

Artistic forces converge for exhibit at Arts Fund Gallery

By Josef Woodard
SANTA BARBARA
NEWS-PRESS CORRESPONDENT



Above is Kathleen Elsey's "Sunlit Room", 24" x 30"

Two local arts organizations have converged, for a good cause, at the Arts Fund Gallery. The Arts Fund itself is a noble, not-for-profit group of long standing in town, raising money for various artist-support and educational projects. Each year, the Fund hands out several Individual Artist Awards (IAA), opening to the winners the portals of its gallery space a few blocks from the beach.

The two concerns have drawn together to present "Across the Board," a willfully diverse sampler plate of seven artists' work under the Arts Fund Gallery roof, with a portion of the proceeds going to the Arts Fund's programming. No prevailing message or medium rules in this show. Variety, it so happens, is the spice and the key in a show which could be viewed as a microcosm of the "open studio" format.

Each artist sticks to his or her particular corner, in terms of both style and medium. Karen Fedderson is the veritable representative of the traditional landscape painting concern, so richly embedded in the Santa Barbara art scene. It's a different story with Joann Dufau's little bazaar of compact oil-on-linen paintings. In the fragmented mix are still-life subjects, a nude, and a nutty monkey image. On the opposite end of the scale spectrum, Dorothy Churchill-Johnson's expansive canvases, "Falling Stars" and "Five Objects," consume the wall facing the gallery's front door, swimming in violet and natural objects writ large. Other artists occupy their own private niches, from John Moses' mostly abstract monotypes to Polly Griscom's friendly watercolors and Pamela Hill Enticknap's loosely-drawn and socially-spirited charcoal slices-of-life drawings. Her scenes of local color include Beto's Cantina and the Little Dog Parade.

"As for the rougher stuff, aesthetically speaking, Kathleen Elsey's painting exerts a bold, almost post-Fauvist-meets-funk touch in her work.

"Sunlit Room," for one, flirts with burly Van Gogh effects, with a vivified palette and brusque brushwork. **It's the mightiest and most memorable piece in the room,** says this unavoidably subjective observer."

ART REVIEW

'Across the Board'

When: through March 8, 2008

Where: Arts Fund Gallery, 205C Santa Barbara St. Santa Barbara, California

Hours: Noon to 5 p.m.

Tuesday through Friday

Information: (805) 965-7321