

## Artists Scaling Down, Thinking Bigger at Santa Barbara City College Exhibition

Atkinson Gallery's 'Small Images' Show Brings Back an Important Showcase for Area Art, in Compact Forms



"100% Sk8 Shoe-PEACE," by Inga Guzyte | Credit: Josef Woodard

By **Josef Woodard**

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It's hip to be small, once again. The *Small Images* show at Santa Barbara City College's Atkinson Gallery has deep roots. Now in its 38th iteration, the exhibition returns to the Atkinson, after having been kiboshed during the pandemic. It's an inspiring case of reengagement with an important forum for artists from the Tri-Counties and a survey of artists both familiar and new.

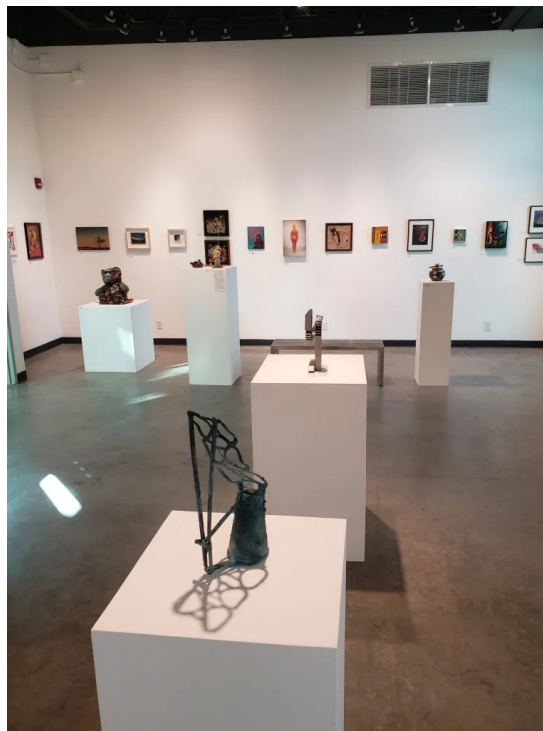
This year's roster is more selective and spare than years past. The beholding eye can breathe and focus on what's in the room. *Lum Art Magazine* provided the jurying duty, paring down 205 entries by 99 artists to a doable load of 59 artists, working in various media and with diverse goals and artistic voices.

A good place to start is Seyburn Zorthian's "Espana 10," (the show's first place/runner-up) which packs a fiery abstract energy into the smallest piece in the room. In the Grand Prize slot (nabbing a \$1,000 prize) was Kevin Clancy's winkingly clever, info-overload-questioning pile-up of screens, in the hands of a baby. Welcome to the wired/wireless world, wee one. Other notable entries in the painting category include Maria Rendon's "The Last Sunset," with a foreboding "X" above and below ground hinting at ominous fates, and Mark Lozano's tranquil, ambience-capturing "Still Life by Window."

Joyce Wilson's "The Bough Bends" is a woodsy scene of muted palette and introspective reflection, drawing our attentions inward, while Marita Redondo's "Aunt Suzy" is a simple, affecting family figure portrait, with faceting brushwork distinguishing it from standard-practice painting formula. Corinne Trujillo's "Extinct" is a soft-spoken, melancholic vision of a bygone bovine.

Three-dimensional art is carefully dispersed on the gallery floor, creating a happy slalom effect for visitors. As we enter the gallery, an eye-grabbing greeter appears in animal form. Elizabeth (Betsy) Gallery (yes, she must be tired of confirming, that is her real family name) shows off both her expert mosaic skills and a certain animalistic charm with her cuddly sculpture "Mar a Lago Fake Souvenir: Day of the Dead Bear."

Another well-known purveyor of sculpture created from unlikely materials is Inga Guzyte, whose unique panache in working with repurposed skateboard decks – and repurposed skate-culture iconography – comes through in the footwear-riffing "100% Sk8 Shoe-PEACE." On the opposite side of the same post, Cynthia Martin's "HERE'S A GREAT OFFER FOR YOU" combines her way with a wavy, sea-minded abstract painting tucked into a sturdy metal frame equipped with anchor imagery and the title in etched letters.



*A view of the Atkinson Gallery's "Small Images" show | Credit: Josef Woodard*



*Kevin Clancy's Grand Prize winning piece | Credit: Lum Art Magazine*

The coy title of Pausha Foley's "Red Poppies" isolates the bed of flowers serving as a plush ground for the real subject, a mutant mix of woman and rabbit, in a work at once surreal and sensuous. Similarly, sensuality takes a strange turn or two in Sol Hill's "Light Vessels — Luminous Void," a mixed-media piece in which a mystical nude figure appears to be cosmically irradiated from within.

Some artists are already pre-calibrated to work well in scaled-down dimensions. Take, for an ideal example, assemblage artist Michael Long. Without screaming out for attention in a room of louder visuals, his "Abandoned Dwelling" pulls us into its spot in the gallery corner. On close inspection, the work might evoke a dilapidated, funky stage set for a Beckett play, fastidiously rendered with the artist's miniaturist aplomb in check.

As we've learned from this exhibition's long-standing tradition and example, small art can speak volumes.

*Small Images: 38th Anniversary Exhibition* is on view at SBCC's Atkinson Gallery through March 30. See [gallery.sbcc.edu](http://gallery.sbcc.edu).



*"HERE'S A GREAT OFFER FOR YOU" by Cynthia Martin | Credit: Joseph Woodard*

Thu Mar 30, 2023 | 02:24am

<https://www.independent.com/2023/02/28/artists-scaling-down-thinking-bigger-at-santa-barbara-city-college-exhibition/>



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