



'one of a kind'



'It's Authentic\* (billboard)'

Atkinson Gallery SBCC photos

## Real Dealings, and More!

TIM BERG & REBEKAH MYERS PULL VARIOUS CONCEPTUAL RABBITS OUT OF THEIR HAT

By Josef Woodard, News-Press Correspondent



**Tim Berg & Rebekah Myers,**  
**'Honest to Goodness'**

**When:** through April 11: Closed during SBCC's spring break March 22-30. However, parties interested in visiting during break may make an appointment with Gallery Director Sarah Cunningham, sbccunningham@sbcc.edu.

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

**Hours:** 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday and Saturday

**Information:** 965-0581, Ext. 3484, gallery.sbcc.edu



'one of a kind (souvenirs)'

First and foremost, the big, green bunny rules the room. From that point outward, the games begin, and lead back to the rabbit, pulled out of the artistic hat and looming large in its urethane-painted, epoxy-coated, Styrofoam glory. Called "One of a Kind," the vaguely Jeff Koons-y bunny sculpture is the canny centerpiece of "Honest to Goodness," the installation/exhibition by the artistic and life partnership of Tim Berg & Rebekah Myers.

But as we immediately suspect from this clever, half-mocking, cheerful, colorful, and sometimes snigger-out-loud show in City College's Atkinson Gallery, there is more pure goodness than honesty at work here. This is the second exhibition to be held in the newly renovated Atkinson Gallery, the gallery with the stunning harbor view from its patio, and this show's loaded and shiny directness with ulterior motives attached, fits perfectly into the space it inhabits. From another site-specific angle, the show is both an installation whole and a collection of individual pieces and interworking parts.

Clearly, this multi-disciplined, artistic pair, based in Claremont, California, is not being entirely honest with us, raising issues of art-as-commodity, art-as-repeatable bliss, and the interconnectedness of objects passing for an art exhibition — which passes for a synchronistic installation piece, as a whole. It's all so confusing, yet endearing and easy on the eyes, a giddy, sleek maze of ideas and impressions, raising questions about art, but with an implied shrug rather than a cudgel and a dogmatic grudge.

Bunnies do procreate with vigor, as we know, so it shouldn't be surprising to find, on the back, a total of 49 (in neat rows of seven x seven, next to a neon sign reading "souvenirs") small, green, bunny replicas in glazed ceramic, in a piece ironically titled "one of a kind (souvenirs)."

Other large, and recurring leitmotif pieces of the installation puzzle include a light, wooden model of a '30s-era billboard, whose very title fudges the truth: "It's Authentic\* (billboard)." On another wall, the piece called "toss up" (its title apparently nodding to fate's mischief) toys with the visual similarities of a large, white, wishbone sculpture and a forked tree limb like a divining



'better an ounce of luck than a pound of gold (expanded edition)'

rod, and embedded meanings related to luck and the folkloric art of rainmaking.

As if these bold, imagistic themes were sending off rippling small echoes, tiny variations of those themes filter throughout the installation. Red wax stamps of the same "It's Authentic!\*" insignia are stamped on large, white, paper pieces with drawings made with perforations, while "better an ounce of luck than a pound of gold (expanded form)" culls luck-lore objects — wishbone, rabbit's foot, horseshoe — coated in pseudo-precious gold and upgraded in perceived importance by presentation in a display case.

And for their next trick, the artists take all the "main events" and objects of the overall show, shrink them down to a particularly portable size and place them in a stylish briefcase, "installation in a valise (honest to goodness)." It was at this point during my patient observation and note-taking that I could no longer restrain my laughter, belching out into the stillness of the gallery. Honest.

"Honest to Goodness" is all good, clean, post-modern fun with serious issues bubbling beneath the simple surfaces and within the newly spiffed gallery walls.