic and natural bristle brushes, with a preference for long flats.

In terms of color, I use a warm and cool version of each primary color along with auxiliary colors, adapting the palette to the scene. Gamsol is my chosen medium for thinning paint and cleaning brushes. The surface I favor is double oil-primed linen. I approach each subject without a predetermined plan, as I believe each painting is unique and shouldn’t be confined by formulaic approach.

The decision-making process begins with a clear understanding of what I want to convey to the viewer. This clarity guides subsequent decisions, including paint application, composition, and even canvas size to support the motif.

Working primarily on landscapes, I place high importance on capturing the lighting of the scene, a crucial element in each painting.

I use professional-grade materials, investing in the highest quality I can afford. With each painting, my goal is to

create a tranquil view that serves as a metaphorical window to a beautiful place. I aim to provide viewers with a sense of peace with each glance.”

You mentioned as a working artist you plan, can you tell us a little about that?

“As a working artist, effective planning is crucial; especially when faced with the challenges of managing shows, commissions, and gallery commitments. Over the years, I’ve discovered that maintaining organization and having a well-defined business plan not only enhances productivity but also reduces stress, presenting a professional image to my customers.

I adhere to a strategic planning approach, encompassing short-term, three-year, and ten-year plans. These plans have naturally evolved over the years, mirroring the evolution of my artistic journey. To keep track of deadlines and prioritize tasks, I used to maintain a whiteboard listing upcoming shows, and commitments. This visual aid served as a constant reminder, ensuring that I focus on the most critical aspects of my artistic endeavors.”

Does all the business planning hinder your creative flow?

“Planning for an art show is a delicate balance between organization and maintaining the creative flow.

Much like composing music, putting together an inventory for an art show requires careful consideration of the overall composition. It’s about creating a cohesive experience for the viewer, akin to weaving a musical masterpiece.

For me, the landscape serves as the central theme, providing a harmonious backdrop. I approach the collection as a musical composition, incorporating moments of quiet reflection – such as still water on a winter day – and intense crescendos, like crashing waves. The unique lighting in each scene acts as a thematic thread, seamlessly tying all the paintings together.

In essence, the process of curating the show itself becomes an art form. It’s not merely a presentation of individual pieces but a carefully orchestrated symphony of paintings, each contributing to the overall narrative. This approach not only ensures a visually engaging exhibit but also allows me to remain connected to the creative essence throughout the planning process.”

“FOR ME, THE LANDSCAPE SERVES AS A CENTRAL THEME, PROVIDING A HARMONIOUS BACKDROP.”

Tell me about the PAC6 and its evolution.

“The PAC6 originated as a spontaneous painting adventure to the Canyon de Chelly by six women artists. Initially, we were relative strangers but shared a common desire to paint the captivating canyon. The experience proved to be so fulfilling that it planted the seed for over a decade of collaborative painting journeys across the western United States.

What began as a simple artistic endeavor evolved into a tightly knit group of artists constantly exploring and creating together. Beyond the joy of painting in diverse landscapes, the PAC6 experienced an unexpected bonus – the opportunity to showcase our work in numerous successful gallery and museum exhibits. This shared journey not only enriched our artistic endeavors but also forged lasting connections among the participating artists.”

THE PAC6 Painters

*Known as the PAC6 Painters (PAC6), **Linda Brown, Marian Fortunati, Nita Harper, Debra Holladay, Laura Wambsgans, and Sharon Weaver** have explored and documented the landscape together for the past 10 years.

Dedicated to painting the beauty and grandeur of the American Landscape, the Southern California-based

collaborating artists share a love of the wild outdoors and painting en plein air.

Following from a new and contemporary perspective, the paintings not only allow viewers to visit and revisit these places, but also take them on a journey through each artist's individual interpretation of their experiences.

As Laura Wambsgans explains, “Capturing the light within the landscape, nature's palette, and the true sense of a place, is our desire with each landscape painting. If we are successful, the viewer will feel the sun and wind and forget what is on the wall outside the frame.”

Highlights of their trips include a pack trip by mule into the Sierras backcountry to Lake Ediza (and a bear that won't forget them), jumping mules, a late-night stroll through the Silver Terrace cemetery under a full moon, forest fires, tumbles and twisted body parts, and crunched cars.

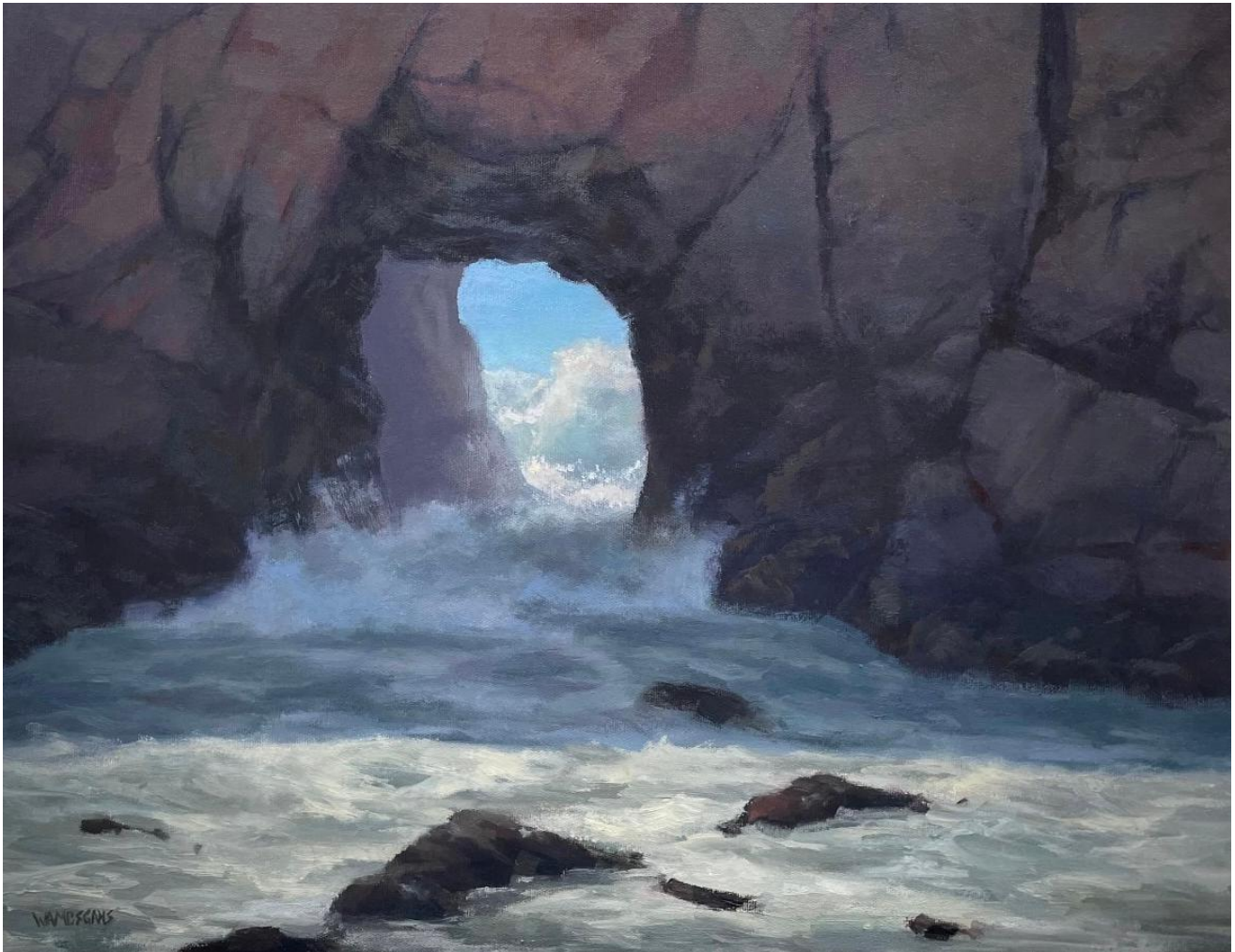
Other painting expeditions include Yosemite Valley (with a snow trip planned for 2025), Carmel, Vermillion Cliffs, Monument Valley, the Grand Canyon, Virginia City, and Lake Tahoe. Upcoming trips are already planned this year for June Lake, Rankin Ranch, and a fourth trip to Carmel.

Linda Brown sums it up when she says, “*Wandering the great outdoors and painting its beauty, from grand*

mountain vistas to butterfly wings, is a joy we simply could not live without.”

Regardless of the destination, at the end of each adventure, the PAC6 Painters brush off their jeans, smile at each other, and proclaim **“...and nobody died.”**

It is obvious that Laura and these women are adventurers and love what they do. The joy of traveling together is a bond of friendship and trust.



Carved by the Sea - On view now at Santa Paula Art Museum



Whispering Cottonwoods



Emerald Waters Carving Crimson Cliffs

Laura Wambsgans

Artist Laura Wambsgans anticipates a series of captivating events in the coming months.

Her itinerary includes participation in the **'From Field to Frame' exhibition at the Santa Paula Art Museum**, followed by appearances at the **Sierra Madre Art Fair May 4-5, 2024** and **'Art Matters' hosted at the Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens**.

A significant highlight will be her role as the featured artist at Art Tehachapi 2024.



Sundown Blaze, Oil, Linen 16x20

Laura Wambsgans, an artist of distinction, espouses a belief in the ability to shape one's own path and emphasizes the inherent potential within each individual to flourish. An intrepid soul, she remains unwavering in her creative pursuits, specializing in crafting exquisite en plein air landscapes that capture the essence and magnificence of nature. Much like her peers in the plein air genre, she embodies a poetic connection with the environment, a quality that resonates with admirers like myself.



More information about Laura visit her website:
<https://www.laurawambsgans.com/>

ArT 2024 Tehachapi

Featured Artist



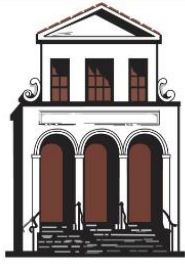
For More information Visit:
<https://www.artstehachapi.org/events>

Sierra Madre Art Fair May 4-5, 2024

For More information Visit:
<https://www.sierramadreartfair.org/vendors-1>

The Sierra Madre Art Fair features about 100 fine artists, showing original paintings, pottery, sculpture, weaving, woodwork, metalwork, photography, jewelry and more.

Be sure to stop and see Laura Wambsgans as she will be there exhibiting her work.



SANTA
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ART
MUSEUM

JEANETTE COLE ART CENTER
COLE CREATIVITY CENTER

Artist Talk: The PAC6 Painters

Saturday, April 13, 2024
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Santa Paula Art Museum
117 N 10th Steet, Santa Paula,CA. 93060

Painting Demo: Linda Brown, Marian Fortunati, and Debra Holladay of PAC6

Saturday, May 4, 2024
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Santa Paula Art Museum
117 N 10th Steet, Santa Paula,CA. 93060

Meet and Chat with PAC6 artists Linda Brown, Marian Fortunati, and Debra Holladay as they paint inside the Museum!

For more information visit:

<https://www.santapaulaartmuseum.org/event>

ARTISTS ON THE RISE

Two up and
coming artists on
a journey of
discovery

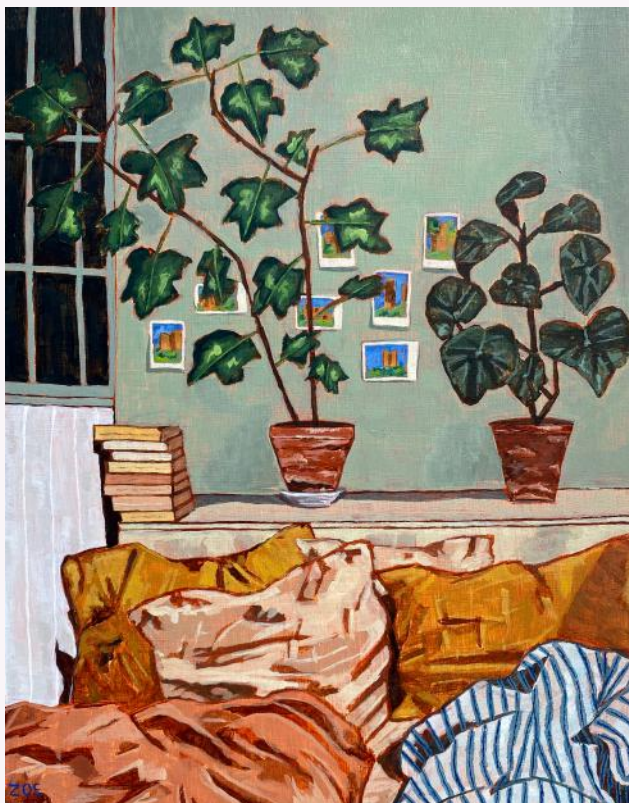
Aaron MacDonald

Zoe Van Beurden

By K.Gonzales



Aaron MacDonald Still Life with Skull 8x10




ARTISTS ON VIEW AT SANTA
PAULA ART MUSEUM'S EXHIBIT
"30 UNDER 30" TILL MAY 5, 2024

TURN THE PAGE TO LEARN
MORE ABOUT THESE UP AND
COMING ARTISTS.

Zoe Van Beurden
Cozy Room, acrylic on cradled wood
14x11

Aaron MacDonald

Chasing the Masters

 @aaronmacdnldart

Aaron claims to have commenced his artistic journey at a tender age, suggesting an inherent affinity for art. His early practice predominantly took place in his room, where he honed his skills through instructional books and outdoor settings with the aid of an easel.

Formal education further enriched his artistic prowess, with studies undertaken at Ventura College and Cal State Channel Islands. Aaron's instructional experience encompasses teaching figure drawing and oil painting techniques for fabric depiction at Vita and Santa Paula educational institutions.



Aaron MacDonald, an emerging artist, demonstrates a deep commitment to studying the works of renowned masters. His passion lies in capturing the essence of the human form through his art.



His artistic approach is evidently influenced by the renowned John Singer Sargent. Similarly, Aaron's method involves initially capturing the most significant shapes with their most expressive angles. Once these foundational shapes are established, he progresses by painting the mid-tones in the background before seamlessly blending the edges. This meticulous process reflects his dedicated focus on detail and technique.

While Aaron is predominantly captivated by oil painting, he has imparted his expertise by conducting courses at the Santa Paula Cole Creativity Center on drawing the human figure, oil painting, and ink drawing.

His passion lies in creating portraiture and figurative art, citing the human form as a source of endless inspiration. According to him, the human body serves as a quintessential model, offering a vast spectrum of subject matter that could engage an artist for a lifetime.

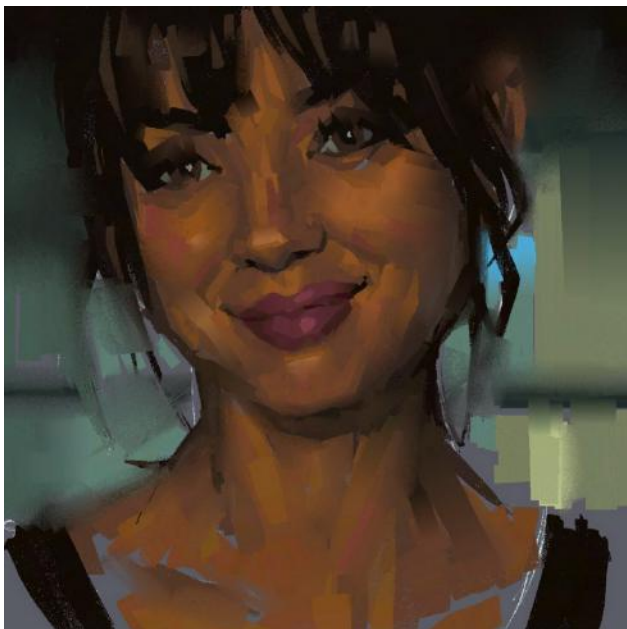
When offering guidance to budding artists, Aaron emphasizes the importance of maintaining focus and finding joy in every progression.

“Keep your head down and enjoy every step that you take. Everyone always seems better than you at something, but if you relax into your work and strive alongside yourself you will fall deeply in love, a deep, respectful love. Visit Museums!!!!”

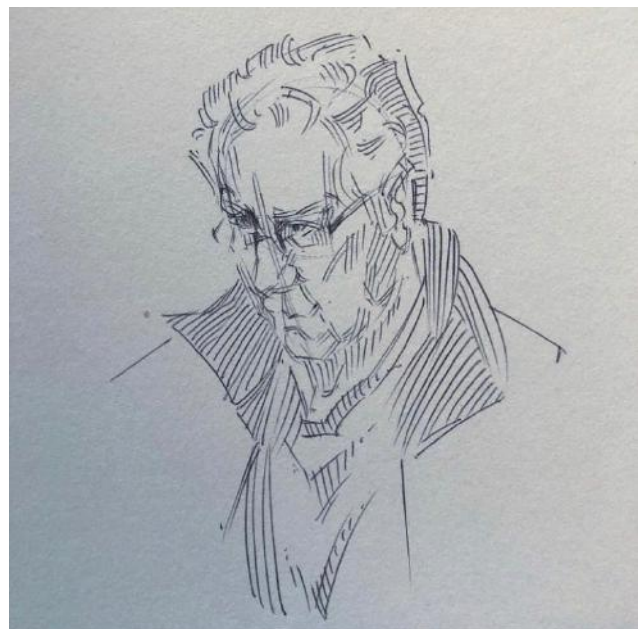
“... Relax into your work and strive alongside yourself you will fall deeply in love, a deep, respectful love.”



Sketch Game-Faced Grandma



Bladerunner Girl



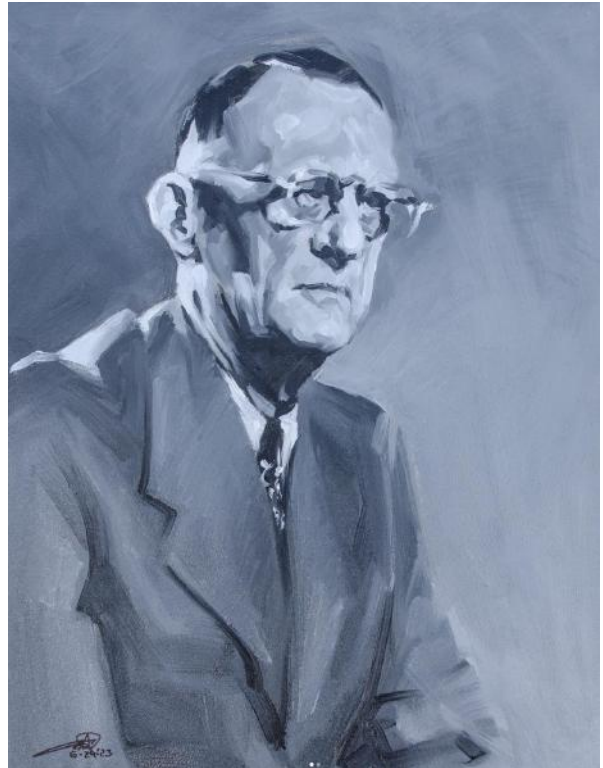
Sketch Game-Faced Grandpa

Reflecting on your inclusion in the Santa Paula’s “30 Under 30” feature, how did it feel to be recognized as one of the 30 featured artists?

“I felt immensely blessed and privileged to be in that show. I got to stand alongside others who are after excellence just like myself.”

What’s next for you?

“To meet myself at the top of the mountain and bring down new knowledge to those who are seeking! Blessings!



Wong Kar Wei paint and charcoal underdrawing

Zoe Van Beurden

Finding Nature's Rhythm

<https://www.zoevanbeurden.com/>

Zoe asserts that her passion for art blossomed during her early education when she enrolled in an elective at school. Mr. Arturo Velarde, the sole art teacher at the school, played a pivotal role in her artistic journey. Zoe fondly recalls him as a remarkable educator and artist whose guidance motivated her to advance her artistic skills. She dedicated numerous hours each week in his classroom honing her craft through drawings and paintings, eagerly seeking his expertise. Moreover, Zoe acknowledges the unwavering support of her family, whose encouragement has always fueled her artistic aspirations.

What artist influences you now and why?

I draw great inspiration from Post-Impressionism artists such as Vincent van Gogh and Paul Cézanne. I admire their ability to capture the emotive qualities of their subject matter, often nature, through rhythmic brushstrokes, exaggerated colors, and slight distortions of reality. This influence is reflected in my own art practice through my tendency to use color and form expressively, transforming ordinary subject matter into something unique. Moreover, being the grandchild of a Dutch immigrant, I feel a particular affinity towards van Gogh's work.



***Zoe Van Beurden**, an artist based in Santa Barbara, specializes in oil and acrylic painting. Born in 2002, she resided in Central California's Central Valley. Her artistic themes are inspired by her upbringing in this region, which is prominently reflected in her creations.*



Flower Still Life, acrylic on canvas 16x20

Explain your creative process:

When I begin a painting, I like to have some sort of plan in place. Though I'd love to say I'm a free-flowing artist, I'm quite organized and methodical.

Typically, I start by sketching on my canvas either in pencil or acrylic paint. Then, I apply a wash of color, oftentimes a vibrant one. Next, I loosely block in the general colors, focusing on shadows and highlights. I then begin adding more detail to each area.

For more realistic pieces like "Peaches" I use a small brush for slow, focused brushstrokes. For more expressionistic pieces, I opt for a medium-sized flat brush and make quicker, yet intentional, brushstrokes. Finally, I sign my work on the front, as I appreciate seeing artists' signatures despite the debate surrounding this practice.

What would you say stands out about your work?

My art practice is not unique in that many artists are inspired by nature. However, I think my work stands out through my bold use of color. Color is not something I shy away from and this is apparent in my work. I utilize color in a way to evoke an emotional response from the viewer.

What are the biggest influences on your artwork?

The natural environment remains the biggest influence on my artwork. Ever since I was a child, nature has brought me an immense sense of comfort. Any time I was angry, sad, or anxious, I would go sit outside. Listening to the leaves rustling in the breeze and the tranquil call of mourning doves brought me back to a calm emotional state. I strive to capture and evoke this feeling through my artwork.



Peaches - Oil on cradled wood 6 x12

What advice do you have for aspiring artists?

My advice for aspiring artists is to create art as frequently as possible. The most transformative period in my art journey was during my senior year of high school amid the global pandemic. With an abundance of free time and no formal curriculum to guide me, I dedicated myself to creating art daily. Not all the work I created was good, in fact, most of it was bad. But one of the most important things I've learned is embracing imperfection and valuing the process over the outcome. Making good art will come with time and experience, but it's essential to experiment and accept failure along the way.

Reflecting on your inclusion in the Santa Paula's "30 Under 30" feature, how did it feel to be recognized as one of the 30 featured artists?

Being featured in Santa Paula's "30 Under 30" exhibition with my painting "Peaches" was a deeply gratifying experience. It marked my first time showcasing work in a museum setting, and witnessing the talent of other young artists was truly inspiring.

How was it having your own solo exhibit at UCSB's Glass Box Gallery?

Having my first solo show at UCSB Glass Box Gallery was an incredible experience. It required months of

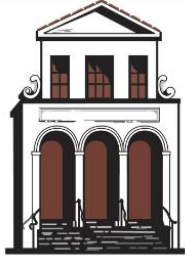
planning and preparation, along with hours of installation work, but I'd do it again in a heartbeat. Titled "Blossoming," the exhibition displayed an array of vibrant paintings, drawings, and sculptures. My aim was to transform the gallery into an intimate space, beckoning viewers to immerse themselves in a world where nature is observed with childlike wonder.

What's next for you?

I'm not entirely sure what's next for me after I graduate college, but I'm excited about the possibilities. I look forward to experimenting with different mediums and subject matters to further develop and refine my artistic practice.



Trumpet Vine, Oil on canvas 20 x16



SANTA
PAULA
ART
MUSEUM

JEANETTE COLE ART CENTER
COLE CREATIVITY CENTER

Aaron MacDonald

Zoe Van Beurden

Can both be viewed at:

Exhibit: “30 Under 30”

On view January 20, 2024, to May 5,
2024

Santa Paula Art Museum
117 N 10th Steet, Santa Paula,CA. 93060

For more information visit:

<https://www.santapaulaartmuseum.org/event>



APRIL EVENTS

Sat. April 13
Barn & Charm
Open Market

9 AM - 5PM
Barn & Charm
22700 Lyons Ave,
Newhall, Ca

Sun. April 28
Le Chene
Art Show

10 AM - 4PM
Le Chêne
12625 Sierra Hwy
Agual Dulce Ca

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Of interest for adults

- **Nest: Healing Arts Studio**, every first Sunday of the month. FREE program for adults & teens to explore the healing benefits of art.
- **Acrylic Painting** techniques class: Thursday mornings from 10-12. Semester ends May 23. Join class in progress or consider fall registration. Class starts again late August.



Artist Gary Friedman
On The Street
Watercolor
11x14

FIRST FLOOR GALLERY

"CITYSCAPES AND STREETSCAPES"
MARCH 7 - JUNE 5, 2024
RECEPTION: MARCH 8, 6-8PM



www.santaclaritaarts.com

NEWHALL COMMUNITY CENTER

"RIDING THROUGH HISTORY"
MARCH 26 - JUNE 19, 2024



www.santaclaritaarts.com

Artist Susan O'Linn
Chet
Oil on Board 10 x10

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