

[NEW CONTEMPORARIES IV](#) at [Alexander Salazar Fine Art](#)

Presented by the [San Diego Visual Arts Network](#)

Monday, August 1 – Wednesday, Aug 31, 2011

Emerging Artists:

Mely Barragan nominated by **Einar and Jamex de la Torre**, artists

[Adam Belt](#) nominated by **Karen McGuire**, William D. Cannon Art Gallery Director

[Susannah Bielak](#) nominated by **Ann Berchtold**, Art San Diego Fair Director

[Fred Briscoe](#) nominated by **Alexander Salazar**, Alexander Salazar Fine Art Director

[Isaias Crow](#) nominated by **Alessandra Moctezuma**, SD Mesa College Art Gallery Director

[Shay Davis](#) nominated by **Debra Poteet**, art collector

[Damian Gastellum](#) nominated by **Julio Orozco**, artist

Gretchen Mercedes nominated by **Lauren Buscemi**, art writer

[Han Nguyen](#) nominated by **Robert Pincus**, art critic

Jaime Ruiz Otis nominated by **Heriberto Yopez**, art writer

[Lee Puffer](#) nominated by **Gail Roberts**, artist

[Christopher Puzio](#) nominated by **David Adey**, artist

[Cheryl Sorg](#) nominated by **Patricia Frischer**, San Diego Visual Arts Network coordinator

Opening Reception: Monday, August 1, 2011 from 6 – 9 pm

Closing Reception: Saturday, August 27, 2011 from 6—9 pm

[Alexander Salazar Fine Art](#) 1040 7th Avenue, San Diego, CA 92101

Exhibition hours: Tue - Sat 11 - 6, Saturday and Sunday by appointment

For more info: [Patricia Frischer](#) 760.943.0148 [Alexander Salazar](#) 619.531.8669



[New Contemporaries IV: Emerging Artists nominated by SD Art Professionals at Alexander Salazar Fine Art](#)

The 2011 nominating committee, which changes yearly, consists of SD Art Prize recipients for the previous year, writers for the SD Art Prize Art Notes, Honorary Hosts and the SD Art Prize committee: ALL emerging artists in the SD region are eligible to be chosen by the established recipients each season including but not limited

to nominated artists in this and previous New Contemporaries exhibitions.

Alexander Salazar at Alexander Salazar Fine Art made the choice of works by these artists, working diligently to showcase each artist so they could be seen in the best possible light. The SD Art Prize is extremely grateful to him for his efforts on our behalf. We hope viewers support this exhibition not only with your attendance but with the purchase of the works by these up and coming creative talents.



The **SD ART PRIZE** is dedicated to the idea that the visual arts are a necessary and rewarding ingredient of any world-class city and a building block of the lifestyle of its residents. Conceived to promote and encourage dialogue, reflection and social interaction about San Diego's artistic and cultural life, this annual award honors artistic expression. The **SD ART PRIZE**, a cash prize with exhibition opportunities, spotlights established San Diego artists and emerging artists whose outstanding achievements in the field of Visual Arts merit the recognition.

[Award Recipients for 2006/2007](#)

Raul Guerrero with emerging artist **Yvonne Venegas**
Jean Lowe with emerging artist **Iana Quesnell**
Ernest Silva with emerging artist **May-ling Martinez**

[Award Recipients for 2007/2008](#)

Marcos Ramirez ERRE with emerging artist **Allison Wiese**
Roman De Salvo with emerging artist **Lael Corbin**
Eleanor Antfin with emerging artist **Pamela Jaeger**

[Award Recipients for 2009](#)

Kim MacConnel with emerging artist **Brian Dick**
Richard Allen Morris with emerging artist **Tom Driscoll**

[Award Recipients for 2010](#)

Gail Roberts with emerging artist **David Adey**
Einar and Jamex de la Torre with emerging artist **Julio Orozco**

[Award Recipients for 2011](#)

Jay S. Johnson with emerging artist **Adam Belt**
Rubén Ortiz-Torres with emerging artist **Tristan Shone**

THE Goals of the SD ART PRIZE, as presented by the San Diego Visual Arts Network, are to:

- Recognize and celebrate existing visual art accomplishments by spotlighting local artists.
- Create an exciting event that facilitates cross-pollination between cultural organizations and strengthens and invigorates the San Diego Visual Art Scene.
- Broaden the audience of the visual arts in San Diego by gaining national attention to the competition through a dedicated media campaign.
- Promote the vision of the future role that the visual arts will play in the San Diego community as lively, thriving, positive and empowering.
- Expand the infrastructure of spokespeople/art celebrities who can bring awareness to San Diego and perform as role models for our student artists.

[San Diego Visual Arts Network](#)

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Mely Barragán



The evolving theme in the art production of the first decade of the career of Mely Barragán has been her fascination with the image of women and of what is feminine. She began by figuring out some of her first aesthetic goals of portraying women in gender based situations. For example, she explored the women's role in history and contemporary life and personal, sexual and social relations like marriage and family traditions. She began to play with the idea of twisting the gender role by using the male figure as a decorative object just like the female figure has been used and abused. Barragán uses drawings and words to convert thoughts into ideas. She studied graphic design



and that commercial art process is reflected in her work. In her last series, *Golden Boy*, and a solo show titled *HeMan*, she confronted the viewer with over sexualized gestures of masculinity, at the same time approaching the gender issue in a comical way. Mely Barragán gives specific meanings to her images, but realizes that gender issues are different to everyone, so everyone can make their own conclusions defining the work.

nominated by [Einar and Jamex de la Torre](#), artists

It is interesting that an artist living in such a crazy city like Tijuana would choose to explore her mind instead of directly reacting to so much intensity around her, but I suppose it is partly a survival strategy. This is a strategy, nonetheless, that has served her very well as she has produced a wonderfully varied body of work that includes painting sculpture, mix media and installations that explore gender roles and emotions in her own vivid style.

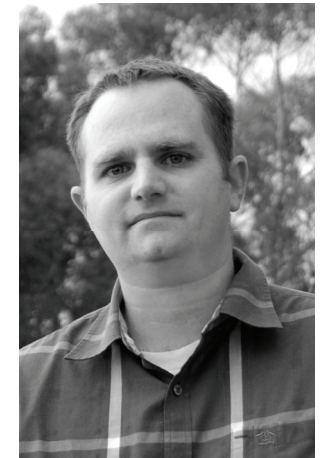
Adam Belt



Adam Belt works with physical manifestations of the unseen including the inherent properties of materials such as salt, ice and concrete, our interaction with the landscape and our wonder of the cosmos. Currently he is working with and documenting a small portable phenomenological installation. "A Thing is a Hole in a Thing it is Not" is comprised of two full-length mirrors with a lit wall in between. Experienced and documented outside at various locations during the naturally changing light of afternoon/evening

the viewer observes and experiences a heightened sense of time and the presence of the self. Adam Belt received his BFA from the University of San Diego and completed his MFA from Claremont Graduate University in 2001 and is now working as an artist and a professor in San Diego. His work is included in many local collections including the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, and the La Jolla Athenaeum Music and Arts Library. Adam has been published in *Leonardo*, the International Society for the Arts, Sciences and Technology magazine. His work has been reviewed in The San Diego Union Tribune, Art Week, Riviera and various other publications.

nominated by **Karen McGuire**, Director, [William D. Cannon Art Gallery](#)



One might observe two purposes in Adam Belt's work. The first is to pay homage to the nature. He does this by combining a reverence for the natural with an awareness of the gulf between the man-made and the environment. The second is to seek new expressions of materials, shape, density and form. I find Adam's work to be always interesting and fresh. When I was first introduced to his work, he was making a series of large drawings of man-made terrain dams. These exquisitely rendered, detailed drawings were in contradiction to the actual monumental structures that were his source inspiration. That interest in detail and respect for his craft are inherent in all his creations. Continually focused on the exploration and investigation of materials and technologies, in each new work he has the capacity to surprise us.

Susannah Bielak

Susannah Bielak combines fine craft and social questions. She intersperses drawing, printmaking, photography, painting, installation, and video in projects inspired by realities of everyday life, such as the rapport between natural disaster and interior life. Bielak received her MFA at UCSD. Her work has been exhibited, published, and collected nationally and internationally including by the Walker Art Center, International Print Center, Luis Adelantado Mexico, Minnesota Museum of American Art, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego,



New American Paintings, and Art Papers. She was recently named as San Diego's New Artist of the Year by the San Diego Fine Art Society.

nominated by **Ann Berchtold**, Director, [Art San Diego Fair](#)

Susy Bielak is a socially conscious artist with a strong intellectual curiosity. Her body of work to-date explores the experience of relationship, identity and displacement through the mastery of several different mediums. Because she chooses to vary mediums, Susy's art defies easy categorization. With remarkable virtuosity and sensitivity, she is able to relate her theme with great visual power – evoking a strong sense of connection to her audience. Because of this adaptability and curiosity, I find her work extremely interesting, and I look forward to what she will present next.



[Fred Briscoe](#)

Contemporary artists tend to extend their genre to examine current trends. Fred Briscoe designates his modern and contemporary examination of art into the basic style of absolute and original form. He achieves an excellent balance in the most difficult media - carved stone. To recognize great art one must not ignore the process. Fred Briscoe is a sculptor that understands stone and is able to mold it into works of art that defend themselves.



nominated by **Alexander Salazar**, Director,
[Alexander Salazar Fine Art](#)

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Isaias Crow



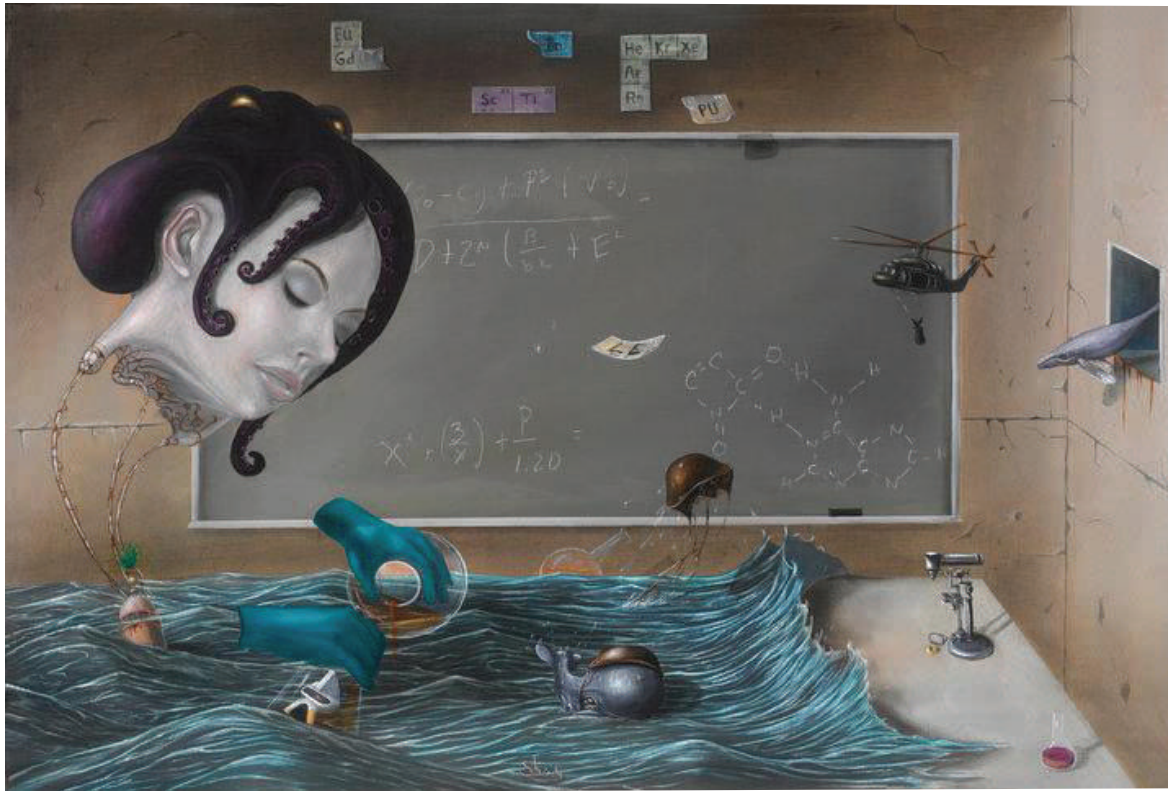
Gibran Isaias Lopez also known as Isaias Crow was born and raised in the border towns of El Paso, TX and Ciudad Juarez, MX. At an early age, seeing his father paint and being intrigued by the lines and colors he created mindlessly, Crow began to explore the tools of pencils and brushes. At 13 years of age Crow branched off from traditional mediums to explore the sub-culture of graffiti art. This is when he chose his artist name "Crow". At 17 years of age, learning that he was to be a father, Crow went to Albuquerque, NM to work in construction and remodeling of homes instead completing his plan, which was to go to art school. Later, when he was 25 years old Isaias Crow moved to San Diego, CA to begin anew and attend art school, where he received a Bachelors in Media Arts and Animation. Now, Crow works intuitively and technically with a variety of mediums, including; acrylic, oil, and spray paint on wood as the sculptural and painting surface. Most of these techniques he offers in his community workshops and programs through-

nominated by **Alessandra Moctezuma**,
Director, [SD Mesa College Art Gallery](#)

Like throwing a stone into a mirror, Isaias Crow punches through the visual ground, shards of iridescent colors radiating from several points. Combining brushes with spray paint Crow emerges from a tradition of graffiti art. In his murals he de-constructs the pictorial space inserting dynamic lines and silhouetted images with a passion for cubistic perspective and elegant volumetric shading. Crow incorporates digital techniques to the development of his artwork. Manipulating with transparent layering and creating prismatic effects, he makes the works explode, disintegrate and then fuse together again. Through his Prizm Process and ongoing similar projects, he has created community engagement painting murals and teaching life skills through art. An inspiration for young artists, he shows that with spray paint you can make an indelible mark.



Shay Davis



Shay Davis began his art career at age 5, but it is still a surprise to find a sense of carefree imagination combined with the more mature strength of his drawing and painting skills pervading all of his works. A sense of playfulness from Davis's life as a football star, surfer, and free spirit, is linked with his own internal challenges in the real world. His obsession with super heroes and fantasy stimuli give the work a powerful emotional content. Davis received a Fine arts Degree from the University of Colorado. He has won numerous awards



including gold medal in the prestigious New York Art show in 1992. His original works grace the homes of VIPs such as actress Halle Berry and Jayne Seymour, athletes such as Tony Hawk, Bill Garnett, and Koy Detmer, and music legend Gregg Allman. Shay resides in San Diego, CA.

nominated by **Debra Poteet**, art collector

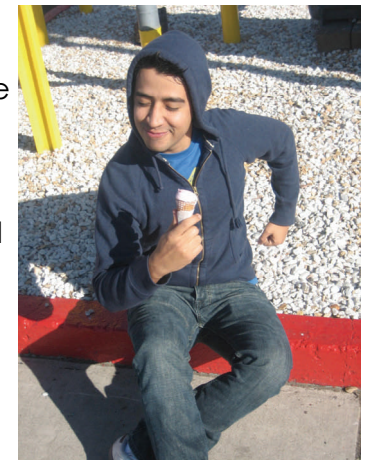
Shay Davis is an artist out of the low brow hot rod culture that challenges the viewer and spits in their eye at the same time. His dark and mysterious cacophony of images morph together to create interesting and provocative narratives. He brings in pop culture imagery with fantasy and gaming icons in his spinning vortex of composition. While the style is not unique his approach is. I nominated Shay because he is the type of artist that makes you want to see what he is working on next.



Damian Gastellum

Damian Gastellum, (b. Tijuana 1981) developed his talents during his first years of racing between Tijuana and San Diego. His work has matured and he has now participated in several group and individual exhibitions, presenting his photographic work. He has received wide press here and abroad. In 2005, he was awarded a degree in Communication and Publicity from the CUT University of Tijuana. Immediately he undertook his first project, *Near the Distant Thing* for an exhibition in San Diego. Gastellum's photographic style is marked by the high level of production and

detail. For the exhibition *Soul as a Child* in Tijuana B.C and Mexicali B.C., his childlike soul emerges and is translated into a style, which reaffirms his position within the field of the photograph. He is a Becano winner of FOECA (state fund for culture and art), and also winner of several other photography awards. Other exhibitions by Daniam Gastellum include: *The Glory of Mantra*, Tijuana B.C.



nominated by Julio Orozco, artist



Gretchen Mercedes

Gretchen Mercedes (b. Oregon) was raised in Taipei, Taiwan and Tasmania, Australia and studied her MFA at UCSD/UCLA and BVA at the University of South Australia. Gretchen's practice has evolved from living and working in flux. Her work reflects an attraction to the nautical, aviation, strange places, chance encounters, outsiders, and myth. For the past three years, Gretchen has been traveling between Australia, Mexico and USA to work with a big game hunter, Alaskan taxidermist, rodeo cowboy's, the 'Big Game' dioramas of NY and LA's Natural History Museums, in-air on 'spotting' planes and off-shore on Pacific and Southern Ocean 'Death' ships. She chooses aspects of these cultures to explore man's relationship with beast, machine and death. Individual characters are detailed in narratives; while the perverse, dynamic and often deadly relationships between human, animal and machine are actively investigated and presented in various media formats including photography, video and sound. Her



photographic and video work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions in the USA and Australia, including; MCASD, University Art Gallery UCSD; in LA at Wight Gallery UCLA, LACE, Compact Space, Luis de Jesus; in NY at Robert Steele Gallery; and in Australia at the National Museum of Australia, Australian Film Commission, Australian Centre of Photography, Sherman Galleries, Helen Gory Gallery, and CACSA.

nominated by **Lauren Buscemi**, art writer

Gretchen Mercedes is a fearless adventurer who produces work at the intersection of nature and technology. Taken from helicopters and ships off remote coasts, her raw films and photographs of the ocean are both serene and menacing. They capture a sense of escape, but also the overwhelming vastness and isolation of the sea. Tapping into the sublime, these films and photographs navigate between a romantic and stark 21st century worldview.



Han Nguyen

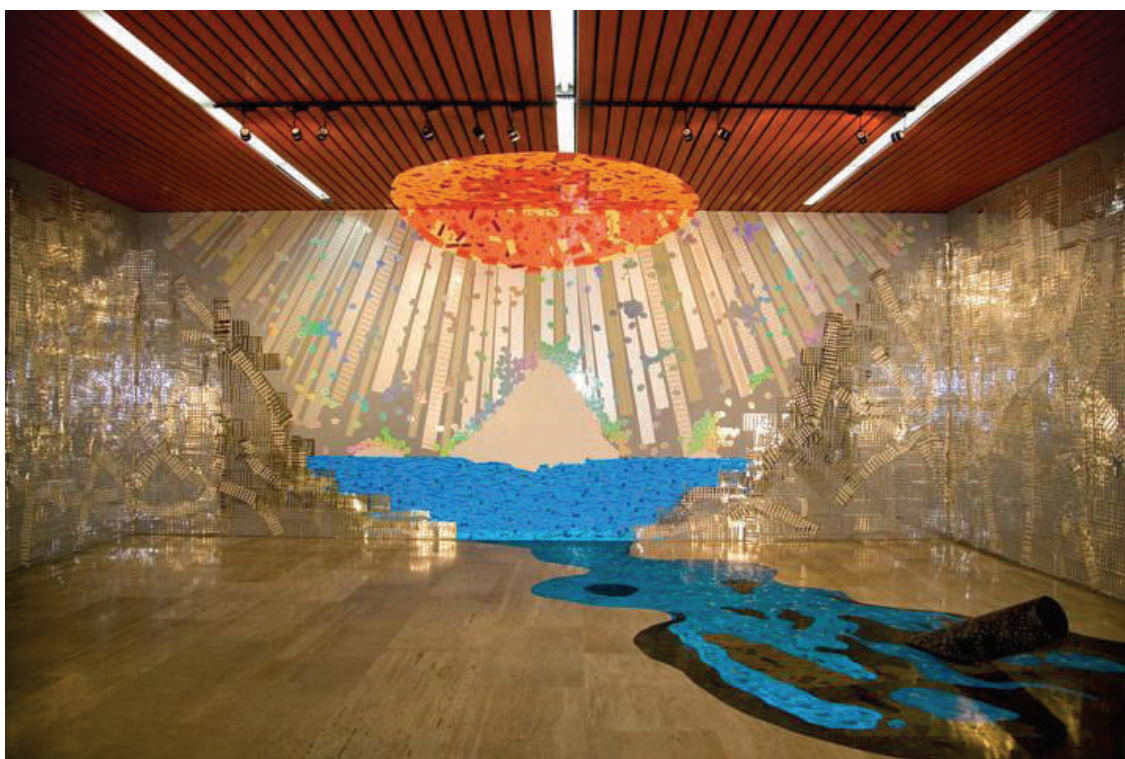
Han Nguyen moved to the United States from Vietnam in 1975. It was in California that he first discovered his love for photography. Created mostly in the studio Han creates delicate studies of himself using a pinhole camera, as part of his ongoing series *Gesture*. Body parts emerge out of darkness in these emotional large-scale photographs toned with selenium and sepia, to give the images an antique cast. Han's photographs are represented in many collections throughout the US.



nominated by **Robert Pincus**, art critic and Senior Institutional Giving Manager, [MCASD](#)

Han Nguyen clearly believes in the power of photography to transform objects and places in ways that both delight and surprise the viewer. Who would, think, before viewing his images, that a piece of wood could look so singular, as if were some equivalent of a human subject. Or, that a deliberately crude building in clay could become so dignified, so elegant.

He has been apt to change subjects. He photographs pigmented water in one series; shadowy landscapes in another. The constant is his great eye for composition, his ability to infuse any subject with a poetic atmosphere and an unconventional sense of the beautiful.



Jaime Ruiz Otis

Jaime Ruiz Otis (b. 1976, Mexicali, BC) from 1997 to 2004 has studied etching with Jan Hendrix and Luis Lopez Losa, painting with Sergio Hernández, engraving with Karla Rippey, assemblage with Carlos Zerpa, stone carving with Antonio Nava, metal sculpture with Paul Nevin, conceptual wood sculpture with Kiyoto Ota, handmade paper with Pia Seiersen, encaustic with Alberto Castro Leñero, performance art with Felipe Ehrenberg and, installation art with Felipe Ehrenberg. Imagine all those mediums used at once and you have something of the wonder of Otis's art world. The materials he uses are gathered from industrial waste:



toners, the gold foil, fabrics odds and ends. He sees and comments on the abuse and consumption that challenges our environment. He recycles, abstracts, minimalizes and adds variations of things both pre-Hispanic and galactic. He has had solo shows including *Cerca Series*: San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego State University, New York, Madrid, Spain, and Mexico and been part of group exhibitions as far away as Moscow in Russia, Cuenca in Ecuador and Beijing in China. Jaime Ruiz Otis's talent has landed his work in private collections in Mexico City, L.A., San Francisco, New York, Spain, Denmark and won him numerous awards and grants.

nominated by **Heriberto Yopez**, art writer

Lee Puffer

An interdisciplinary artist, Lee Puffer has a thriving studio practice in La Mesa, CA where she creates life-sized figurative and/or kinetic sculpture and installation work. Her sculpture offers cultural critique through personal and often controversial imagery with irony and humor. Puffer's ongoing research is in the human creative process as well as the artists' role in our contemporary culture. Lee Puffer holds an MFA from San Diego State University and a BFA from Massachusetts College of Art. She has taught art at SDSU, MassArt, Grossmont College, and Coronado Adult School to individuals of all ages and abilities.



nominated by Gail Roberts, artist

Lee Puffer is my emerging artist nomination for several reasons. There are many deserving artists in the San Diego region, but Lee's name immediately came to mind. Since completing her MFA at SDSU, she has sustained her sense of passion and conviction. Her new ceramic sculptures are even more emotionally wrenching and simultaneously infused with brash humor and irony. She lays bare her candid and poignant observations about her personal daily struggles with life's obstacles, but the image in the mirror can be anyone's reflection. I greatly admire her capacities as an artist and communicator and look forward with anticipation to her future work.

Christopher Puzio

Christopher Puzio was born in Paterson, NJ in 1971. As a young man he apprenticed in his father's architectural firm and went on to earn a B. Arch from Boston Architectural College in 1996. He worked for several years thereafter as assistant to sound & light artist Christopher Janney on projects for Dia Art Foundation, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and Miami International Airport. During this period he developed an expertise in metalwork and fabrication which led him to pursue graduate studies at Cranbrook Academy of Art, where he received a M. Arch in 2002. He co-founded Spacecraft Gallery for contemporary art after relocating to San Diego in 2003. In addition he has completed several large-scale art and architecture projects throughout the region. As an educator, Puzio is faculty at Woodbury University San Diego where he directs the school's renowned design-build studio and coordinates shop curriculum. Christopher Puzio is a licensed builder and frequent lecturer on the topic of digital fabrication and design technology. His work has been exhibited in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Miami, Detroit, Boston and most recently in the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego's *Here Not There: San Diego Art Now*.



nominated by David Adey, artist

Chris Puzio is a master metal fabricator and a sculptor's sculptor. He embraces digital fabrication processes as a means to inform his work, bringing a contemporary point of view to metal sculpture. Chris is interested in building systems and structural algorithms based on naturally occurring geometric patterns. His exploration into the potential of complex structures through the introduction of random components is fascinating and inspiring. He always brings a fresh approach to the expression of form and composition and I find his work elegant and visually powerful. At first glance, his sculptures are often deceptively simple, but after further study and contemplation, their complexity and visual poetry is revealed.

Cheryl Sorg

Cheryl Sorg's work has been exhibited in numerous galleries and museums, including WorkSpace in NYC, the Photographic Resource Center at Boston University, MoPA in San Diego, the Long Beach Museum of Art, the Torrance Art Museum and Eric Phleger Gallery. Awards include most notably a MacDowell Colony Fellowship. Her work is included in the Allan Chasanoff Bookworks Collection in NYC, and is referenced in the book *A Companion to Herman Melville*. Cheryl received her BFA from the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston in 1999, and now lives in Leucadia, California with her husband Xavier and their children Hugo and Esmé.



nominated by **Patricia Frischer**, Coordinator
[San Diego Visual Arts Network](#)

Cheryl Sorg has invented a new way of portraying her subject and thus herself. The interview is as important as the construction process where she take verbal passages from literary references to recreate their unique fingerprint. I was drawn to the beauty of the compositions and think this is an artist to watch as she threads her way into our DNA.



[San Diego Visual Arts Network](#)

SDVAN is a database of information produced to improve the clarity, accuracy and sophistication of discourse about San Diego's artistic and cultural life and is dedicated to the idea that the Visual Arts are a vital part of the health of our city. SDVAN hosts a free interactive directory (over 1600 resources listed) and an events calendar covering all San Diego regions including Baja Norte with an opportunity section, gossip column and the SmART Collector feature to help take the mystery out of buying art. SDVAN is the proud non-profit sponsor of the SD Art Prize. This is the only site designed exclusively for the San Diego region and the Visual Arts and is one of the most technically advanced sites of this kind in the country. SDVAN currently get 3-4000 unique visitors per month and over one million hits a year.



During the course of the exhibition, NCIV artists will be teaching workshops arranged by [It's All About the Kids](#) at Alexander Salazar Fine Art every Tuesday in August, 2011.

[Alexander Salazar Fine Art](#)

Fine Art Salon featuring the works of national and international mid-career and emerging artists, Alexander Salazar Fine Art encourages the appreciation and understanding of art and its vital role in our community through many exhibitions, artists lectures, community event sponsorships and charity events. Alexander Salazar continues to build museum quality private, corporate and celebrity collections worldwide.

[San Diego Visual Arts Network](#)

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[Tristan Shone](#)

New Contemporaries II: [David Adey](#),
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[Tara Smith](#), [Matt Stallings](#), [K.V. Tomney](#), [Jen Trute](#),
[Gustabo Velasquez](#), [Yuransky](#)

New Contemporaries III: [Greg Boudreau](#), [Kelsey Brookes](#),
[Stephen Curry](#), [Steve Gibson](#),
[Brian Goeltzenleuchter](#), [Wendell M. Kling](#),
[Heather Gwen Martin](#), [Robert Nelson](#), [Julio Orozco](#),
[Allison Renshaw](#), [Leshia Maria Rodriguez](#),
[James Soe Nyun](#), [Stephen Tompkins](#)

ART SAN DIEGO | 2010
Contemporary Art Fair | SEPT 2-5

[Art San Diego Contemporary Art Fair](#)

Art San Diego has designated the San Diego Art Prize as its non-profit beneficiary for specified events and will be showcasing the SD Art Prize recipients each fall.



ATHENAEUM
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[The Athenaeum Music and Arts Library](#)

in La Jolla showcases the recipients of the SD Art Prize each spring.