

Press Release for exhibition

For Immediate Release: February 10, 2002

Euphrat Museum of Art

De Anza College, Cupertino, CA 95014

Art exhibition:

Magician's Day Off and Other Stories

February 26 – April 18, 2002

Closed March 23 and 30

Museum Hours: Tu, W, Th, 11-4; Tu evening 6-8, Sat 11-2. Open to tour groups by appointment.

Reception: Tuesday, March 12, 6-8 pm with artist presentation

Family Day: Saturday, April 6, 12-3 pm.
Hands-on activities (for all ages) and performances.

Artists: Pilar Aguero, Doris Bittar, Binh Danh, Lydia Tjioe, Ricardo Gil, Paul Pratchenko, Joan Schulze, Lynda Watson, Christine Wong

Narrative art, storytelling, takes many forms. *Magician's Day Off and Other Stories* presents narrative art by a selection of contemporary artists in California, working in a variety of media: painting, photography, sculpture, quilts, printmaking, jewelry, and mixed media. There is magic in this age-old manner of art making. Once upon a time...

The show's title comes from **Paul Pratchenko's** painting, *Magician's Day Off*, a peculiar juxtaposition of images, the magician performing, the magician relaxing on a couch, and the magician's shoes as seen below a closed theater curtain. Pratchenko's work is like that, a scene or composite of scenes, with unusual twists or juxtapositions of familiar imagery, commentary with a touch of humor. In *Vulcanization*, a man performs tricks on a tight rope above an exploding volcano on a moonlit night, balancing a hoop and a ball. His female partner helps hold the rope and his hoop. Below in the volcano's interior is an idyllic island with a few buildings, connected by a bridge to some other forested land. *Burning Bridges* and *Rescue* are other narrative scenes in nature, which apply as well to contemporary urban life. At times Pratchenko brings in animals when he comments on our institutions, as in *Monkey Business* and *Pearls Before Swine, Swine Before Perils*.

Doris Bittar's paintings are more loosely painted and offer two different narrative styles. In one series she presents life-size portraits of Jews and Arabs. Each person has a portion of a narrative from his/her life suspended in front. Some of these are humorous, for example *Chuck and Nick*, father and son, which reveals son Nick's confusion about his identity, which is Lebanese. In another series she presents horizontal paintings with a sliding panel that alters the scene, depending where it is placed. A unique work, *Stars and Stripes*, refers to September 11. The stars recall decorative Arabic designs. Bittar's heritage is Lebanese and Palestinian. Her husband is Jewish. Between them they facilitate Jewish/Palestinian dialog in the San Diego area, where she teaches at U. C. San Diego.

Joan Schulze's quilts are personal stories drawn from memory. The stories are quite hidden because Schulze does not want to reveal too much about herself. She layers and obscures the images. "Memory tends to exaggerate. Some images are clear, others hazy. Bits come off. The images change and get older, just as we do." Many have to do with the life of women. One sees bits of statues, interiors, jewelry, fashion images that women emulate. "I age it. There is a subtle message. I like scratches in silver, marks on furniture. It shows they're used." *Fin de Siecle* is of the times, with lots of newspaper bits. *Beyond Recollections* is "two quilts in one." It is about her exhibition in Germany and her thoughts before going, and also about famous artists erasing the work of others. She does her own erasing, leaving a hazy trail.

Lydia Tjioe's small sculptures speak of stories in different ways. *Home in My Palm* comes from having moved a lot, from her homeland Germany, to Mexico and the United States, and a desire to create pieces that can fit into a pocket. Tjioe often uses natural shapes such as pods, which open up to smaller objects inside, which themselves may open up. She may add windows to suggest smaller interior living spaces, indicating already developed buildings, stories, that are hidden within. She makes natural things permanent: "It will never decay." *Personal Attributes* is a nest piece, a layered seedpod with words inside: driven, ambitious, creative, inventive, sensitive, loving, honest. There is interplay of inside and outside. Autobiography. While to a distant observer "I may appear to be Asian, on the inside I am impressed by the deep felt actuality that I am German. We are not always on the inside what we appear to be on the outside."

Ricardo Gil exhibits the most concrete narrative, photographs of the story of his daily life as a short person. He, his wife, and his brother are dwarfs. His daughter isn't. Gil shoots from his eye level. *Big Wheels* is just that, the big wheels of a truck. In *Public Restroom*, his eyes barely make it over the wash basin to look in the mirror. We see his daughter in a shopping cart, or being carried off to bed by her mother. The images are familiar, yet different. We all can picture a street scene with a few mean-faced children, but we haven't had to continue to experience it as an adult but still at their eye level. Some images are warm-hearted, in others there is isolation, even fear. In several, people's eyes are closed, alluding to a whole different way to communicate.

Pilar Agüero's art also relates to episodes from her personal life. In the installation *Sisters* we have images of her and her sisters when they were young. They are drawn on large paper pads then ripped out, revealing the perforated edge. There are smaller symbolic images, studies, also with the ripped out look, as if pages from a daily journal. All are covered with wax. Below are nests on shelves. The installation relates to a time when the sisters came together as adults, but were still sorting out their relationships from childhood.

Binh Danh's work deals with history. Using early photographic process, such as the Daguerreotype technique, he weaves his family history into the collective American story. Binh Danh was born in Vietnam and was a year old when his family escaped, becoming part of the great migration of Vietnamese boat people. Now, using photosynthesis, he records images of the Vietnam War onto tropical plants, which he then casts in resin. He shares the hidden stories of Vietnamese American experiences, as he examines the remnants of the war (bombs, blood, sweat, tears, metals) which live on forever, transformed in the Vietnamese landscape.

Lynda Watson, recently retired from the art faculty at Cabrillo College, made jewelry until her hands started to give her problems. Then she switched to drawing for a few years, drawing images of her travels. Now she combines the two. Little drawings are incorporated into necklaces and bracelets, telling a story about a person or place. Stones, shells, a variety of mixed media, and objects crafted from metal give additional information to the drawings. *Cape Cod Revisited. Humboldt with Kris. The Copper Canyon at the Millenium. Baja Revisited.*

Everyone is a Storyteller is a 15' wide reduction woodcut print by **Christine Wong**. Wong's imagery acknowledges the superficiality of the American Dream, at the same time pointing to "beauty in the American reality — an environment filled with painful yet inspiring melodies of immigrant songs, ancient narratives re-invented in modern myths, and stories of assimilation, resistance, and innovation." Back packs, coffee mugs, TV screens. Students study, struggle, eat, make art, make music. With faces that seem alienated, they yet talk together, touch and counsel each other. The print is accompanied by smaller prints in her *American Sign Language* series, related to consumerism. An old woman looks at her reflection in a toaster turned on its side; in the background a garden sprouts images of cars in the place of blooming flowers.

On view in April is a related collaborative public artwork organized by the Euphrat Museum's Arts & Schools Program and involving elementary school students from Cupertino Union and Sunnyvale School Districts.

The exhibition was curated by Jan Rindfleisch and Diana Argabrite with Dawn Nakanishi.

Call Jan Rindfleisch 408-864-8836 for more information.



April 26, 2002

Euphrat Museum of Art
De Anza College
Cupertino, CA

Press Release

De Anza College Student Art Show

Show dates: May 16 - June 13, 2002. Closed Memorial Day weekend.

Museum hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 11-4; Tuesday evening 6-8; Saturday 11-2
Open to tour groups by appointment

Reception: Tuesday, June 11, 6-8 pm. Awards will be presented during this reception

Sponsored by the De Anza Associated Student Body, the Euphrat Museum of Art, and the Creative Arts Division, this exhibition features paintings, drawings, mixed-media works, photography, graphic design, sculpture, and ceramics created by students at De Anza College during the past year.

Several large sculptures are prominent, for example the mixed media work *In Memory of John Caesar* by Terry Kao. It honors an older student who had taken many classes at De Anza and had his sculptures in previous De Anza student shows. Kao's artwork is in the style of Caesar and includes pages from his autobiography *Please Ignore Me — I'm Not Here*, which includes poignant reference to Caesar's disabilities. Other large sculptures include the life-size *Love Seat* of wood, metal, and papier-mâché by Liat Binyamini Ariel and two curvilinear wood sculptures by Cristina Cantú-Díaz.

Among other unusual works are a clay *Bento Box* by Junko Ogawa and a canvas on sheetrock portrait of a young woman by Dax Tran-Caffee. *Feathers from a Thousand Li Away* by Wei Jao Chang is a composite graphic work based on Amy Tan's *Joy Luck Club* and created using Adobe Photoshop. A quilt by Jane Ewers is built around cyanotype photographs on fabric. Jenny Ha portrays the *American Dream* in charcoal with multiple symbols, such as dollar bills at the bottom of the composition, a diamond ring in the center, along with an eagle and a microphone, then a child's hand and a dove above.

The gathering of works reflects expertise in diverse media and varied interests and points of view. A jury of three selected artworks for the exhibition: Pilar Agüero-Esparza, Patrick Surgalski, and Mary White. Agüero-Esparza is curator at MACLA in San Jose. Surgalski and White are both professors at San Jose State University. All are experienced with multiple media and are exhibiting artists.

Special acknowledgement: Chancellor, Foothill-De Anza Community College District, Dr. Leo E. Chavez; President, De Anza College, Dr. Martha J. Kanter; Vice President, Instruction, Dr. Judy Miner; Dean, Creative Arts Division, Dr. Nancy Canter; Art and Photography Faculty; Art on Campus Committee

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Call Jan Rindfleisch 408-864-8836 for more information.