

The Art of Letting Go, And Letting Things Go

'CORROSION/EROSION' GRACES THE WALLS OF JOHN DUNN GOURMET DINING ROOM

By Josef Woodard,
News-Press Correspondent



'Corrosion/erosion'

When: through May 17

Where: Atkinson Gallery Annex,
John Dunn Gourmet Dining Room,
Santa Barbara City College,
721 Cliff Dr.

Hours: Mon.-Fri. 11:30 a.m.-2:45 p.m.,
Thurs.-Fri. 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Information: 965-0581, ext. 3484,
gallery.sbccc.edu

On one hand, it might seem a bit distracting trying to pay close attention to the artwork lining the walls of the John Dunn Gourmet Dining Room on the Santa Barbara City College campus, a showcase eatery for the college's noted culinary program. It is here, on available wall space near the door, that the intriguing new Atkinson Gallery Annex has set up shop, currently showing a small group show called "corrosion/erosion," open only during the dining hours, lunch and dinner time.

On the other hand, the unusual art-in-a-public-place of the Atkinson

Annex concept — especially during this period when the gallery, proper, is sequestered in a humble temporary building on the west campus while the "real" gallery/building gets a makeover, adds an extra touch of intrigue. For one thing, the juxtaposition of the gourmet training ground of this room with an exhibition about the way of decaying and corruptible things and natural forces adds up to culturally contrasting energies.

In "corrosion/erosion," curated by Atkinson Gallery intern Emilia Dattilo, multiple artists approach the theme from different angles and with different media, including the industrial grade stuff of concrete, in Carlos Padilla's Cubist-ified abstracted figurative sculpture, "Child." There are ulterior and sub-surface ideas at work in some of the art, as with Kathi Scaminach's "Rusty Beijing Rain," an acrylic and collage piece that initially strikes us as a sensuous abstraction. As the artist explains in a text, the piece, vis-à-vis its title, also makes reference to the rusty red/brown patina of life in Beijing during an especially rain-soaked summer of 2012.

A more societal brand of decay and fragility is at hand in Ray Barsante's "Empires," a detailed yet chaotic etching of buildings turned asunder by unseen forces. It's not clear if the urban rubble is the result of seismic or socio-political-military upset, but we get the message of fallen empire shards and generalized destruction in the tangled heap, which, incidentally, also shows off the artist's draughtsman skill.

Other aspects of the etching art are on view in Jacqueline Aspen Lincoln's more textural "Transfigured," with linear elements on a sodden ground, conveying a sense of transformation through decay and regeneration. Things get less subtle and more specific in Zoe Elliott's "Abandoned Innocence," a photo-like black-and-white painting of a decaying and discarded doll in the underbrush. Innocence is, indeed, abandoned, and a sprinkling of ye olde memento mori is in the margins.

Erosion of linearity or rational imagery makes for some optical charm factor in the deft, foot-the-eye collage pieces of Jake Terrell. From yet another personalized expressive angle, Dalayna Grace Christenson's abstract "Decalcifying," with its active title and canny



Emilia Dattilo photo

'Decalcifying,' Dalayna Grace Christenson



'Rusty Beijing Rain,' Kathi Scaminach

blending of a gray-to-white top layer with murmuring darker visual layer below, somehow conveys the quasi-natural force of its title.

Somehow, one of the mind-catching pieces in "corrosion/erosion" relates to the show's theme only tangentially, but speaks to anyone who has had a stake in the wonder and terror of the creative process. Elizabeth Mitchell's etching "The Muse" makes manifest in animal form the mythical inspiration-giver (and inspiration-taker-away), here seen as an enigmatic, be-tailed and masked woman, mysterious in her ways and moods. Oh, mighty and fickle muse, be not a stranger, in our minds, lives, studios, galleries, and art-festooned public dining rooms.



'Child,' Carlos Padilla

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