
THE SAN DIEGO VISUAL ARTS NETWORK

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A+ Art Blog – December 2007

Burnished by Fire: stories of the 2007 SD Firestorm

We chose to leave our home during the fires in October to avoid the ash, soot and bad air quality. We left in a hurry and it felt like we were running for our lives, dodging smoke plumes to the left and right as we made our way through north county east to Palm Springs. My husband grabbed the computers and I grabbed a small sack of sculptures that I was working on. A few clothes, some bottled water and we were off. Three hours later we were the lucky ones having martinis under clear skies. We came home a week later and were relieved to find our home much as we had left it. We wish everyone had been spared. But Mother Nature had other plans.

[Madelynn Engle](#) lost her home and studio in Fallbrook this October and she is allowing us to link her complete story [here](#) to be an inspiration to other artists and fire victims. Our thanks to this brave lady. Here is an abridged version of her current story.

"Dear family and friends... Ground zero is almost utter devastation...there is a peaceful quiet that falls over a place that has been burned to the ground...no familiar birds, no tick of a clock or hum of the fridge, no ring of a phone. It occurs to me what a clean break with the past a fire is. Unlike the floods I have experienced where often there are things to be salvaged, dried out, sprayed and cleaned for mildew...there is only a powder of ash everywhere you look. No decisions to make, just gone. Even the new cement and stone obelisks are reduced to ash, the glass and porcelain portions melted and shriveled...I didn't know glass would do that. The huge glass table that held so many, many hours of sharing and camaraderie is powder and its granite pedestals fragile dust. Four of the firemen who fought the fire at our home came on site while we were there. They said the fire raged at about 2000 degrees, exploding boulders and setting palm trees off like Roman candles. It was so hot that it blew the propane tank high up into the sky, releasing the gas as it ascended. The firemen said it sounded like a huge freight train. It landed in our neighbor front yard, cutting the fire hose when it came down, so the fire fighters had to abandon their mission and retreat. The hose is still snaked across the front drive, flattened and hollow like a long shed skin.

So we are now in the queues at the Disaster Center, gathering information and permits for a trailer on the burn site, FEMA info, the Red Cross...there is even help for animals there. Ginger and her friends have sent a box of fresh clothes for me, and Grant for Jerry. There is no energy or time for shopping these days...I go to the Disaster Center early and leave about 6:30 at night. I am learning about the application process for everything and making new friends at the Disaster Center every day.

I put out word that I am looking for a barn in which to re-establish my studio for the next year, and within a day, our wonderful tennis buddy Knut Husby, took me out to see the great barn he has, and he is making it available...I should be back to work by the end of the month. And there is a lovely room (Knut's private painting studio) close by with a sofa and desk, so I can keep Jerry and Doc with me while I work. Then today I received a call from our neighbor Ellie. Her friend has a 30' RV that she wants to loan us for the next year. I have already pulled the permit and plans for the power pole on our site, so we will move it onto the property after we finish the demolition. It is our hope to rebuild something very simple next year. These plans may change as the month's progress, but the path is opening for our recovery from the fire.

I once knew a wise old woman who lived on her farm on the river outside of St. Charles, Missouri, where I lived. We had a hunting lease on her land and we saw her often. She had lived through the Depression

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and was still plowing her own land at 78. When I was going through a rough patch during my divorce in 1977, she came to have supper with the children and me...and told me: "If there is ever anything you ever need that you do not have, then just come to me...and I will show you how to live without it!" I have used her old red enamel pots and pans as water bowls in my studio for over thirty years now...they are melted into the remains on Poppy Lane...surely a reminder of her wisdom for what is a much lightened load into this next chapter of life." Madelynn Engle

Please note: "Out of the Ashes" is a gathering of Jerry and Madelynn's friends to turn the page from fire to the holidays and help with re-stocking of Madelynn's temporary studio with Burnt Offerings on Sunday, Dec 2, 11:00 am - 3:00 pm at the upper burn site, 3770 Poppy Lane, Fallbrook, Ca 92028 760.731.3158. Burnt Offerings include tools, resource materials, gift cards etc. Madelynn adds, "We accept with gratitude the abundance of thoughtful and generous help that has been bringing us Out of the Ashes in the days since the wildfires that took everything but our spirit and the sacred center of The Woods...please place your name, e-mail, phone number, address on or in anything you bring or send, and a story if there is one that goes with an object, as we will want to acknowledge your thoughtfulness and participation in our recovery from the fire. When you are in my life, you are in my art....The obelisk form has always celebrated the story of a battle won, the immortality of a heritage passed on...look for yourselves in the obelisks of "Burnt Offerings" in 2008!"

Here is a graphic account from [Michael Campbell](#), the professional photographer, from his experiences in the Cedars Fires of 2003. He just produced [Tested by Fire](#) with images of Madelynn, her husband Jerry, and her studio and home.

"The Cedar fire of 2003 started at midnight with sustained wind speeds 40 to 60 mph. with gusts up to 115 mph. Basically it's like a hot dry hurricane. The air temperature rises to over 100 F degrees. The fire produces flaming embers which fly from mountain to mountain, so the fire jumps with ease over ten lane freeways, lakes and valleys. The fire front can move at 75 mph across areas of country. In the residential area of Scripps Ranch, it went raging through neighborhoods at 25 mph from house to house as I well remember running for my life from my burning house. House and trees do not catch fire and burn as in a normal fire situation they explode and the fire creates its own hurricane force wind associated with tornados of fire and smoke shooting hundreds of feet high. I remember running as palm trees literally exploded around me. It is hard to breath as the oxygen is sucked out of the atmosphere and the smell of burning materials is choking. The air was so thick with smoke and dust I could barely see 30 feet through it. As I ran the 200 meters at a personal record speed down our road, I felt any moment my heart was going to give out, it was beating so fast. Another name for the wind is Satana meaning Satan in Spanish and it certainly felt to me, that Sunday morning in October 2003 that it was blowing straight from the gates of hell."

Our hearts go out to **Joanna Bigfeather** who was burned out in the recent fires. This amazing woman was still able to put together the **Annual Art and Photography Faculty Exhibition** at [Palomar College Boehm Gallery](#) just delaying the opening for a short time. The show runs until Dec 12 and is free and open to the public. Check out their website or our [art schools, colleges and universities with art spaces](#) feature to see times and parking and driving instructions. Her partner James Luna, Native American performance artist, received the distinguished artist award at the Native Art Invitational in Indianapolis. Obviously a dynamic couple to watch. Joanna and James lives on the La Jolla Reservation in Pauma Valley, and 95% of La Jolla Reservation burned this year.

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The friends of James and Joanna have established the Phoenix Fund to aid in helping them raise their home from the ashes of the fires. James went to town to fill his truck with gas in case of the need for evacuation and returned to his home. That night he and Joanna retired for the night and while concerned, fatigue overtook them and they fell into a deep sleep. In the middle of the night they were suddenly awakened by James' brother pounding on the window. The winds had shifted and the reservation was burning. James and Joanna fled their home and then with the rest of their community waited uncertainly for days to learn what damages they had sustained from the fire.

When they were allowed to return to the reservation they discovered that their home had burned to the ground. Everything inside had been consumed by the fire, leaving their belongings in ashes. Both James and Joanna were fine and his family had escaped the fire. He says he feels blessed because the fire somehow spared both his art studio and his tractor. Unfortunately, their home was a complete loss. This is particularly devastating as the reservation is on federal land and so they have no insurance. The Red Cross, FEMA and the Governor have expressed their intention to aid those displaced, but they are deluged with applications for funds and there is no way to tell when and how much aid will be available.

Lost were the many personal mementos, the vast library of art books accumulated over many years, Joanna's slide archive encompassing the work of thousands of Native artists as well as those of her own. If you would like to help please send your contributions to Circuit Network (James Luna's management organization, a non-profit arts service) at 2940 16th Street, San Francisco, CA 94103. You can make your checks payable to James Luna or if you would like to have your donation be tax deductible, make the check payable to Circuit Network. Please feel free to circulate this information to anyone it would be of interest to and if you would like more information on [James Luna](#) check out his web site.

[Cherrie La Porte Cohen](#) misses the giant oak trees now burned to cinders that used to give shade below the Glass Ranch in Del Dios that she shares with husband [Garry Cohen](#), but their wonderful home and studios were spared. She and Garry have made glass hearts rolled in the ash of those trees and they are busy giving them to fire victim, firefighters and supporters and well as selling them for charity. These [Healing Hearts](#) are such a worthy symbol of the creative future which will pull our community together.

A group in Long Beach called [The Roof Tile Project](#) is starting to take the bits and pieces of salvaged mementos and fuse them into an art work for the family which has lost so much. They are asking those fire victims to Save the Shards. It would be wonderful for them to have a branch in the San Diego area.....volunteers anyone?

Remember that you can donate to [Synergy Arts Foundation](#) which benefits [SD-EASL](#), the **Emergency Artists Support League** and your donation goes directly to the artists in need in San Diego.

The What and the How and the Wow

Sometimes one of the most immediate questions that is raised when one views a work of art is "How did they do that?" This often happens when what [Robert Pincus](#) describes as the "wow" element is present. The "wow" is usually heard when the look of a work is exciting, unique and/or mysterious. A great example of this is the present work

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by Doris Salcedo, *Shibboleth*, at the [Tate Modern](#) in London which is a gash in the floor of the Turbine Hall resembling the crack made by an earthquake. Not necessarily a subtle characteristic, the “wow” draws us in and hopefully we stay long enough to figure out the “what”.

In that tradition, **Robert Irwin** wants to see and make art that “...knocks my socks off and bowls me over”. I was able to hear Irwin at a media preview for **Primaries And Secondaries** at [MCASD Downtown](#), (through Feb 23 -Jacobs Building and through April 13 -1001 Kettner) and found him to be, at 79 years young, an enormous presence in the art world of San Diego who brings an international reputation to the county. His view of art is as a “continuous envelope” which contributes to society in the form of a non-ending re-examination of the world. For him the “what” is the knowledge he gains from intense observation. The “how” is a sensibility developed over the years which gives him the ability to make decisions about the experiences he produces. He adds that integral part of the formula which is the “who” and this is the viewer. His works only fulfill their destiny when the viewer has a participatory experience. He prizes feelings and experience and believes them to be equal to intellect.

Irwin calls most public art “site adjusted” instead of site specific when it is almost an after thought to fit into a vacant spot in the architecture. He prefers the term “site conditional” where the site actually demands an art solution. This is certainly true of the Getty where he transformed a vacant plot into a garden of delights. In SD you can see three enormous oceans of color, “Who’s Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue” as well as the new amazing installation of Untitled Disk with no artificial light making this subtle piece even more magic. It is not surprising that Irwin’s knowledge of the MCASD architecture informs every choice of the installation as he was a consultant on the new buildings.

You need to go and experience these works on your own with no interruptions. Irwin got out of his studio to make his leap from the limitations of painter to graduate to “Wow” artist. It would not surprise me if he gets out of the museum from now on as he continues his quest.

This show was made possible by the friends of Charles and Tanya Brandes who gifted support for the Irwin exhibition as a group to celebrate the couples anniversary this year. What a terrific tradition to start in our city and we say bravo to them. One date to save for 2008: Thursday, February 21, 7 PM, MCASD La Jolla, Robert Irwin: MCASD/UCSD Russell Lecturer 2008. In the spirit of letting the artist speak for himself, we found a page of his quotes from the [Dia Art Foundation](#). Enjoy.

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In the previous [Art Resource Focus](#) about digital art, [Digital Who Done It](#), we noted that digital artists themselves are often so involved with the process of creation that they neglect to discuss the “what” of their work. We have three shows on view in SD right now which contain video digital art; [The Art of Digital Show](#) at the Lyceum curated by Steven Churchill and juried by [Neal Benezra](#), director of the SF MOMA until Nov 11, Wendy Richmond’s [“Surreptitious Cellphones”](#) at [MOPA](#) until Jan 6 and [Animated Painting](#) showing at the [San Diego Museum of Art](#) until Jan 13, 2008.

Animated Painting features 25 cinematic works by 14 international contemporary artists and is one exhibition where it is helpful to read the catalog notes by media theorist Lev Manovic. I especially like his phrase “deep remixability” and his description of digital as a metamedium. His explanation of the relationship between the developments in architecture which are made possible by the inventions of digital animation was a revelation. This is due, in part, to the focus on continuous change made possible by advanced production technology.

Betti-Sue Hertz curated works into this show from artists who either used the animation technique with hand drawn or painted images or used it with live action source material. In both instances, the placing of these works in a museum elevates the genre of animation in the “high” art category. Some of the works are aggressive and violent, others reflective and introspective but all the works have a point of view and therefore a “what”.

Highlights of Animated Painting include; computer animated figures by Julian Opie that are displayed outside of the Museum, the Barnstormers who created a 3-d projection of a “Motion Bard” being un-painted with graffiti, Ann Lislegaard amazing cad software designed rooms which read simultaneously as painting and architecture, and many viewers’ favorite “Pink Dot” by Takeshi Murata where Rambo takes a psychedelic acid trip. Animated Painting also showcases some audio soundscapes and its very clever installation manages to honor each art piece while the viewer can see and hear glimpses of more than one work at a time.

I was sad to miss the opening festivities of the beginning of the second season of the [SD Art Prize](#) but privileged to meet the artists. **Marcos Ramirez ERRE** was trained formally as a lawyer but rejected the system of his native country. Instead to the dismay of his family, he moved to SD and became a construction worker. But the need to take responsibility for his community, which motivated his original career choice, surfaced. He became an artist and took the experience he had gained in construction, both manual and emotional to inform his art. He is a lucky man to have combined all his

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callings in such a well respected and widely appreciated career. Long may ERRE look hard at all of us and reflect what he sees so insightfully.

Allison Wiese has very determinedly chosen San Diego as her home. She also "looked hard" to choose a graduate school and she admits that UCSD was too perfect of a match to pass up even though her roots are on the east coast. She has made very sound choices about all the jobs she took throughout the country to support herself during her schooling and artist residencies and each one added a practical dimension not only for her art but for what she now can bring to her new position as a tenure track professor at USD. Emerging she may be, but a better prepared artist you will not find.

You can view the works of both of these artists until mid-January at the [L Street Gallery](#) 628 L St. SD 92010 across from the Omni Hotel.

A+Art Blog

Careerist Artist

There is a new book *The Most arrogant Man in France: Gustave Courbet and the Nineteenth Century Media Culture* by Petra ten-Doesschate Chu reviewed in the July 30th issue of New Yorker magazine by Peter Schjeldahl.

The subject of this book, Gustave Courbet, is an artist I studied in my art history classes in the late 1960's. My not particularly inspired teachers during my undergraduate days at Washington University were more concerned with slide identification than the cult of the artists' personality. They were dry courses but gave me a good basis of information about composition, technique and historical sequence. It did little to help me when I got my first job as a gallery assistant in a London in 1972. I was then being groomed to learn how to market art in the traditional 20th century mode.

Let's go back to the 1840s. There was no gallery system and most artists showed their work in a juried salon setting where 1000s of works were displayed. That reminds me very much of the situation in San Diego currently where we have over 100 visual arts associations that conduct juried shows as well as membership exhibitions. Courbet, born in 1819, was an established artist and well accepted into the juried system. But by the 1860s he still saw the other artists as competition to the relatively few cognoscenti who were buyers. He had a dilemma similar to one a current day artist faces in San Diego with few galleries and not enough awareness by the general public of the value of art.

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Courbet turned to the new “journalist” rage of his time. Everyone wanted to be a writer and like Warhol’s 15 minutes of fame, they recorded their lives hoping for an immortality of sorts. Courbet turned himself into a character physically by dressing and acting the role of the bohemian and artistically by challenging the accepted morays. Some say his work became pornographic (at least for the times) even though we see Manet soon afterwards creating much more risqué works. Of course he was lucky to have the great Baudelaire to boast his exposure.

Courbet is now known as the first careerist artist. Chi says of Courbet, “(He) opened a perspective on a new culture in the art world in which the public’s approval was valued higher than that of the government or an official elite, and money was seen as a more legitimate gauge of artistic success than official honors.” This raises all sorts of concerns especially about Courbet selling out for the sake of sales. He certainly came a cropper in the end, selling romantic landscapes to tourist as a Swiss exile and dying in 1877 of an over indulgence of alcohol.

But I rather think there is a lesson here for us. Courbet changed the way art was marketed forever. As we see the Internet expanding and offering a universal blogging platform, we are suddenly on the cusp of a new journalistic explosion. We also see the cult of the artist as bohemian resurfacing (some say it never left) as artists have to work ever harder to rise above the masses of creative talent to be seen.

I would like to end with a quote Peter Schjeldahl found and used from Linda Nochlin’s book *Realism* from the philosopher Hegel: “Art digs an abyss between the appearance and illusion of this bad and perishable world, on the one hand, and the true content of events on the other, to reclothe these events and phenomena with a higher reality, born of the mind.” This sets the challenge of great art that is popular. Ever an optimist, I have faith in our artists to continue to produce work that stimulates even if it does sell.

Non-Profit is not a Free Ride

Independent Tax-exempt status for SDVAN

Up until the fall of 2006, the San Diego Visual Arts Network used a fiscal agent to assure it tax-exempt status for donation solicitation. In the summer of that same year, the tax law changed making that arrangement impossible. With a grant pending to finance the SD Art Prize, we took steps to obtain our own 501 (c) 3 status. Over **200 hours of work** later, we are please to announce that we now have our own federal

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letter of determination granting us tax-exempt status. We worked with the [Synergy Art Foundation](#) and formed the San Diego Synergy Arts Network. Both SDVAN and SAF work separately but we now share a board of directors and by laws as well as incorporation documents. We file joint tax returns and look forward to a long and successful partnership. Synergy Art Foundation concentrates on Arts Education and granting funds to artists and arts organizations in need. We find this a perfect compliment to the services we render with our directory and events calendar, education of art patrons and recognition awards.

Donors to the site will not be affected in any way, but we are happy to say that we no longer have to pay a commission on donation to a fiscal agent and that we now can earn interest on money in the SDVAN bank account. Our thanks go particularly to Naomi Nussbaum for her support in this process. All services on SDVAN will remain free to all. We do encourage your donations and depend on your support to keep the site running and to fund our projects. You can [donate now](#) either on line or by check. Please take a look at our list of [SDVAN supporters](#).

SDMA Giverny Exhibition

How very interesting that we are privileged to have the only North American showing of the [Giverny Impressionist](#) painting at the SDMA and this become clear when you realize that both Derrick Cartwright, director and Scott Atkinson, curator spent considerable time employed at the Musee d'Art Americain Giverny in Normandy. We are indeed fortunate to have this connection and two men to give us such insight into this interesting period in art history. Monet landed in Giverny in 1883 and so many artists had arrived by 1885 that he had to shut his doors to visitors. Over 450 painted in the area over the next 30 years. This exhibition tracks those years and brings us works from all over Europe. But how especially interesting to see the 12 works from San Diego, which do us proud and are notes by slightly darker wall labels. Go see the show and indulge in a range of work which is undeniable beautiful but also educate your eye to the finer comparisons of this selection of works.

SDMA Alexandre Arrechea

The [Contemporary Links](#) series at SDMA continues with its fifth installment, featuring Cuban artist Alexandre Arrechea. The series invites artists to choose works from the museum collection as inspirations. The works by Arrechea are about security systems and surveillance in museums and includes a large-scale sculpture of an model of an arena with the exits replaces with live video broadcast

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from various places in the SDMA. But the show starts with a wonderful photomural of our of the museum guards superimposed on a blow up of a section of a Diego Riviera drawing. Reading the well laid out and free brochure that goes with the exhibition called Scalpel and Cotton is essential to get full mean from the this art. I especially enjoyed the large corncob inspired drawing with its camera lens embellishments.

Letter to the Editor re: *Public Art Put on Hold* by Maureen Magee published in the Union Tribune

Catherine Sass is fighting the good fight. The public work at the Port is fun and colorful and it is THERE . Let's face it, for the budget the Port has they can't buy one fabulous world-class work because it would cost the whole budget. Trying to bring work of quality to the city is important. When Chicago's Picasso was unveiled people hated it and called it big bird. Public art has a maturation time that no other art has and we need to support the Catherine Sass' of the world who do everything they can under difficult conditions.

The [Urban Trees](#) project, which we all agree might have a range of qualities, has brought further commission for many of the sculptors and that was due to this vital exposure. A ripple effect has occurred and more people are able to see those works and create even more sales for these artists. The Port's priming of the pump with grants made to artists has helped cause this economic boom, which in turn is good for everyone in the visual arts and the city.

Not only sales are affected but also as the article in question shows, clearly a public dialogue and a public forum are encouraged. Participation by these artists in the scenery of the city validates the role art has on the street. These are primary issues and extremely important. We know a photographer who loves to take photos of the tourists taking photos of the kids by the urban trees. Just take a look at these photos and you will see why we need more photos to the editor than whining articles. written by [Joan Seifried](#) and edited by [Patricia Frischer](#)

A+ Art Blog for June 2007: Crowd Control at our Museums by Patricia Frischer

In 1999, **Jackie and Rea Axline** gave \$30 million to both the [SDMA](#) and the [MOCA](#) enabling both of our major institutions to survive and flourish at least on a higher economic level. This year the SDMA Axline lecture was given by Adam Gopnik the author who has previously written art essays (New Yorker magazine) and is a sometime

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art curator but is probably better known for his essays and books about everyday life. He tackled the subject of the role of the Museum past, present and future.

I was pleased to attend the Axline lecture where Mr. Gopnik raised more questions than he gave answers. Museums are, of course, depositories of historical artworks. In the past people attended museums in hushed reverence and were expected to have an almost religious experience communing with objects hopefully of great quality selected by learned fellows. In the sixties this changed as museums became social meeting places and museum staff worked to build attendance with blockbuster exhibitions. Attendance at museums in general has never been higher. So much so that some like Adam Gopnik worry about the "Museum as Mall" entertainment. He spoke of making the art experience more pure again by removing labels, eliminating computer information in the galleries and restricting audio support programs. But he did not address issues of converting younger generations of museum visitors into art supporters.

It seems to me that our museums have to decide whether they want to cater to an older generation where there are potentially large amounts of money available for donation in the near future, or if they want to make an effort to cultivate the younger generation and be ready for their needs. They often do not have the resources to do both. I am not just speaking of a matter of age when I say younger generation, but of youth of outlook and a contemporary brand of creativity.

Barry Hessenius with The Hessenius Group, and Moy Eng, Performing Arts Program Director for the Hewlett Foundation, gave a presentation about the **Hewlett Youth Report** at the Youth Involvement in the Arts forum in May sponsored by the [Emerging Leaders for the Arts](#). (This is the local branch of an organization started by Americans for the Arts and helped in SD by the Commission for Arts and Culture) The full report is available on the [Hewlett site](#). You can also see an open discussion on these topics on [Barry's Blog](#). Barry has made three "calls to action" for museum and other arts organizations. First: Make the issue of generational succession and the involvement of young people an agenda topic for discussion at your next board of directors meeting. Second: Add someone under the age of 30 to your board of directors. Third: Do something, anything, to start some direct link between your organization and at least one college campus in your area.

The larger question here is what is the shape of museums to come and how do arts organizations, both for and non-profit, support and augment museums through collaborations. People, young and old, are looking for a sense of community and ways to find meaning and direction in life in general. People, young and old, are looking for

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ease of access and affordability. Also people of all ages want respect and recognition when they volunteer.

Perhaps new technologies are the only real way that the generations are separated. And if that is so, then hurrah to my mother who is 87 this month and Skypes with the best of them.

Read our [Art Resource Focus](#) article on Museum Collaboration for current info about local collaborations.

Our thanks to [Rosemary KimBal](#) (Zen painter) and her eagle eye for editing and proofing.

A+ Art Blog

May and it's Darling Buds

by Patricia Frischer

There is no doubt in my mind that the art scene in San Diego is maturing because of the sheer volume of quality art that is available to the general public. A stroll down the Cedros design district revealed a show at [Susan Street Gallery](#) which is outstanding. Michael Brennan, Don Fritz and Masayuki Oda are three not to miss until June 17. These are sophisticated and charming works with humor and great visual appeal. Abe Ordovery's *Kings in Paradise* penguin duets jump off the page into your heart at the [Ordovery Gallery/Solana Beach](#). New works by Vinca at [Galerie d'Art International](#) show great creativity in her new technique combined with her great flair for drawing the female nude.

The [Women's Caucus for the Arts](#) Speaker panel was themed "**Professional Presentation for the Artist**" and **Susan Linnet Cox** and **Dorothy Annette** joined me on the panel to talk about getting into a gallery, working with websites and involvement in volunteerism. What was exceptional about the afternoon was that we were streamed live on the Internet and a further 29 people were able to participate in this way. Here are some samples of this new technology. [Sample one](#), [Sample two](#), recorded that afternoon and now archived. [Walter Davis](#) was the cameraman but is also the company representative in San Diego for this service and so click on his name to hear his promotion that allow us all to have streaming video presentations like these for very affordable prices. Or click here to watch the [company explanation](#) that also includes

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video emails and instant messaging. My thanks to **Laura Thompson**, club president for arranging this wonderful opportunity for artists.

Beckett 3 (Beckett Cubed) is a theatrical installation conceived and directed by **Scott Feldsher** with sculpture and installation Art by [Becky Guttin](#) and music composed by **Tim Root**. All Becky Guttin's ideas were fed by working with Tim and Scott in this collaboration of multi-media stimulation. This is "Beckett without Beckett." At the entry are [Ben Lavender](#)'s sculptures. Ben is one of the emerging artists featured as part of the SD Art Prize New Contemporaries exhibition at [Simayspace at the Art Academy](#) opening June 22. I was challenged by the music. It seems to take its lead from mathematics but it is, of course, strongly influenced by the absurdist notions of Beckett. This made me think about how the language of music is so coded to most of us and that secret code applies to the visual language as well. I think that my husband Darwin said it best, "You have to slow down to another level to appreciate this and so it might be something we have to go back to and take another look and a listen." We set a very high standard for this type of installation performance from what we have seen in London (for example, Waves put on by the National Theatre of the book by Virginia Wolfe), but it is important to shift gears and expectation for this exceptional combination, which is not so much immediate gratification but more a cerebral experience with alluring visuals. Read the rave reviews from the [Union-Tribune](#) and [SanDiego.com](#) Wed-Sun, May 9 – June 2, [Sledgehammer](#) Uptown 4025 Goldfinch Street, SD 92103 More info: 619.544.1484

By the way, the artist panel discussion was held after the opening night at the [Cinema Under the Stars](#). What a cool venue this is in Hillcrest north of Washington on Goldfinch. How quintessentially San Diego to sit in comfy chairs outside to soak up some culture.

[Tim B. Wride](#) is the Head of the Photography Department at the [Los Angeles County Museum of Art](#). Tim spent nearly four days viewing the 9867 images from artists in 37 countries, narrowing it down to 103 images for [The Art of Photography](#). **Steven Churchill** introduced Tim who explains his strategies for choosing the work. He tried to pick photos in every category but of course his personal preferences came through loud and clear. He does not like over processed images unless there is a reason like irony or humor for the manipulation of the image. He is not that interested in the image and how it was made actually but prefers the object with its visceral qualities and presentation of frame and mount. Some works were so bad that they were good and he seemed to be drawn to works that gave him a "50 minute hour" i.e. evoked some sort of mini analytical introspection. He was, of course, extremely knowledgeable about references in the photo art world but it was the very humanness of his choices that was refreshing. This

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lecture was like a gift where we were all able to slow down and look more closely, often seeing through Tim's eyes. Here's a four-minute [QuickTime video clip](#), which showcases about half of the images in the exhibit, which continues until May 28 Lyceum Theatre, Horton Plaza.

Over 60 people attended the Art Walk mini lectures I gave on Making the Most of Your Art Walk Experience for Collectors and several new additions were made to our mailing list from this event. Our thanks to **Cynthia Jenson-Elliott** for her promotion of [Art Walk](#) and these seminars in the [Night and Day column of the San Diego Union Tribune](#) and of course to Sandi Cottrell and Paul Kwast for their continues support of SDVAN in promotion with [Art Walk](#). You can see video of the VIP opening at the W Hotel at [LetsPlayDowntown](#).

The [Point Loma Artists](#) opened their doors and gave us Intimate Views: Real Life Studios of the Peninsula

with the Point Loma Artist Open Studio Tour. Six homes offered art and tidbits of food and drink to give the locals a chance to see art mainly about the views that surround them. No conceptual or surrealism here. Just some glorious views captures on canvas and paper.

The [Jeans For Justice](#) fundraiser bringing awareness of Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Victims was held at the glorious Bernard Gardens in Rancho Santa Fe (Thank you Bob Bernard) and attracted more than 400. We saw **John Thomas, Steven Churchill, Ally Bling Bling, Philly Swendoza, Joan Seifried, Gustaf Rooth, Fresh Ginga, Deanne Sabeck** and **Jeffery Laudenslager** all supporting the cause. Jess Johnson and Ellen Smoak organized this exceptional evening of great food, fun fashions, music and drink. JFJ will be an ongoing campaign for [Consciously Social](#) Events as the denim art will be featured around town at select art galleries and boutiques and available on commission. Read about the evening in the [Rancho Santa Fe News](#).

We attended the media preview for **Waking Dreams, the Art of the Pre-Raphaelites** from the Delaware Art Museum at the [San Diego Museum of Art](#). As rebels against the strict artistic traditions of the Royal Academy, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Holman Hunt, and John Everett Millais, transformed their high ideals into separate artistic identities with the single unifying force, their reliance on the literary sources. At least that is what the blurb says for this exhibition. But it only takes one look to see that this show is about sex. Models were found on the streets of London and made into the most exotic stars. Some of the artist bedded them, some married them and some of the models even became artists. Imagine an 1870's casting couch

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with artists instead of directors and you will get the idea. These wonderful women are certainly Stunners although if you look hard you will notice that they almost look like men. Is that the ego of the artist shining through? Chief Curator Scott Atkinson had to struggle with roof repairs and looming deadlines but managed to design a beautiful exhibition. Those looking to learn more about the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood can attend [Insight Gallery Talks](#) on Thursday, June 14, and Sunday, June 17. The show continues until July 29. On June 8, we hope to attend the Adam Gopnik presentation, this year's Axline Lecture. Gopnik is known for his thought-provoking essays on big thinkers in the New Yorker Magazine and we can't wait to see him in person.

We had a charming evening at the home of Nasser and Sari Pirasteh for **The Unveiling: an evening of Art and Opera** in aid of **Doctors Offering Charitable Services** (DOCS) and presented by [Museum Artists Foundation](#). The house was so appropriate for the display of art by Mr. Pirasteh and Jenifer Broomberg. Joan Seifried was our mistress of ceremonies and introduced the artists and the musical performances by the artists Marina Martin, Ernesto Pinamonti, Jennifer Heilig, Hyueeun Ham and Yrsan Daro. Ruth Chris Steakhouse supplied great food but only if you like succulent steak sliders. It was a sophisticated night under the stars with some of the art stars of San Diego.

Art+ Art Blog Cruelty Free Art Zone

This month I thought I would give you a little round up of some of the art I have seen locally. These are all personal opinions and do not reflect the views of the San Diego Visual Arts Network.

The new [MOCA SD](#) downtown opened while I was in London but I have had ongoing discussions about this space with [Joan Seifried](#) of Angel Appraisers. Here is the best of our conversations:

Joan: The main atrium entrance, once you are in the door, is wonderful as is the overhead minimalist work by Richard Wright.

Patricia: It is a very impressive entrance that shouts out "Art is Important." But it could have used some more art in it. Both Wright pieces were high up but we especially liked the way you could view the red piece through the window of the gold piece and get extra distortions. In fact, we didn't even notice the red work at first. Until May 6

Joan: Turn into the left hand main gallery space on the ground floor and you will see an amazing hanging fabric and spice chandelier. Its smells and textures were redolent of bull's balls en masse (at least at the bar across the street). Although this sounds damning, it does in some way convey the masculinity and grittiness of this installation

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by Ernesto Neto. Here we see conceptual art gone organic in a similar way to the Pollen sculptures MOCA offered a few years ago.

Patricia: Definitely unusual and the more you looked the more you saw. Until September 23

Joan: I was hoping to see something really outstanding and Jenny Holzer's LED light sculptures really fit that bill. It is placed on the outside of the building where it can be viewed from the street. In fact, people in the bar next door were complaining later that the "sign" was distracting. Long may they be distracted.

Patricia: The slogan and quotes on this work reminded me of The Situationist International which can be considered as the last avant-garde movement of the 20th century. Its revolutionary program aimed at undermining the symbols of power and at fighting the expropriation of everyday life by the consumer society. If you are Basel, Switzerland until Aug 5 you can see a retrospective on this theme at [Museum Tinguely](#). Permanent

Joan: A nice touch I thought was the off kilter media Foster Gallery screening room for Eija-Liisa Ahtila's movie about heartbreak. But nothing about it enticed me to stay and watch.

Patricia: It was restful and had some wonderful moments, but I too got up and deserted it. Until May 27

Joan: I loved the lavalier chandelier scone-like industrial urbanized wall mounts on all of the landings of the staircase by Roman de Salvo. De Salvo was sadly the only local artist represented in the line-up of opening permanent installations.

Patricia: I liked these works so much and was appalled that I had to ask to see them as they are closed to the public at all times. His one piece in the window that is on permanent view is greatly enhanced when you see the works on the staircase as a unit. Permanent

Finally I enjoyed the Morris Louis show tremendously and welcome exhibitions of this caliber. Go while you have a chance and reveal in his amazing color veils. He ordered canvas in 1000-yard rolls and only two or three of these series of over 300 works was shown in his lifetime. Until May 6

It is a treat to see **Art Alive** every year at the [San Diego Museum of Art](#). I attended with Julia Gill and Ralyn Wolfstein and we agreed that the relationships between the floral designs and the pictures were absorbing although I must admit that I became increasingly demanding of some subtlety. There was not much contemporary art available and so those exciting abstract designs were not so much in view this year. I missed that. [Annie Leibovitz: A Photographer's Life, 1990–2005](#) made a gallant attempt to take this popular commercial photographer and make her into a fine art star.

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The use of very large-scale landscapes and candid shots of Susan Sontag, her life partner, didn't dull my pleasure in her Vanity Fair vanity shots.

Exciting to see the **UCSD Graduate Open Studios**. These kids are not marketing savvy yet but they are having fun and turning out some interesting edgy art. I especially enjoyed Kate Barclay (donut/tire shapes gone wild), [Seth Augustine](#) (body beautiful and bracketeer), Scott Horsley (our own Chapman Brother), [Tristan Shone](#) (sound and fury and one of those chosen for the SD Art Prize emerging artist show at Simayspace opening June 22) and of course, [Iana Quesnell](#) SD Art Prize winner this year.

There are now 24 sculptures in the **Wolfstein Sculpture Garden** at Scripps Memorial Hospital in La Jolla. Three more trees (Bobby Valdez, Deirdre Lee, Amos Robinson & Ken Chytraus) from the Urban Trees project sponsored by [Art at the Port of SD Authority](#) and *Pedestrian Observations* by Ed Benavente were "planted" this year because of the generosity of this amazing couple who take such care to finance, choose and site the works on the hospital grounds. Nate and Ralyn Wolfstein are now being joined by other art patrons and with the help of artists like Gerrit Greve and Jeffery Wolfstein; their vision will grow into a proud art destination for our city. We understand that a website will be coming soon.

[Quint Gallery](#) is showing **Ryan McGinness**, *A Rich Fantasy Life*, until May 19. He is getting some help on the promotion, as this is the cover artist of [Art News](#) this month. My favorite work is [False Negatives](#), which is a wonderful sliding together, and piling up of images leaving a rich glowing orange which invites you to indulge. This and all the other paintings are now sold and luckily, at least some are going to local collectors so we may have a chance to see them again.

How exciting to see the new galleries coming alive at the NTC/Liberty Station finally. [New Vision Art Quilt Gallery](#) had its grand opening mid-April and you can now see a stunning retrospective of **Miriam Nathan-Roberts** until June 3. Located at the corner of Historic Decatur and Dewey Road. [The San Diego Watercolor Society](#) has a gallery in the same building and [ARTS: A Reason to Survive](#) has a gallery in Building 201 (Roosevelt and Decatur). Remember that the SD Foundation moved into Liberty Station as well and we just heard about [KIT](#), which stands for Kids Included Together. They offer an education facility for training for after school programs, which are available to child with and without disabilities. It is a lovely campus and once it is in full swing, will be a real asset for the arts in SD.

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A+ Art Blog

Critical Issues Facing the Arts – The James Irvine Foundation, September 2006

Summary by Patricia Frischer

[This twenty-four page document is summarized here in just two pages. Many of the points are paraphrased, so if you are interested, it is highly recommended that you read the full document, as this is just one person's interpretation of the report by the James Irvine Foundation.](#)

The changing demographic in California means that the young, non-white population is greater than the white population. California has the greatest growth in Asians and Latinos than any other state. Of these, the Asian are at the high end of the earning scale.

Because of the cuts in funding, non-profits are going to have to compete with commercial enterprise and take on commercial marketing techniques (i.e. technologically advanced tools). Paramount in communication is educating the public about the social and economic worth of investing in the arts. This means learning what the public values and showing how those values can be met.

Huge numbers of American involve themselves in the arts; as such, we are not looking for numbers to increase. There are now enormous numbers of non-profit, cultural institutions to serve these numbers. What is changing is that people expect to curate their own artistic experience. One underdeveloped area is the niche market, which can achieve a massive scale by using the new technology of communication. The question to answer is: "How does this market experience the product offered?"

Key Issue - Access

Artistic creation is flourishing. Individually, artists are finding a market by self-producing and self-marketing. These artists have now taken the power away from the major cultural institutions that used to be the arbiters of taste. The cultural institute cannot personalize their audience's experience, and more and more people are making art themselves and do not need to have art delivered to them. This is a throw back to a time when people had to make their own cultural experiences. Amidst this change is the argument about controlling copyright, which some see as a stifling factor to creativity. What everyone does agree is that technology will continue to change the way that we create, distribute and consume culture.

Key Issue - Cultural Policy

California does not have a coherent cultural policy. Focus is on a short-term level and not on the strategic, which would include arts education, participatory and amateur activities, technology and other ways to reach wider audiences and new ways to build demand. There are too many egos involved and, perhaps, too many advocacy groups who do not work together. This was OK in the 1960's when there was large funding. But now California is rated 50th in per capita funding for the arts. Since January 2005, 50 arts council partners have closed.

What is lacking?

- A consensus about what is the value of culture.
- The elimination of an elitist idea of the arts for a selected segment of the population.

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- A rationale for investing in the arts.
- A standardized way to measure success.

This Irvine Foundation Report tells us, "People in California believe in the arts, but they no longer believe that the arts are a public responsibility." There have been relatively few research study projects. We can look to the states of Maine, Oregon, and Arizona who have made headway in making cultural policies.

Key Issue – Arts Education

San Diegans know that art education "contributes to social skills, academic achievement and learning motivation." Ninety-nine percent of our population want more arts education. What needs to happen is that art needs to be built back into the core curriculum of the schools and not added on as trips or special projects. The body blows in 1970 (Ryan Act) and 1978 (Proposition 13) were not fatal but we now have programs that are not comprehensive and only temporarily funded. Funding for the arts is on the rise again, but the figures are tiny.

Key Issue – The Non-Profit Business Model

In 1960, there were only a few thousand non-profit organizations in the country. Now there are 50,000 with 10,000 of those in California. But this has not been partnered with an increase in the demand for their services. Most non-profits know little about their current or potential audiences. They can only survive if they can change their programs in response to the needs of their audience at the same time as they build brand awareness and loyalty. To do this, they need market research. With this research, they may become more inventive in selling their products, cut back to create demand, refine their niche by using the web for sales and drop the traditional use of subscriptions. Private foundations are now funding short-term projects instead of operating expenses. Public and Corporate funding is decreasing not increasing. Mid-sized organizations are suffering the most as large ones can weather the changes with endowments and small ones can change more quickly and have fewer overheads. Non-profits are encouraged not to increase fixed cost in this market, and new organizations should seek other models besides non-profits.

Key Issue – The Next Generation of Artists and Arts Managers

The majority of leaders within non-profit organizations have no formal training. There are only 40 degree granting programs, which graduate a total of only 600 individuals a year. The wages are low compared to for-profit opportunities. However, the skills needed to be an arts manager are vast. To ensure consumer confidence, there is a multitude of added expertise that is needed today. Besides the traditional roles of Art Administrator and Fundraiser, we need to add knowledge areas such as commercial licensing and environmental regulation, as well as familiarity with the new laws that have been put into effect since the Enron and WorldCom debacles. Arts Managers no longer have the power to determine artistic merit or quality, as stated earlier. There are now an estimated 700,000 artists in California. Those artists in the visual media and theatre arts are now being recruited for the commercial industries. Their aesthetic judgment skills as critical thinkers and creative innovators are being prized. Those who also have management and entrepreneurial skills can go far. To create human resources in this field, the for-profit and non-profit organizations should work together. The non-profit gives young artists a chance to work

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with no commercial pressures and gives the older artist a way to refresh their talents. The commercial sector can supply a living wage. (Read another summary on this topic called [Crossover: How Artists Build Careers across Commercial, Nonprofit and Community Work](#))

My conclusion to all of this information is that we need to look closely at defining value for the visual arts. Self-recognition is a goal in our society, as witnessed by the reality TV shows and the idea that everyone should have their 15 minutes of fame. Art is a way to discover things about yourself, either by your choices in acquiring or viewing art, or in the making of your own art. The savvy organization recognizes this and is able to offer satisfying and individualized experiences to its audience. The new audience can be the viewer and/or the maker of art.

LETTER FROM LONDON, DEC 28 2006 – FEB 17 2007

PART ONE

I shall attempt this year to tell you about my art experiences as normal, my gourmet experiences as a justification for not losing the 35 pounds of my annual New Year's resolution, and the occasional interesting tidbit that traveler collect on their journeys.

My trip started before I even left town with a visit to the [David Zapf Gallery](#) on Kettner in Little Italy. The [David Wing](#) exhibition titled *Travelers' Advisories And Unlikely Stories*. The artist's very selective eye and sense of humor could be signposts for me on my trip. Thanks for sending me off looking for those interesting connections that no one normally sees.

In the UK, the number zero is often given the name nought. So in this first decade of the millennium, we have zeros in double figures. It is therefore beginning to be known here as the Noughties. Since **burlesque** is back in a big way over here as well as in the States what could be more appropriate.

Last year the vogue here was for black Christmas tree. They were all over the place and even upside down. This year we saw **blue** Christmas lights almost everywhere casting a ghostly aura of chic

My friend Nancy Atakan who lives in Turkey and who will feature later in the trip told me about a gallery [Gasworks](#): showing Erkan Özgen and Sener Özmen's subtitled video 'The Road to Tate Modern' The film recalls Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, two smart-suited young men – one on a horse and the other on a mule – journey through an area of barren and rocky Turkish landscape, until they are faced with a choice of two paths. When they meet a fellow traveler, they ask him (in Turkish) the way to Tate Modern. He tells them it's pretty far, but they'll reach it if they head up towards the mountains. My

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first three gallery visits are to the Tate Liverpool, Tate Britain and Tate Modern. Its not so much the mountains as the journey they tell me.

Tate Liverpool: We drove from London to Liverpool on the second day, jet lagged and in that wonderful state when all foreign things look more interesting than they do at home. The [Liverpool Tate](#) is set in the Albert Dock and we arrived in dark but discovered the magnificent setting on the Mersey..yes, Mersey as in Merseyside as in Beatles. The Beatles Museum was there the next morning in the weak sunlight. But all was a glow in the [John Armleder](#) installation at the Tate with its Christmas trees, TV's, a wall of 60's vacu-formed Mylar mirrors with glitter disco balls. Maybe you were supposed to get beauty and mystery, but I think I got flash and fun. We really enjoyed the [DLA Piper Series: International Modern Art](#), the [Lowry in Liverpool](#), the [Henry Moore: Natural Form](#) and the [Patrick Caulfield](#) painting were especially intriguing. Pop Art made some timeless artworks as we are discovering year after year. .

I was especially tempted to go to Liverpool because of the [Chapman Brothers](#) retrospective called Bad Art for Bad People. It was a large show but I saw nothing new and came away still liking their collection of pretend African art with allusions to MacDonald's. This is owned by Charles Saatchi owns these works, which obviously on loan while his collection is in storage and the new building is being finished in Chelsea.

We were ushered immediately on arrival in Edinburgh to [Number One](#), at the Balmoral Hotel on Princess Street - head chef Jeff Bland gave us a dinner which started with a small platter of savory bites including appealing swirls of foie gras. Then the first amuse bouche was a soup of butternut squash with king prawn and pine nuts, with a little walnut oil. Then came my second foie gras of the evening, a terrine accompanied by a sweet pineapple chutney; there were two perfect rounds of foie gras, densely packed and creamy, which was set off very nicely by the chutney. Darwin had scallops with spinach and shellfish bisque. I had a breast of Gressingham duck, complete with parsnip chips. The second amuse bouche based on blood oranges, was a cold sorbet. I eyed the cheese but decided on the lower fat content of a chocolate cake not memorable so I should have gone for the cheese! The various breads, it goes without saying made in-house, were wonderful.

It's always extraordinary to dine with **Boyd and Evans** in Wolverton. Super wines and her own lemon ice cream and this time I did not resist the Stilton, which they buy specially every year. We barely had time to glimpse at any of the new work but they have their heads down working on an upcoming show at [Flowers](#) in March. You can

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still see some of their work at [Galerie d'Art International](#). They are still the most elegant and impassioned artist couples we know.



Pam Kent escorted us to the Cork Street opening at the Flowers Gallery of [Patrick Hughes](#). Super to see some old friends there. [Andrew Logan](#)'s enormous portrait of Angela Flowers dominated the new and very large below ground floor space, which has just opened there.

Tate Britain and the Turner Prize: Because of my passion for the SD Art Prize, this was like a visit to Mecca for me. I got all sorts of ideas for future improvements especially as the educational elements of the Turner are so well developed. Besides an online education pack, there is complete gallery signage, a free hand held tape recorder with sounds bits from the artists and two art professionals, and a set of video interviews of the artists. There is a 16 page broad sheet (rather what we would call a smaller catalogue) and a larger catalogue of the history of the Prize.

I was impressed with what I saw. They have made many changes over the years of this prize, but it remains relevant and the work was stimulating and diverse. [Tomma Abts](#) makes intimate size paintings and she is, at first glance, the least likely winner. These works have to be seen to be appreciated fully and then they are subtle and compelling. One insight I can give you is that they first appear to be backgrounds of pure color with geometric design placed on top. But they are actually a mass of geometric design, which are then covered by one color leaving only the most spare of visual tricks. [Mark Titchner](#) installations remind me of spiritual quasi-sexual devices. They appear to be experimenting with a world consciousness but they actually question both our blind faith in science and our obedience to authority. I actually enjoyed them more before I knew what they were about. [Rebecca Warren](#) makes lovely gooey clay lumps with little bits of recognizable subject matter. They were enjoyable to look at much like seeing forms in the clouds that float by on a lazy sunny day when you can lay in the grass. (Maybe the gale force winds are getting to me!) Her vitrines of the slight castoffs of her life did less for me. The explanation of recasting in bronze of the lumps of clay after they came out of the molds rather seemed old fashion like editions of

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monotypes. Finally [Phil Collins](#) takes full advantage of the press coverage and large crowds that the Turner Prize draws to create a series of videos about people who feel their experiences on reality TV shows has ruined their lives. A fully functioning studio is part of the exhibition. His underlying message is about the influence that the camera exerts on the behavior it seeks to record. Known in basic physics as the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, this artist's work was the least visually interesting and I find it pertinent that their prize was given to the art which was probably the most visually dependant.

Just a note to let you know that I go to these shows with various friends and when I am very lucky with my husband Darwin who always has a unique insight. We only just discovered the joys of the Oyster card to make traveling in London so much easier. It eliminates the need to buy tickets for every journey or get a day pass. You pay for the card and then top it up with any sum you want. You swipe it past a reader as you enter and exit the tube. Bus journeys you only have to swipe at the beginning and they are as low as £1 so if you are like me and like a view as you travel and don't mind the leisurely pace, then learn the bus routes. Another disincentive to travel by car is the congestion charges, which seem to be ever expanding. You pay to drive into London and so many of the areas in the outskirts of London are now smartening up, as people simply don't go into the center of London. If you do drive in, beware the nasty little smart cars, which have telescoping cameras. They move around and record offences of all kinds and then offenders get tickets by post. So a few minutes on a double yellow line now means a £50 fine. But joy of joys, there is no law against jay walking and so I have been darting across roads with gay abandon.

[Tate Modern](#) has to be combined with a trip to the [Borough Open Air Gourmet Market](#). This year we spotted fresh white truffles. At £95 for 100 grams, we had to be intoxicated by the aroma to buy just one small marble size gem. But it was worth every tiny \$1 sliver. We had never actually owned one and you never know when you might have a spare \$20 to spend on such an extravagance again.

[Fischli and Weiss](#) was such fun from the otherworldly double exposed luscious flowers to the entire workroom perfectly duplicated using polyurethane foam and paint. But the showstopper for the crowd and me was the film of chain reactions of explosions set up to capture the energy of gravity, fire, and chemical reactions on everyday objects. Thirty minutes of pure bliss that I could not stop watching. [David Smith](#) was the class act here and viewing a retrospective and the filmed interview re-enforced his place in history for me. Seeing and hearing the man who looked and rather sounded like Ernie Kovacs playing the role of an artist made the sculpture seem more personal than ever before. Everyone who knows you are going to the Tate Modern asks if you have gone down the slides. See [Carston Höller](#)'s art yourself with a [live webcam](#). It filled up the vast space and was a great draw for kids of all ages.

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[Velazquez at the National Gallery of Art](#) showed how important it was (is?) to have a patron of importance and I don't mean in order to prosper, but as the subject matter of the work. This show did little for Velazquez, but it did awaken in me the importance of the National Portrait Society next door. It was the history that stole the show here. King Philip and his two wives and the daughters and poor son who died so young are the stars here. Their court and the recording of it in oil paint keeps them alive as surely as if they were on a DVD recording. Seeing the work in person was a bit of a disappointment. If one knows this artist from reproductions of the work, then one expects more details when you see them first hand. But the loose brush strokes made things look out of focus from a distance and up close. The portrait of Don Pedro de Barberana y Aparregui, however, was a tour de force of composition and rendering. He was the only one I could have possibly fancied.

[David Hockney at the National Portrait Gallery](#) was everything you thought it would be. This artist is so prolific that he can fill nine rooms just with his portraits of family and friends and those who pass through his studio. Although he has done portraits for the last 50 years, this is not all he has been doing and he is not even a commission portrait painter like our friend Velazquez above. I saw a few works I had never seen before but what amazed me was the size of the crowd. This is the last week of the show and you could barely see around the people it was so crowded. It makes me glad that at the SDMA, MOCASD and MOPA you can really study the works. By the way, The National Portrait Gallery has embraced photography and there were several photographic displays on view including the [Photographic Portrait Prize](#) show, which I did enjoy enormously. The 2007 event is open to photographers from every country, so heads up to the portrait photographers who want a chance to show in this prestigious gallery.

We saw the artist **Patrick Tuttofuoco** at the [Haunch of Venison Gallery](#), which is a very well funded sales gallery. (Side note: I had heard that some galleries are now better funded than small museums and can hire away curators and promote artists on a museum level and it was interesting to see this in action) Patrick Tuttofuoco went to 17 of the world's fastest growing cities in just over 3 months with a film crew and then used all the images to make videos, sculptures, painting, and wall murals. This show was called Chindia because of the relations he drew between China and India. It very much reminded me of the Tijuana show that we just had in SD. The colors, the collaged images, and a view through the eyes of an artists is becoming, I think, a universal way of seeing the world. .

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We discovered the [Alexia Goethe Gallery](#) on Dover Street on our walk back to Green Park Tube station. [Sandro Porcu](#) drew us into the gallery with his hospital bed with a feather therapy contraption on a motorized pulley system. Is it pleasure or torture as you are tickled to death? We also enjoyed his Instant Campfire which was a wigwam of sticks vacuum-packed onto very 50's illustrated cardboard backing. At 5000 euros each for the small size, this might be as close as one could get to burning money. I also took to [Johannes Tiepelmann](#) who makes a more painterly version of Gilbert and George and might be in the next generation of graffiti artists to make it big. Camille was very welcoming and generously gave me a black [International Art Diary](#) so I shall be fashionably up to date at least for this year. And it is in French as well as English, n'est pas. It reminds me to remind you not to miss the [LA Art Show in Santa Monica](#) Jan 24 to 28.

[Damien Hirsts Collection at the Serpentine Gallery](#) "In the Darkest Hour There May Be Light" works from Murderme collection. Visitors will not come to this exhibition to see the art. Instead we come to get an insight into the life of Damien Hirst. First I learned that he is mega rich, worth about \$200 million from the sales of his own art. He is a compulsive obsessive collector...our favorite type. And as was expected, the work in the show did reflect the same issues he deals with in his own art. That having been said, it was great fun to see this work. Labels were at the floor, which made the guessing game more fun. I believe this was done because there was a mix of famous and emerging who when then given a fair chance of equal exposure.. I also learned that he has an art factory which employs about 100 artisans Three of those artists were included in this show. That seems very fair. A big discovery for me was the work of [Tim Lewis](#). His treadmill of rotating figure was impossible to deconstruct and it haunts me and fascinates me at the same time. This is not the only opportunity to see this work body of work. Everything will eventually be housed in Toddington Manor in the Cotswolds and open to the public in a few years' time.

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Yes, that is snow on the palm trees in our garden in London! It only lasted a few hours but what a sight.

We had a wonderful Chinese lunch at [Pearl Liang](#) in a new area called the [Paddington Basin](#) which has 5 very smart restaurants...very Las Vegas designs, huge and showy. All of them are tucked away and you have to walk through the Venice canal or along an old alley to get to them. Strange but fascinating. There was two life size faux [human sculptures](#) by [Sean Henry](#) really well sited with the sweep of the overpass. Lots more building planned in that area. I was particularly fascinated with the idea of a [rolling bridge](#).

Next week we are off to the theatre and I am getting used to wearing my new [Masai Barefoot Technology](#) shoes. I am walking everywhere so should be fighting fit when I return to San Diego.

Absolutely the latest in theater productions was the interpretation of Virginia Woolf's [Waves](#) at the National Theater. This is where theater and video come together to make an entirely new art form. You watch radio sounds being made. Movie vignettes are composed with the little tricks of the camera world revealed. Both of these are layered with voices and live action filming. The piece is choreographed like a ballet with the very clever cast knowing exactly where to be at every turn. The staging abounds with visual tricks and you are kept enthralled. Did I know what it all meant, perhaps not.... but the rhythms did strike a cord.

PART TWO

St Alban, the latest restaurant from ex-Ivy masterminds Jeremy King and Chris Corbin (they also own the [Wolseley](#)), Rex House, 4-12 Lower Regent Street, SW1.

Tel: 020 7499 8558 was great food and they got us in and out in time for the theater.

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Minimalist decor may not be your thing, but the service was first class and the food perfection. It does not appear to be in any of the guides yet, so note this address if you are on your way..

Tom Stoppard's [RocknRoll](#) was the verbally packed narrative that Stoppard always gives us. You want to see it again just to hear the bits you missed. Stoppard is a native Czechoslovakian and this is a story built around a man who returned there from England in 1968. It balances Marxist doctrines with hippy manifestos and take us on a ride until 1992 with many relationships intrigues along the way. The little bits of music between the scenes were fun but the graphics that came with them seemed so unsophisticated especially after the joys of Waves.

I think this may be the real digital art! : The [Kinetica Museum](#) is new to London and it is so much fun to see it and to know that the audience for this new resource will support it. [Gregory Barsamian](#) gave us more work like that we saw in the Damien Hirst collection show at the Serpentine by Tim Lewis but this time on a large scale. It blows your socks off the first time you see it with the strobe lights and what seems to be impossible appearing before you eyes. Solid objects appear to change. This is a trick of light and movement but so well done. I also liked the work of [Jim Campell](#) described as "technocrat with an artist's soul". All this work is to do with light and movement, but Jim's view of a library entrance with a shadow figure moving mysterious up the stair was so subtle and desirable. The whole show was worth seeing and this will be a Museum to watch in the future.. [Dianne Harris](#)'s own work is on view and she is curator and founder of Kinetica.

[Anselm Kiefer](#) at the White Cube and at the [Royal Academy](#) Sometimes the gods conspire to put you at the right place at the right time. We ran into Sue and [William Pye](#) and they told us about this show and then we spent the afternoon with a collector who was invited to the private dinner with the artist after the show. No, we were not included but both factors meant that with the wide choice of events to attend, we found ourselves on Duke Street rounding the corner of a tiny muse entrance to a large barren courtyard with the shining White Cube building in the center. The show was packed but these impressive works of art could hold their own. A large dead palm lying flat in the first room caught your attention and three \$2 million mega paintings in the lower ground floor were reminiscent of the poppy fields in the Wizard of Oz. Outside the yard was filled with beer drinking art types and the artist was no where to be seen. I thought it was fitting that they thought enough of this crowd to give them free beer and a chance to gather. All the works were sold before the doors even opened. If you want to read an entire art speak review you can not do better than the one by Simon Schama in the [Guardian](#) . He say "Contemporary art doesn't get much better than this". You don't need

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to hunt though your map to find the Keifer at the Royal Academy. Just walk west on Piccadilly and turn your head to the right. Two stunning columns which look like piles of shanty town concrete huts make you wonder if this is leftovers from a bomb or the construction stage of the tower of Babel. I was impressed and this guy is only two years older than me!

I would like to point out a phenomenon noticed this year. The galleries which got large spaces in Hoxton or near King's Cross, all seem to be coming back into the west end of London which maybe smaller galleries, but obviously needing to have a presence back in the congestion zone. I am speaking of the White Cube, Gagosian and Flowers Galleries to name three.

We went back to [Yauatcha](#) the dim sum restaurant in Soho and it was loud and the food just not deserving of the \$100 a head we paid. But prices are sky high everywhere so save your pennies if you are coming over to the big smoke, which, by the way, is not smoky or foggy anymore. The city is clean, clean, clean. And at least this restaurant had no chavs....don't know what a chav is? Neither did I but my friend here all do. This sums it up from Wikipedia: "Chav is a mainly derogatory slang term in some parts of the United Kingdom for a subcultural stereotype fixated on fashions such as gold jewellery (often cheap) and 'designer' clothing. They are generally considered to have no respect for society, as well as being considered ignorant or unintelligent. The term appeared in mainstream dictionaries in 2005. The defining features of the stereotype include clothing in the [Burberry](#) pattern (notably a now-discontinued baseball cap). Tracksuits, hoodies, sweatpants and baseball caps are particularly associated with this stereotype. Response to the term has ranged from amusement to criticism that it is a new manifestation of classism. The term has also been associated with delinquency, the "[ASBO](#) Generation", and "[yob](#) culture". Sounds like a lot of Americans unfortunately.

I am not sure if it was my cold (I was in the second day of a real sneezer) or just not growing up with the British pantomime tradition, but [39 Steps](#) seemed a bit silly although, of course, there is a place for silly in the world. I loved the original black and white movie but they made this into a spoof with very low tech special affects which intended to make us all part of the joke. I couldn't help but compare it to the simple but effective affects of Waves, which is still haunting me. But you should not compare apples and oranges.

I previewed the [Sotheby's](#) auction shows today after a fabulously indulgent lunch with my friend and lawyer here Craig Ferguson. He was my neighbor after I got divorced

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and looks like Superman. So as I drooled over him and barrowed endless cups of sugar, we became fast friends. He now helps me rent out my flat and his wife and 3 children keep him from flying faster than a speeding bullet.

Right, about the Sotheby's sale. It was unbelievable impressive. A small museum could have arrived with a £95 million and bought everything and had a ready-made permanent collection. And it had been a while since I was in the building and boy has it changed. First of all, there is small cafe right after the reception area...this was full of elegantly dress men and women, sipping tea and pouring over their catalogs. There were many, many more display rooms then before and none of the work was display salon style, but all in gallery style with name tags....not like the old days when items were numbered and you had to refer to your catalogue. Now it is slick. Imagine you are walking around a museum and all the prices are on the labels...Darwin was just knocked out as he had never really put those abstract prices together with a real set of items which were going on the block. We went on to a pavilion set up in Hanover Square and saw the daytime Contemporary sales, which was full of Chinese, British and more American works. I found out that there were 463 lots in the morning and afternoon session together. We only saw the tip of the iceberg. But we were seen by all evidently. I got emails the next day to say that we appeared on the BBC evening news as background color for the story they did on the sales. I did see someone filming us out of the corner of my eye but never expected this to be 3 seconds of my 15 minutes of fame.

Just a follow-up note to these sales with some total results: In November, sales in New York totaled one billion dollars in modern and contemporary art in one week. London has almost equaled this figured with \$757 million in the week of 5 February: \$392 million at Christie's and \$365 million at Sotheby's with 153 works exceeding one million dollars. The Scott who grew up in Canada and Trinidad, was educated in England and now lives in Trinidad, [Peter Doig](#), had a picture "White Canoe", which sold for \$11.4 and is now the most expensive work sold by a living artist in Europe.

Collect is the international art fair for contemporary objects presented by the British Crafts Council now in the expanded space of the Victoria and Albert Museum. The 41 galleries showing over 350 artists were still very crowded only an hour after the opening at 11 am. We whizzed around trying to see everything before it became difficult to move. I was mainly attracted to the glass works. Here are some of my choices: from France [Antoine Leperlier](#)'s carved and cast glass, from Sweden [Ulla Forsell](#)'s corrugated glass, from Copenhagen [Mette Saabye](#)'s whimsical jewelry sculptures, from Australia but showing in the US [Scott Chaseling](#)'s comic book glass vessels. The standard was very high as were the prices and this inspiring art fair is a

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must for anyone who wants to learn about craft objects and how they are being accepted as art objects.

Pinter's [The Dumb Waiter](#) was a revival of the play from the 50's. Pinter is alive but no longer writing plays but this one is still alive and kicking. Tightly packed in just one hour you are seduced, satirized and startled by the two hired guns. One imagines Pinter casually noticing a dumb waiter machine one day and then spinning this fantasy around the most innocent of puns. I came out thrilled that I understood it all and this proves that Pinter is timeless.



[Hogarth](#) at the Tate Britain was a once in a lifetime opportunity to see an artist for all seasons. His best-known Model Morals series includes Marriage a la Mode, the Rake's Progress and the Harlot's Progress. A la mode, of course, means of the fashion and these series were about arranged marriages, the decline of a women's virtue and the decent of a playboy. Turn on any daytime soap and Hogarth could get a credit. . His work was so impressive because it covers all comers. There are religious allegories, historical documentations, satires on current affaires, notable portraits, family scenes, and theatrical acts. He is the Shakespeare of painters and so wildly talented that he puts Velazquez to shame. I found the work inspiring and got all sorts of ideas from him on marketing art in SD.

[Gilbert and George](#) at the Tate Modern. Deeply "British" (even though Gilbert was born Italian, in the Dolomites) this show displays forty years of creations. They met at St Martin's School of Art in 1967 when they were 25 years old and have continued in impeccable suits or in the nude. The Tate Modern shows all, from the performances of their beginnings when they pretended to be statues to the Dirty Words pictures, the Gingko pictures from the Biennale of Venice to the Sonofagod pictures. You see their

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development and learn their language. From tentative to flamboyant to studied and from photography to paint to digital, all is shown. Gilbert & George ask the same questions about identity, sexuality, and idolatry. But just maybe this is not enough. Visit the website and hear the audio interviews with these two men talking about their own work habits.

A bit about the people we have been seeing while we are here. I am happy to say we have made some new friends. Marla Mossman made the introduction to **Qais Azimy** who was her guide in Afghanistan and who now works for the New English TV channel **Al Jazeera**. It is only a few months old, but many western journalists including David Frost are working there and it appears to be not just pro-Arab. This young man has had an amazing life formed by events in his country. He was trying to escape the Taliban when some journalist who needed a translator and a fixer found him. He said what he really wants is to come to America and study political science and then go back and become a politician. But I think he just might want a life with no more thrills and not so much responsibility. He is only 24 but has lived through so much grief. He said the Americans are so well trained and so well equipped that the Taliban stay away from them. This lunch was set before we heard that Darwin's son Scott is off to Afghanistan soon but it appears he will be relatively safe on the very large military base. I hope he doesn't get too bored and volunteer for anything dangerous. We need him to come home safe and sound...Qais seemed to think Scott would be safer in Afghanistan than on the roads in America...evidently no one drives there as the roads are so bad! He also said they put something in the food in the base to keep sexual appetites at bay. He hated the Taliban who he said were all gay because they were kept in large groups away from any women. This shame against their religion might explain why they raped so many women. Maybe they should have put something in their food as well! He is convinced that the fundamentalist got to these young men and brainwashed them. He is so grateful for the troops in his country, which have made his life so very much better. I don't know whether to believe everything he said, but we were somewhat reassured about Scott's safety after having talked to him.

Unfortunately I could not introduce Qais to **Agnes Asha**. This was an introduction by Linda Nimmerrichter of a former nun from India. This charming woman worked in community collaborations but found it necessary to leave her calling because of her very involvement with the community. She felt the Catholic Church was not ready to change its doctrine to help those in need. She also talked about corruption within the fundamentalist Hindu of India. Evidently they have banned all charity donations from western religions. This is making some severe hardships because 17% of the charity in the country comes from outside the country. She is now volunteering in England for

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[L'Arches](#), which builds communities for people with learning disabilities. I discovered the artist community while in San Francisco called [Creative Growth](#) and hopefully Agnes will have some luck introducing the idea of artist with learning disabilities into the marketplace in Europe and even Asia as a way to empower the members of her group and involve the community and even make some income for their cause.

Mehmet and [Nancy Atakan](#) are long time friends from Turkey and it was a joy to spend a week with them this trip on our turf in London. Nancy is a video/poet/digital/installation/photography artist who is on the Biennial trail. She told me of the progress of the Istanbul event which is growing in stature. Turkish artists are strong on conceptual art and ripe to be the next “big” discovery. Mehmet has the widest circle of contacts of anyone I know and it was a pleasure to meet Izak and Freda Uziyel who invited us to join them at the Anselm Kiefer exhibition. Freda is Polish and organizing an enormous charity art auction through Christies for Israel museums. They are both connoisseurs and it was great fun to see their art collection and their beautiful garden in Hampstead.

Our thanks go to Joe Khodoory, Brian Thorpe, Joe Powell, Arielle Essex, Alison Denham, Joe Chamberlain, Sandy and Julie Hutchons, Chris Keats, Tim Donavan, Nicholas Beaumont, Hannah Stappard, Sandy and Elizabeth Love, Smadar and David Cohen, David Porat, Ruth Middlemas Meyer, Cliona and Michael O'tuama, Roy and Lizzie Addison, Ken and Jan Overman, Mark Hodgetts, Pam Kent, Lesley Silver, Stephen Jones, Craig and Jayne Ferguson, Matt and Tiffany Keiller, Fionnula Boyd and Les Evans, Linda Dangoor, and Peter Logan for all their kindest in enriching our lives during this trip. I blame you all for the extra weight I am carrying back to the US and I don't mean luggage!

A+ Art Blog: State of the Arts

Non-Profit is not a Free Ride

Independent Tax-exempt status for SDVAN

Up until the fall of 2006, the San Diego Visual Arts Network used a fiscal agent to assure it tax-exempt status for donation solicitation. In the summer of that same year, the tax law changed making that arrangement impossible. With a grant pending to finance the SD Art Prize, we took steps to obtain our own 501 (c) 3 status. Over **200 hours of work** later, we are please to announce that we now have our own federal letter of determination granting us tax-exempt status. We worked with the [Synergy Art Foundation](#) and formed the San Diego Synergy Arts Network. Both SDVAN and SAF

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work separately but we now share a board of directors and by laws as well as incorporation documents. We file joint tax returns and look forward to a long and successful partnership. Synergy Art Foundation concentrates on Arts Education and granting funds to artists and arts organizations in need. We find this a perfect compliment to the services we render with our directory and events calendar, education of art patrons and recognition awards.

Donors to the site will not be affected in any way, but we are happy to say that we no longer have to pay a commission on donation to a fiscal agent and that we now can earn interest on money in the SDVAN bank account. Our thanks go particularly to Naomi Nussbaum for her support in this process. All services on SDVAN will remain free to all. We do encourage your donations and depend on your support to keep the site running and to fund our projects. You can [donate now](#) either on line or by check. Please take a look at our list of [SDVAN supporters](#).

SDMA Giverny Exhibition

How very interesting that we are privileged to have the only North American showing of the [Giverny Impressionist](#) painting at the SDMA and this become clear when you realize that both Derrick Cartwright, director and Scott Atkinson, curator spent considerable time employed at the Musee d'Art Americain Giverny in Normandy. We are indeed fortunate to have this connection and two men to give us such insight into this interesting period in art history. Monet landed in Giverny in 1883 and so many artists had arrived by 1885 that he had to shut his doors to visitors. Over 450 painted in the area over the next 30 years. This exhibition tracks those years and brings us works from all over Europe. But how especially interesting to see the 12 works from San Diego, which do us proud and are notes by slightly darker wall labels. Go see the show and indulge in a range of work which is undeniable beautiful but also educate your eye to the finer comparisons of this selection of works.

SDMA Alexandre Arrechea

The [Contemporary Links](#) series at SDMA continues with its fifth installment, featuring Cuban artist Alexandre Arrechea. The series invites artists to choose works from the museum collection as inspirations. The works by Arrechea are about security systems and surveillance in museums and includes a large-scale sculpture of a model of an arena with the exits replaced with live video broadcast from various places in the SDMA. But the show starts with a wonderful photomural of our of the museum guards superimposed on a blow up of a section of a Diego Riviera drawing. Reading the well laid out and

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free brochure that goes with the exhibition called Scalpel and Cotton is essential to get full mean from the this art. I especially enjoyed the large corncob inspired drawing with its camera lens embellishments.

Letter to the Editor re: *Public Art Put on Hold* by Maureen Magee published in the Union Tribune

Catherine Sass is fighting the good fight. The public work at the Port is fun and colorful and it is THERE . Let's face it, for the budget the Port has they can't buy one fabulous world-class work because it would cost the whole budget. Trying to bring work of quality to the city is important. When Chicago's Picasso was unveiled people hated it and called it big bird. Public art has a maturation time that no other art has and we need to support the Catherine Sass' of the world who do everything they can under difficult conditions.

The [Urban Trees](#) project, which we all agree might have a range of qualities, has brought further commission for many of the sculptors and that was due to this vital exposure. A ripple effect has occurred and more people are able to see those works and create even more sales for these artists. The Port's priming of the pump with grants made to artists has helped cause this economic boom, which in turn is good for everyone in the visual arts and the city.

Not only sales are affected but also as the article in question shows, clearly a public dialogue and a public forum are encouraged. Participation by these artists in the scenery of the city validates the role art has on the street. These are primary issues and extremely important. We know a photographer who loves to take photos of the tourists taking photos of the kids by the urban trees. Just take a look at these photos and you will see why we need more photos to the editor than whining articles. written by [Joan Seifried](#) and edited by [Patricia Frischer](#)