

# Life in LAMORINDA

## Bert Monroy's Digital Art on Display at SMC's Hearst Gallery

Paintings Created with Today's Technology

By Andrea A. Firth



Damen by Bert Monroy

Photos courtesy of Hearst Gallery

As you enter the Bert Monroy Exhibit at the Hearst Gallery you feel as though you are walking directly onto the platform of the Damen Street elevated train stop on Chicago's northside. A few steps further into the Gallery you realize that you are looking at a five-foot by 14-foot hyper-realistic image of the deserted rail station, and you begin to question whether it is a photograph or a painting. *Damen*, the largest work in artist Monroy's collection, is comprised of 15,000 digital layers and serves an elegant example of the patience required to create his

photo-realistic paintings. Dubbed Mr. PixelPaint, Monroy is the preeminent pioneer of digital art. Part artist and part technician, Monroy is the master of the point and click. As Monroy creates, his canvas is housed in a Macintosh computer and displayed on two large-screen monitors. His brushes and paint are drawn from the software programs Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator.

Monroy ventured into digital art while working at his own advertising agency in New York back in 1984. His first Macintosh computer, which is also on display at the exhibit, boasts a 4-inch by 6-inch screen in a 12-inch by 18-inch box complimented by a keyboard that is a technological one-step beyond the keys of a typewriter—an antiquity of the late

20th century. Monroy embraced computer technology as an artistic medium from outset upgrading the hardware and software as each new version was released. He achieved master status and went on to teach the art of digital art to literally millions of students around the world.

At the heart of Monroy's work is his love of painting. Exhibit-goers will be fascinated by his portrayal of light in the shadows created by a deck chair and in the reflections found on signs and saltshaker caps and in mirrors and puddles. Locals will also be delighted to see many familiar scenes of Berkeley, Oakland, San Francisco, and Marin County.

What is most exciting about the Monroy Exhibit is the video that explains how it is done. The source of his inspiration and the method of his execution is not a secret for the supernaturally and artistically inclined. Monroy, as cool as his Apple roots, leads the viewer through his artistic journey, taking a clear and understandable path for those with only a moderate amount of computer knowledge. Be sure to watch long enough to see him create a flock of birds that seem to fly off the screen and the leaves on a tree identical to the one in your own backyard. Or make plans to drop into see the real Monroy as he shares his digital art techniques at the upcoming digital media demonstration.

Bert Monroy's Exhibit of works, entitled *A Digital Artist Paints with Light*, will be displayed at the Hearst Gallery on the campus of Saint Mary's College in Moraga through April 5th.

The Digital Media Demonstration with the artist will be held on March 19th from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Soda Center followed by a half hour Exhibit Tour. With questions, contact the Hearst Gallery (925) 631-4379, www.hearstgallery.org.



Bert Monroy Photo provided



Breakfast in Tiburon by Bert Monroy

## Taxes in California's State Budget Hit Hard

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"They are the ones who have to fix and service their cars," he wrote in a recent editorial. "Upper income people buy or lease new cars regularly before they need extensive repairs or service. There is a basic unfairness here. In fact, this same deterrent effect will apply to the level of safety on the road. ASCCA members are reporting ever increasing numbers of motorists declining even safety-related repairs due to cost."

Cited as unfairly targeting specific industries, the extension was said to affect these businesses because of the "ease of implementation as these services are generally provided by entities that already have a relationship with the Board of Equalization."

"This is blatantly unfair," Pennebaker noted. "A ten percent tax on auto repairs could cause fewer older cars to be repaired and maintained correctly, causing increased pollution and greenhouse gasses. Not a very intelligent deterrent to have in place when the state is spending billions to combat exactly what these cars produce."

Even without broadening taxes to include these services, the increase in the sales tax to 9.25 percent in Contra Costa County will have an impact — especially for those on fixed incomes.

Karen Stein, an attorney in Lafayette with an estate planning and elder law practice, gives presentations at the Lafayette Senior Center and is a member of the steering

committee for the Central County Senior Coalition. She states that increased taxes on car ownership, gas consumption, and on every non-food item you buy at the store, impose a relatively greater burden on those living on fixed or low incomes.

"Higher sales taxes take up a greater percentage of a fixed income person's budget compared to someone who spends discretionary income on non-taxed services or investments," Stein said. "This inverse relationship between the tax rate and the taxpayer's ability to pay results in an increasingly regressive tax scheme that hurts fixed income people the most. Like inflation, tax increases eat away, little by little, at what fixed income seniors live on."

Although Lafayette resident Marilyn Finn says that she hasn't fully researched the budget solutions, she feels as if "those of us on fixed incomes, those of us who have lost our jobs, and those of us raising children as single parents are seemingly getting the privilege to bite the bullet pretty much alone."

"I believe that every citizen and business in California should have to bite the bullet," Finn said, "and as a senior citizen on a fixed income I want to do my part. I just don't see the wealthy having to bite very hard."

In addition to the new taxes, legislators plan to eliminate the state and federal cost of living increases for those receiving Supplemental Security Income/State

Supplementary Payment.

Stein added, "Fixed income people who already struggle to live within their means shouldn't have to shoulder the burden of a state government that has never figured out the way to live within its own."

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By Lana Reichick, a 25 year resident of Lamorinda, owner of San Ramon Irrigation & Drainage Supply. [www.linkedin.com/in/lanasan](http://www.linkedin.com/in/lanasan) Email: [lanasan@aol.com](mailto:lanasan@aol.com)

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