



Fusing Energy for San Diego Visual Arts: Mentorship, Education, Recognition, Collaboration

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2009 [SD ART PRIZE](#) RECIPIENT ANNOUNCED

We are pleased to announce the emerging artist recipients for the 2009 season of the SD Art Prize. chosen by [Richard Allen Morris](#) is [Tom Driscoll](#).

The announcement was made at the lavish opening reception put on by the Omni Hotel at the L-Street Gallery (628 L Street (Across from the Omni Hotel), SD, 92101) for the exhibition **DISCOMBOBULATED: Kim MacConnel** and emerging artist **Brian Dick** which runs until July 20th, 2009. The [SD Art Prize](#) is produced by Patricia Frischer ([San Diego Visual Arts Network](#)) and Ann Berchtold (www.SDArtists.com)

The SD ART PRIZE is dedicated to the idea that the visual arts are a necessary and rewarding ingredient of any world-class city and a building block of the lifestyle of its residents. Conceived to promote and encourage dialogue, reflection and social interaction about San Diego's artistic and cultural life, this annual award honors artistic expression. The SD ART PRIZE, a cash prize with exhibition opportunities, spotlights established San Diego artists paired with emerging artists each season whose outstanding achievements in the field of Visual Arts merit the recognition. Over the course of the year, a series of exhibits featuring the recipients will run simultaneously at the [L Street Gallery](#) at the Omni Hotel, and on the websites: SanDiegoArtist.com and SDVisualArts.net (SDVAN).

Tom Driscoll



Tom Driscoll was born in San Diego, California in 1945 and lived in Mission Beach between the ages of one to eight years old. At the age of eight, his family moved to the more arid terrain of Chula Vista when his father went to work at Rohr Corporation a part of San Diego's aerospace industry.



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Driscoll was drawn to sculpture early. "A point where I realized I was good with my hands occurred when I was a senior in high school. In an art class I started stone cutting and direct carving on wood. One of my pieces ended up being displayed at the school library. It was the first pat on the back I recall receiving." Those early carvers - Moore, Brancusi and Hepworth - turned his head.

After high school, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and served with the 82 nd Airborne. Upon returning to San Diego he enrolled at Southwestern College. His exposure to the "Artist Lecture Series" - the guests included Robert Irwin, Paul Brach, Newton Harrison, moderated by John Baldessari. - captured his attention as no other class had up to that point.

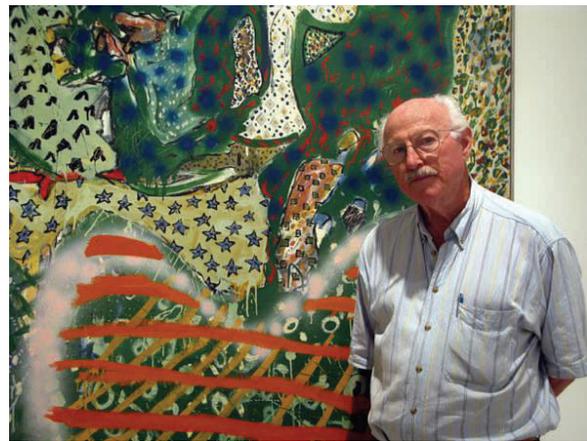
A significant change in Tom's career occurred in 1981 when he moved to downtown San Diego. Here he encountered several artists living and working in cheap commercial spaces: Richard Allen Morris, Lynn Engstrom, Barbara Sexton, Gillian Theobald, Carl Peck, Lynn Schuette, Richard Sigmund, William Gambini, Jay Johnson and Gary Ghirardi. "We would each arrive at night after our day jobs to work in our studios. At that time a number of art galleries opened in downtown San Diego: Patty Aande, The Pawn Shop, 552 Gallery, Newmyer, and later Quint Gallery and Sumay Space. These galleries brought all of us together."

Driscoll's work has received critical acclaim and has been included in numerous solo and group exhibitions throughout Southern California, i.e. Mandarin Gallery in Los Angeles and Quint Gallery in San Diego. Best known for his cast cement and large-scale sculptures (cones and spheres), Driscoll has produced a body of diversified work over the years including a recent series where he used Styrofoam and vacuum formed plastic packaging as molds. The inner negative spaces of the material produced an array of abstract shapes replacing the original product.

With his masterful handling of material, Tom Driscoll is currently producing an intriguing series of cast epoxy – mysterious in their deep red and amber translucency.

Richard Allen Morris and Tom Driscoll share qualities of honesty, perseverance and a respect for art history. San Diego has benefited from their continued presence.

Richard Allen Morris



Richard Allen Morris was born in Long Beach, CA in 1933. Morris is self taught exploring his enormous interest in art history with no formal art education. He began exhibiting at the age of 26. He served in the Korean War leaving the service in 1956. His first solo show was in 1959 and has had solo and group exhibitions throughout California since. He currently lives and works in San Diego.

Morris's works are firmly anchored in the Abstract Expressionist school. The handling of the paint is always seductive and he managed to transfer that same feeling to his collaged works. You feel these col-

ages are gathered from the snipes and off cuts found in the waste areas of his studio which he spins into gold. He has the obsessive nature of many great artists and has produced a large body of work which treads the line between great sophistication and a child like glee in the world around him.

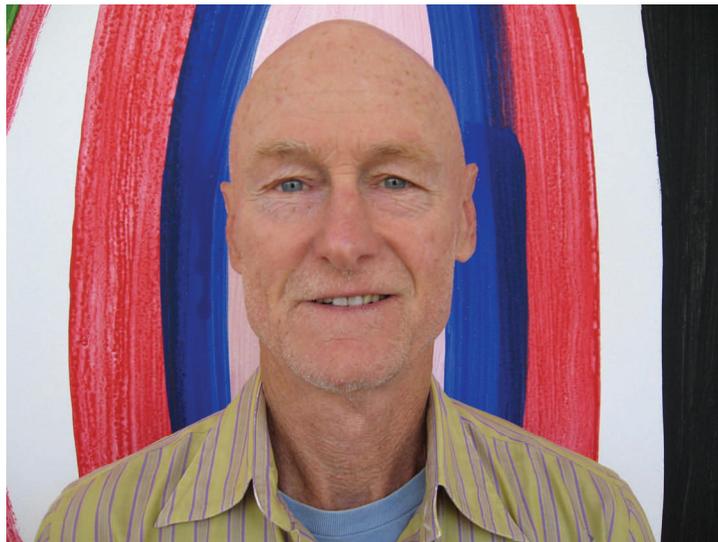
Morris has been recognized recently in Germany and Switzerland where his work is much in demand. He has been the focus of many exhibitions and catalogues. *Richard Allen Morris: Retrospective, 1958-2005* was an exhibition that includes 150 paintings made over the course of his fifty-year career organized by Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld and shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego in 2005.

Published in Art Scene which is the guide to exhibitions in Southern California of show at Mandarin Gallery in Los Angeles in 2006 was this statement about the show *Body and Soul*. "Richard Allen Morris' brand of eye candy sets up this challenge: how much visual incident can be squeezed onto the head of a pin? The effect of walking into a roomful of these impastoed dandies will immediately either put a smile on your face or raise your hackles. But the decorative indulgence is beside the point. Let yourself get your nose up to these things, and then step back again so you can go along on Morris' ride. His deft brush takes us to a surprisingly wide variety of places without having appeared to have done very much."

From this same show David Pagel writes in Special to *The Times* for the *Around the Galleries* feature, ".....playful combination of paint squeezed straight from the tube and slathered on with a palette knife resembles the aftermath of a food fight between Matisse and Gauguin."

Richard Allen Morris is represented by [RB Stevenson Gallery](#), La Jolla.

Kim MacConnel



The story of how Kim MacConnel named his most recent series of pictures, *Women with Mirror*, tells a lot about the artist and the man. It is not surprising that he would be interested in the pattern in the backgrounds of Pablo Picasso's paintings. Pattern Painting has been the genre most associated with MacConnel. But MacConnel decided that just as Picasso had used African art as the subject of his work and added backgrounds of pattern, he would look at those backgrounds and take out the subject matter. Sounds good on paper, doesn't it? But when he actually began his research, MacConnel found very little pattern in any of the Picasso works that related to his sketches. Finally, *Women in A Mirror*, was the one work where he saw a connection. It is amazing that so slight an inspiration could produce a body of works that is so intriguing and so ongoing.

We will be showing the *Age of Plastic* series, a precursor to those new works, during the exhibition for

the SD Art Prize 2009 coming to the L-Street Gallery of the Omni Hotel in the spring. The title is an ironic reference to the Guggenheim's 1993 sculpture exhibition *The Age of Steel*. MacConnel choose two of the most despicable trends of our times that he could think of....clowns and beach trash and used the cleverest of combinations to make trash into treasure. In his March 1995 article in *Art In American*, Michael Duncan says, "With its eye-grabbing commercial palette and hard-candy texture, plastic rubble provides a perfect medium for MacConnel..... MacConnel's clowns are both formally rigorous and playful, yet their lowly medium heads off any possibility of pretentiousness."

Born in Oklahoma City, MacConnel's family comes from San Diego but he was raised on both coasts and in the Texas and Mexico as well. He currently teaches at the University of California, San Diego. The first showing of the *Age of Plastic* was at Holly Solomon Gallery, New York followed by Thomas Solomon's Garage, Los Angeles and finally *Clowntown* was displayed at the Quint Gallery, San Diego all in 1994. This series was included in *Kim MacConnel- - Selected works from 1974 - 1996*, at the California Center for the Arts, Escondido, California in 1997 and *Parrot Talk: A Retrospective of Works by Kim MacConnel* curated by Michael Duncan, Santa Monica Museum of Art, Santa Monica, California in 2003. *Clowning Around* was shown at Margeaux Kurtie Modern Art, Madrid, New Mexico in 2001.

Amy Goldin, an influential UCSD visiting professor while MacConnel was in school in the 70's, put forward the concept that pattern is not just the repetition of a motif but the rhythms created between the motifs. MacConnel has explored these and other very formal aesthetic concerns with a continuous nod to art history. His fearless use of color and his mesmerizing pattern is why these works breathe with the joy of life.

Kim MacConnel is represented by [Quint Contemporary Art](#), La Jolla and [Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Santa Monica](#)



Brian Dick

Brian Dick's art constructed from everyday vernacular materials emerges from a process of play and are purposefully temporary-not works meant to last over time. Each morning since 1997 whether at home, visiting family or on a vacation trip, Dick transforms the mattress, sheets, pillows, blankets, and even the frame of the bed into a temporary sculpture, costume or performance. Dick documents these creations and actions with color photography. The ten year duration of the series, *Making My Bed*, is a testament to Dick's commitment to the idea as well as to his self-imposed ritual. The results are: a bump in a mattress caused by the bedding, which has been placed underneath it; diapered monster outfit and mask (performed by the artist's mother); or an upright totem. For a new project, Dick has been designing mascots for select museums constructed from recycled clothing, crocheted afghan throws, and consumable domestic materials such as paper cups and clothes pins. In so doing , museums are thereby treated to the same emblematic form as is common for sports teams. The mascots take the shape of sculptural masks that are worn in impromptu performances in a variety of public settings. Related posters and handbills expand the absurdist gestures of both the bed and mascot projects." Betti-Sue Hertz, Curator SDMA for *Inside the Wave: Six San Diego/Tijuana artists construct social art*.

Dick was born in Las Cruces, New Mexico and raised in Southern California. He received his B.A. from UCLA and, after graduating with an MFA from the University of California, San Diego in 1995 Dick accepted a six week residency at Arteleku in San Sebastian, Spain. Shortly thereafter he was invited to an extended residency through The American Center in Paris where he stayed for two years. He appeared in several group shows including shows at The Center George Pompidou, The Musée d'art moderne and in spaces in Denmark and the Netherlands. Additionally, he had solo shows at Gallerie Chez Valentin, Paris, France and Gandy Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic. He also appeared in two of the first ever web-based shows in France. Since returning to San Diego, he has participated in shows and film festivals in San Diego, Dallas, Houston, Reno, Kyoto, Japan and Berlin. In 2007/2008 Dick had solo shows at Spacecraft Gallery and Luis de Jesus Seminal Projects. Also in 2008 he participated in the group show *Inside the Wave* (with Christen Sperry-Garcia) at the San Diego Museum of Art as well *Childsplay* at The New Children's Museum, San Diego. In 2009, among other things, Dick will be participating in Bushwick: *SITE*, a performance fair in Brooklyn, NY, as well as a guest curator at Sushi Visual Arts Space, San Diego, CA.

Dick lives and works in Southern California. More work can be seen at the [artist's website](#).

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