

ART REVIEW: Art Under Shared Roofs - 'Double Trouble' brings together complementary work by notable Santa Barbara-based artists who happen to be married to each other

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ART REVIEW

'DOUBLE TROUBLE: MARRIED TO ART AND EACH OTHER'

When:

through Jan. 14, 2012

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

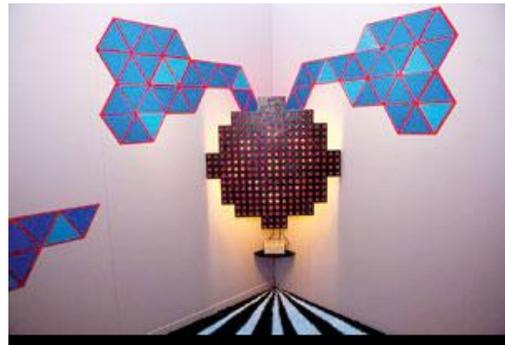
Gallery hours: 1 to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday

Information: 965-7321, artsfundsb.org

Marriage, like art, is a complicated enterprise, where passion, tension, ecstasies and agonies bubble up to or simmer below a calm surface. Add to the marriage contract a partnership between artists and you might find yourself with the sentiment expressed by the current Arts Fund Gallery show, "Double Trouble: Married to Art and Each Other."

Somehow, though, the "trouble" part is all safely tucked away or resolved, and we're left with a wonderful and celebratory exhibition, touching on the power of creative symbiosis within given households. It is also fittingly timed as the official tenth anniversary show of the Arts Fund, which has survived and become a strong and inspirational pillar of the local art landscape.

Curated by Nancy Gifford, "Double Trouble" affords us a window on four couples, all well-known artists in



FROM TOP :
'EYECOMPUTERWORLD,' KIMBERLY HAHUN AND JAMES VAN ARSDALE
'ESTANCIA CERRO GUIDO, GLTIMA ESPERANZA,' MACDUFF EVERTON
'CONFLUENCE 2,' MARY HEEBNER

Courtesy photos

the Santa Barbara scene, and with connections to various academic and institutional situations hereabouts. The compare/contrast/correlative impulse implicit in art shows takes on a deeper meaning here, as we note the cross-talk between the artists involved: Jane Callister and Philip Argent, Mary Heebner and MacDuff Everton, Kimberly Hahn and James Van Arsdale, and Dane Goodman and Marie Schoeff.

Indeed, what gives this exhibition more than a circumstantial or possibly novelty-driven status is the sense of commonality and kindred spirits — and in some cases, explicitly collaborative links — among the marrieds.

Even for those unaware of the marital status of Callister and Argent (both teaching at UCSB), the artistic proximity of their work could seem the makings of a natural pairing. Here, each shows two large-ish paintings, set side by side. The work is dynamic, yet also stark in a way, dealing in separate but resonant manner with plasticity of visual effect and deconstruction of painterly content or method.

With Heebner and Everton, she is the mixed media and poetry-sensitive artist, and he the poet of panoramic landscape and geo-cultural photography. The pair have teamed up on a number of projects, including a soon-to-be-published photo essay book on Patagonia, an end-of-the-earth site from which Everton's four handsome, horizontalized images in the gallery come.

Heebner's adjacent lyrical, watery images make for suitable visual dialogue, especially given the subtle narrative inflection of a phrase scrawled on the wall, "Cartographers call blank spaces on a map Sleeping Beauties." Together, their work straddles a line between sleeping and waking beauty.

In the case of Hahn and Van Arsdale, the couple has taken the occasion of this show to venture their first official public collaboration, with the cool, funky site-specific mini-installation "eyeComputerWorld." Ironic retro-futurism is abuzz in their nook of the gallery space, organized into a symmetrical design, with the suggestion of an agnostic, low-tech shrine of a piece — its God/subject of veneration left open to interpretation.

No such direct collaborative energies have filtered into the artistic life of Goodman and Schoeff, at least in terms of their public exhibition, but they often show work in the same group shows (as in the current local artist exhibition at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art).

Whatever the language affinity between these artists, on some subliminal level, their art gets along quite famously and familiarly. On one wall of the Arts Fund Gallery, the Goodman/Schoeff team conspires toward a combined effect of delicate, gently loony charm.

Goodman shows his forlorn, gloomy/funny figures and heads-on-sticks ("Discuss," a pair of heads, and "Perform," a friendly, dough boy ghost), while Schoeff's work here consists of several tiny silverpoint drawings on pink. Her drawings are as much tone poems about wind, fleeting forces and gauzy veils as concrete objects/subjects, making a nice mate for her spouse's mumbly creature underworld.

A ripe tenth anniversary party at the Arts Fund, "Double Trouble" is a neatly organized and clearly focused show, brushing across some deeper concepts in and out of art, as such. The exhibition's clever mailer card shows each pair, uniformed in the same black turtlenecks, with backs to each other. In that pose, each pair seems to fuse into one being, joined at the

shoulder blades. But at the same time, they are gazing off in opposite directions, comfortable in the liaison with another but going in their own private creative directions.

Somewhere in that plurality of outlook resides a handy metaphor of what makes this stimulating show tick.