

With the *2021 Left Coast Annual Exhibition* on view from April 9 through May 16, Sanchez Art Center continues to bring inspiring contemporary art to the Bay Area to nurture and uplift our spirits during the pandemic. This year's juror, Christine Koppes, Curator and Director of Public Programs at the Institute of Contemporary Art San José, selected 56 works from among the 800 entries submitted by artists from the left coast (Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington). Koppes was "impressed with the important conversations around social change, identity, and the COVID-19 pandemic." Her selections have resulted in an exhibition that, in her words, "reflects on our interconnectedness even in a time of isolation."

Certainly the *Left Coast Annual Exhibition* this year highlights contemporary moments of both hope and shadow. Here are just a few instances: Amy Ahlmstrom's heartfelt quilted textile piece, *I'm Okay*, tells the poignant story of putting up a brave front in the midst of inner turmoil. Jenny Balisle's cross-stitched embroidery piece, *Collective Grief*, reminds us of the consequences of ignoring truth about the pandemic and systematic racism. *Covid Diaries #7: Vote, Make a Plan* by Myra Eastman captures the urgent need to act in this moment, to stay informed, to keep up with the news no matter how demoralizing, and to participate. Helen Ellis painted an expressive, intense black and white portrait of the actor, baritone singer, and Civil Rights activist Paul Robeson. Lindsay Kapoor's delicate mixed media piece *Daily Ritual* reminds us of the importance of finding structure in our upended lives. In the midst of social distancing, Penelope Lenaerts reminds us of the human need for touch with her soft sculpture of interlocking hands and fingers titled *Chain*. *Sequestered* by Roz Ritter is a prayer flag for our time, made with antiseptic wipes embroidered with the daily haikus she exchanged with family members in isolation. Of course, there are moments of hope and joy as well, such as *Mount Haupu After the Rain, Kaua'i*, by Bro Halff, and Xenia Smith's charming *Kit and Caboodle*.

Don't miss the Juror's Talk on Zoom at 3:00 pm on Sunday, April 18. Juror Christine Koppes will talk about her experience, and the artists in the show will take part in a virtual Gallery Walk. A link to pre-register for the talk will be available on the Sanchez Art Center website and via emails.

In the East Gallery, the two artists who won exhibition awards in 2020 will present their work. Pilar Agüero-Esparza and Mark Seely were chosen by the *2020 Left Coast Annual* juror, Carin Adams, Curator of Art at the Oakland Museum of California.

Pilar Agüero-Esparza's works comprise a meditation on shades of skin color. Says the artist, "I create works that question the inequities of race, gender and class to engage viewers in specific cultural and gendered experiences. . . . I want the viewer to see these works as 'racialized abstractions' and consider social dynamics and hierarchies within our culture." Agüero-Esparza's award-winning painting, *Stratum 5*, presents a bold, dramatic design of diagonal chevrons in various shades of brown, tan, and black acrylic paint on wood panel. Visit [her website](#) to see many creative variations, including weaving with strips of tan and copper leather, a much quieter impression than *Stratum 5*, though equally strong. Agüero-Esparza's work has been in numerous institutions including the San Jose Museum of Art, Triton Museum, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and the de Young Museum. In 2017, her work was featured in the exhibition *The U.S.-Mexico Border: Place, Imagination, and Possibility* at the Craft Contemporary Museum, Los Angeles. In 2019 this exhibition traveled to Lille, France, as part of the *Eldorado Lille3000* arts festival.

Mark Seely's oil paintings are landscapes, but so much more. He captures the dynamic essence of thunderstorms before they happen. The artist says he wants to capture what the Spanish call *duende*, a spiritual experience of heightened emotion felt in response to a

particular landscape. In *Verdant Country*, the painting that won him the 2020 juror's exhibition award, tall gray cumulus clouds, heavy with rain, tower over green fields. In amongst the green, and even in the sky as well, one sees small inexplicable splotches of red orange. The sudden, unexpected contrast of bright color against the dark, brooding scene raises this landscape image to a level of intensity that approaches *duende*. Some landscapes are painted on collaged paper backgrounds, adding yet another layer of complexity and mystery. Seely has also done some exquisite smaller works in pastel, including perfectly rendered images of old metal objects such as obsolete machine parts and tools. Seely's work has been shown in the U.S. and Australia, and was included in the 2020 *de Young Open*. To see more: www.MarkSeely.com.

Both the *2021 Left Coast Annual* and the *LCA Awards Show* open Friday, April 9, at 1 pm (no evening opening reception), with gallery hours Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 1–5 pm, through Sunday, May 16. Gallery visits are by free appointments that can be booked online at <http://SanchezArtCenter.10to8.com>. Safety protocols for the health and well-being of visitors, volunteers, and staff include face masks, physical distancing, and limited numbers of people in the galleries. We will also make the exhibitions available to browse online in the virtual gallery section of our website. Our gratitude goes to the Art Guild of Pacifica and Sheldance Orchid Gardens for their continued support.

Upcoming: Sanchez Art Center welcomes spring with a fundraiser titled *Art x Nature x Art*. Mark your calendars for the weekend of Fri April 30–Sun May 2. Tickets will be available on Eventbrite.

Sanchez Art Center is located at 1220 Linda Mar Boulevard in Pacifica, about a mile east of Highway 1. For more information, visit www.SanchezArtCenter.org or email info@sanchezartcenter.org.

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