

Stephanie Washburn brings eclectic art style to SBCC

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While she was hired to teach drawing, first-year City College art instructor Stephanie Washburn says her artwork—and what she teaches— “can go literally anywhere.”

“I work in a lot of different media,” said Washburn, in her office in the Humanities Building. “It’s not as uncommon as you might think. A lot of artists these days work in a big range of media. For me, it’s always made a lot of sense to teach in a range of subjects: conceptual art, art history, drawing, painting, photo.

“But drawing always feels to me like the gateway.”

Washburn is showing her artwork to the college for the first time in the current [Atkinson Gallery](#) exhibit, “Office of Loss Control.” The exhibit, which she shares with fellow first-year instructor Armando Ramos, continues through April 7.

While she grew up in a family of writers, Washburn studied many subjects in her undergraduate college years including history and philosophy. It wasn’t until her junior year at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn., that she decided to major in art. She later attended UCSB, earning a master’s degree in fine arts.

Art “ really felt like the most mysterious, challenging thing I could find,” she said. “And that was really exciting to me. I felt intimidated by it, but attracted to it as well.”

Washburn’s work has been displayed at at least a dozen galleries, including the [ACME Gallery](#) in Los Angeles and the [Museum of Contemporary Art](#) in Santa Barbara.

Also displaying her work was Mark Moore of the Mark Moore Fine Art gallery. On his website, the former gallery owner and now collector wrote, “Her practice explores the material digital interface and the persistence of the body and human touch in pictorial space.

“Washburn combines everyday materials and televised imagery to stage a series of photographs. The images that result generate a range of painterly abstractions and counter narratives to the programmed content flickering beneath.

“With references to Abstract Expressionism, feminist art practice, and early performance, they pose a real physicality as the dramatic player in the fictive space of both the digital spectacle and her own hybrid image making.”

Now that she’s at City College, Washburn says she is eager to “give back.”

“I think the mission of this college is so important,” she said. “Public education, higher education in America needs to be affordable and free, and the school is doing a wonderful job of providing that...”

“I want to be engaged, giving back something of what art means to me, making art a part of the critical mission here for quality and truly affordable higher ed.

“There’s such a push right now for professionalization. I’d like to help creativity, the challenge and unexpectedness of that way of thinking, hold its place as something our culture really values.”

-Zuri Smith contributed to this report

Clarification: Aug. 15, 2017

This story includes corrections to a previous version. The original article stated that there were artists in Stephanie Washburn’s family. It has been updated to specify that there were no artists, only writers. The previous version also stated that Washburn majored in history and philosophy, which are subjects she only studied in undergrad.