

Teaching by artful example

VIBRANT WORK BY SANTA BARBARA CITY COLLEGE ART DEPARTMENT FACULTY
LIVENS UP THE NEWLY RENOVATED ATKINSON GALLERY

By Josef Woodard,
News-Press Correspondent



Art Faculty Biennial

When: through September 26

Where: Atkinson Gallery, Santa Barbara City College, 721 Cliff Dr.

Hours: 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday through Thursday,

10 a.m.-4 p.m. Friday and Saturday

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

Although the current exhibition at SBCC's Atkinson Gallery, a showcasing of the talented art faculty at the college, is one brimming with vitality and enlightened variety, a certain, strange aura of lamentation also sneaks into the room, when you least expect it. What initially seem to be faint sounds of weeping become waves and degrees of emotional intensity and serio-comic dramatizing.

Have no fear, dread or loathing: it's only the sound of art making its multi-media presence known, in the form of Elizabeth Folk's canny, multi-sensory sculpture, "How to Cry on the Internet." Three small video screens are tucked into an odd, carpeted structure — some kind of variation on the theme of a cat-clawing play structure, a comfort zone of sort — where we find histrionic criers in the "act," overlaid by psychedelic murk effects, for further emotional distancing ends. It becomes the subtle, cry-baby soundtrack to a show that is anything but mokey.



"Dog Bonz 1," Christopher Bates

It is more than fitting that the new Atkinson Gallery season — the first new full season in the newly renovated gallery-with-a-view after nearly two years spent in the humble utilitarian digs across campus — kicks off with one of the regular faculty shows at the college. Now a bi-annual occasion, the faculty shows manage to serve a different purpose, showing by example the ever-changing nature and diversity of the SBCC Art Department from the mentor perspective, while serving the purpose of giving attention to locally based art and artists worth checking in on. That list includes a few new artists in the mix since the last such exhibition in this space.

From the painting angle, the work here varies boldly, artist to artist. Laura Krifka, who impressed mightily in her UCSB MFA show a few years ago (and in the recent UCSB alumni show) and now teaches at SBCC, is up to her cracked classicism agenda with the painting "Lambs." It's another wowing example of her unique, elegantly painted canvas, with hints of sex, violence (is that berry juice or blood?) and mythology rejiggered, with sumptuous skin tones and sneaky undertones in tow.

On another wall, another large painting beckons: Rafael Perea de la Cabada's "Square One" is a seductively ritualistic image of a sym-



"How to Cry on the Internet," Elizabeth Folk



"Turn Time," Liv Aanrud

Photos courtesy Atkinson Gallery

biotic pair of amoeba-like creatures meeting in some dreamy middle dimension. A different sort of meeting is involved in Dustin Metz's "Half Night, Still Life," which craftily fuses (and confuses) the artistic traditions of the nocturne and the still life. Christopher Ulivo, one of the newer additions to the art faculty who had a one-man show on campus last year, asserts his gonzo comical aesthetic with delightful images from a "Prehistoric Park," where presumably static dinosaurs lurk amidst a shifty proprietor and a drinking toad.

Sculpture has its day, and moves in various directions and materials, in the show. Aside from Ms. Folk's wry, weepy charmer, Stephanie Dotson's "Drugrug" is a rug-like relief piece of hypnotic design, roughly similar to the artful weave of "Turn Time," Liv Aanrud's jumbo-scaled bowtie, a rainbow-colored textile art piece. Michelle Onstor's "Again and Again" deftly stirs up metaphoric and direct emotional trouble with a window frame, broken panes and damaged hands, suggesting a residue of crime and/or wages of passion.

On more archetypal and form-based terms, Ed Inks' "If Not One" is a mutating cast aluminum and rust-colored (and rust-themed) composite blob, at once sensuous and slightly sinister, while Nathan Hayden's "Shapes for Shadows" is a mock-studious collection of elemental forms in clay, with holes strategically placed as if for easy transformation into macro-millagros. Christopher Bates demonstrates his sure and luminous skill working with glazed porcelain in pieces graced with titles which thicken the interpretive plot — "Yoho Bowl" and "Dog Bonz!"

In the "other" categories of the college's seemingly balanced Art Department options, Marie Schoeff shows two of her cryptically elegant, abstract dry-point prints. Thomas Larson shows examples of his long-honed book art style, with accordi-

on-style collage techniques working toward a multi-dimensional sense of detached, impressionistic nostalgia and experiential ephemera. In some related way, Barbara Vilander's color photograph "Aquivalence" basks in cropped, enigmatic details of a world we don't quite grasp.

And then, in its own corner of a dense but somehow compatible showing of works, there is Brian Scott Campbell's "Don't Bother, I'm Painting," a cool-headed and spare image of a painter's hand contending with a palette. Did we mention that this art-about-art artwork is a drawing?

By the time you've taken in the gallery's bounty of work and individualistic artistic perspectives, the murmuring sound of weeping somehow has transformed into an abstract, ambient lull. Art can be funny that way.

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