

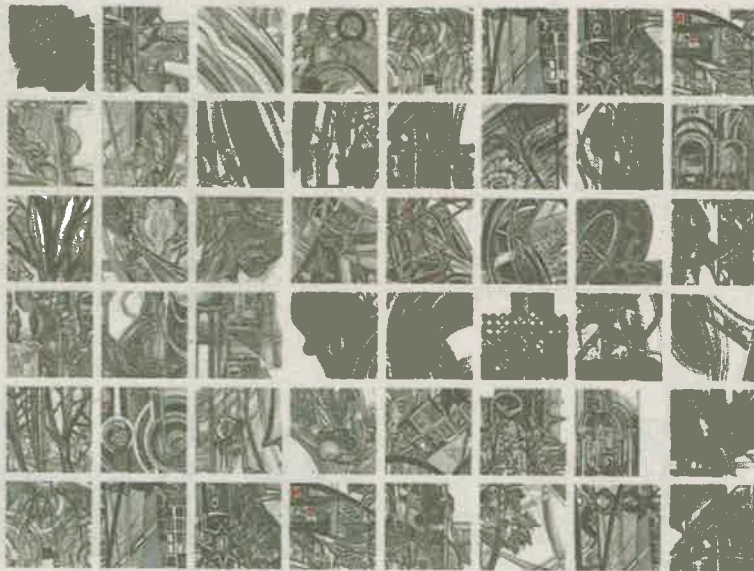
Frameworks Trapped in the Undergrowth

NOTABLE SANTA BARBARA-BASED ARTIST ANN DIENER'S EXHIBITION, 'ENTANGLED GRIDS,' INAUGURATES THE NEWLY REMODELED ATKINSON GALLERY

By Josef Woodard,
News-Press Correspondent



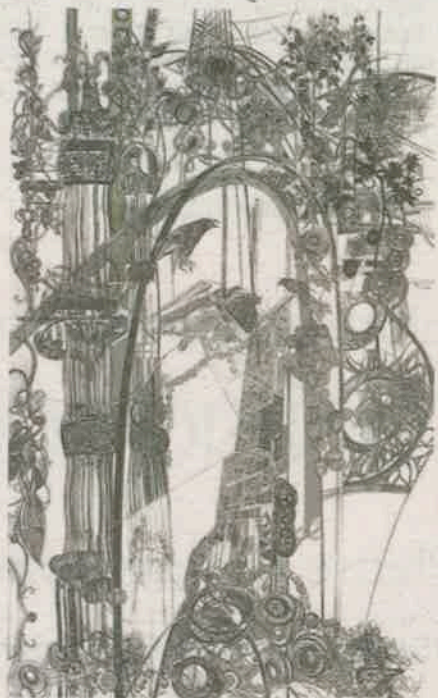
Ann Diener,
'Entangled Grids'
When: through February 28
Where: Atkinson Gallery,
Santa Barbara City College,
721 Cliff Dr.
Hours: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday
through Thursday,
10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday and Saturday
Information: 965-0581, Ext. 3484,
gallery.sbccc.edu



'Project 100 series (detail)'

With Ann Diener's new exhibition at Santa Barbara City College's Atkinson Gallery, over and above the quality, puzzlements and enticements we have come to expect of her art, a secondary star attraction is the host space itself, all redressed-up and with somewhere to go. After a year and a half of dormancy during a remodel, and Atkinson Gallery functioning in a workable, but makeshift, temporary building on the other side of campus, the gallery is back in business in the old, familiar Humanities Building, which houses it on the top floor with its awesome view.

That alone is news in itself. The



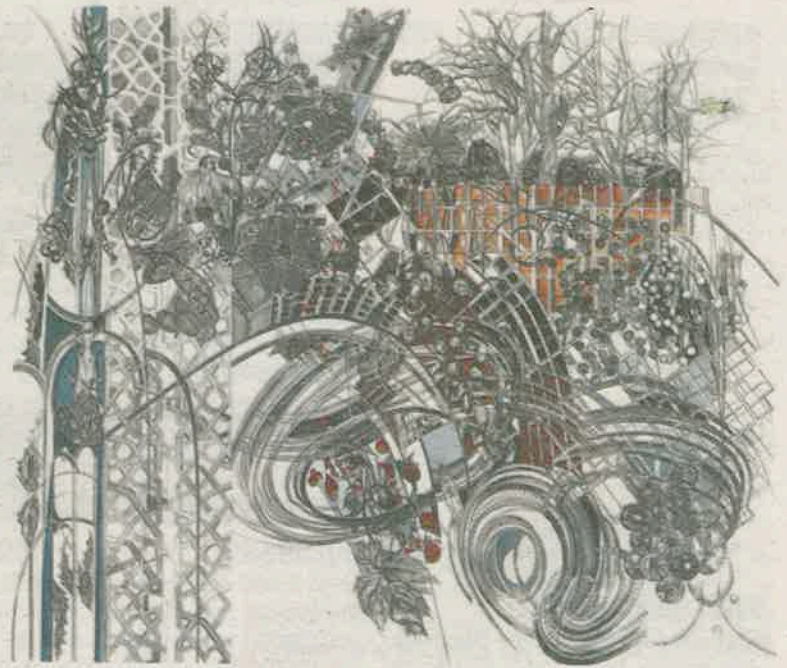
'Large Tapestry'

old funk has been dusted off and sanitized into a polished steamship of an architectural structure. Long live the old funk in the ghostly bones and echoes of the place. Welcome to the new and improved gleam.

On some levels, the concept of inaugurating the renewed old space with a one-person show by the notable Santa Barbara-based artist, Ms. Diener was a shrewd and suitable move. We've caught sight of her stylized and personalized art in various contemporary-friendly venues around the area, including the UCSB Art Museum, Jane Deering Gallery, and the much-missed, old Edward Cella Gallery. At the Atkinson, she brings her identifiable artistic interests fruitfully to bear in a complementary space in the show aptly named, "Entangled Grids."

Between a large, virtually mural-sized piece covering one gallery wall and several other integrated pieces of varying scale, Ms. Diener's familiar visual strategies and virtuosic drawing style resonate beautifully in this sparsely organized show in the space. Her bold, yet ingrown and internally tangled, intricately detailed blending of gridworks, both orderly and quite the opposite, breathe and complicate the air here. Thickets bustle over underlying, organizing structural plans, with a dual effect not unlike the untidy and organic mess of human life, decay and regrowth, in spite of the ideal principles and designs of graphic tidiness or city planning.

Consuming one wall, we find the site-specific – or at least site-af-



'Entangled Grid'

Scott McClaine photos

fixed – centerpiece of the show. The epic and minutiae-filled "Urban Grid" is a grounding grid pattern of squares, adding up to a mosaic-like foundation, but with plenty of cross-firing visual energies spinning and twining "off the grid," so to speak. Across the room, by contrast, is "Project 100," a subtler aggregation of 6" x 6" square drawings. Each discrete drawing is more focused in its subject than is common in Ms. Diener's usual overgrowth/undergrowth plottings, and includes references to the urban mesh, as well as a Gothic cathedral, a point of reference in her visual vocabulary.

"Large Tapestry" and "Vertical Grid" go decidedly vertical in orientation, merging hints of urbanity and fragmented architecture, but complicated by rangy foliage, vines and swirling web works of lines in nervous motion. And yet, certain elegance prevails amidst the messiness. As for the "title" piece, "Entangled Grid," it is a large, square-formed piece to which is added the human touch of tiny illustrations, with the wee, real-worldly touches of faces, animals, the Eiffel Tower, and elephant life gently percolating in the thick of visual info.

A contextual question arises in looking at this evocative art in this evocative, view-endowed art space: what would be the perception of seeing this work in a congested, urban, gallery setting, versus the stunning foothills-and-harbor view

that blesses the Atkinson? Would it be more calming or more knottily frazzling and inherently complex on impact?

Whatever the hypothesis, Ms. Diener's art makes its own kind of special, personalized statement on its own terms, and all the more luminously, in this happy, pristine gallery at home by the sea.

WANTED:
Quality Paintings

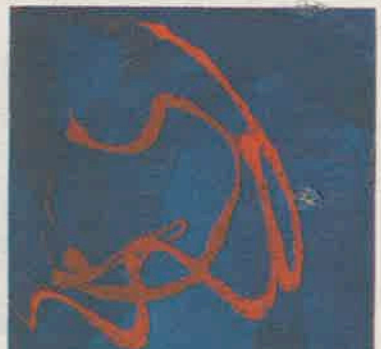
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