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## Exquisite 'Outsiders' Exhibit Opens at Lafayette Gallery

By Jade Shojaee



The Outsiders, from left, back row: Ray Jackson, Randy Sexton, Jerrold Turner and William Rushton; front row: Nikki Basch-Davis, Judy Molyneux and Pam Glover Photo provided

deals with tranquil landscapes and images of nature, but this group remains true to its namesake (or at least to its alternate entendre), as these paintings rebelliously depict more populated urban settings.

Perlmutter will be curating the event with pieces by the Outsiders themselves, including Nikki Basch-Davis, Ray Jackson, William Rushton, Randy Sexton, Jerrold Turner and Judy Molyneux. They are "painter's painters," she observed. "They paint as an extension of their skin. As a painter myself, I look at their work and I'm so attracted to the way they make it move and the way they lay it down and it looks so effortless."

Perlmutter's descriptions of the work are as effortlessly impactful as the strokes of paint on the pieces themselves. William Rushton's "I Roll" jumps off the canvas with impasto strokes that give texture to a skateboard rolling a little boy. Rushton's "Passage" depicts two in a canoe, rowing toward us from an endless ocean - soft blues, horizon line, above it rasping smoky blue strokes of sky. It captures light and movement with stunning style, utilizing primary colors for a rich complicated composition. "When the paintings arrive, that's when it all comes together," she says. "When everyone has left I empty the gallery, and lean the work against the walls and imagine how many pieces I can fit, without crowding the space. As an artist myself I think, how would I want my work shown?"

The paintings (all abstract and figurative) are individually exquisite, and the visual narrative Perlmutter uses to tie the exhibit together viscerally tells the story of plein air creation, a process that is as grueling as it is rewarding. To create the plein air pieces, the artists must brave the elements, and capture the exact light that upstages their focal point - all the while, dirt blowing in their paint and paint blowing on their clothes. This style of painting is also as vulnerable to the elements as it is messy. A fussy climate can be the difference between a masterpiece and a flop when the artist is depending on consistency in light to create continuity in the work. But, according to Perlmutter, "there is a vibrancy and energy that comes from the elements" and this exhibit is a beautiful demonstration of exactly that.

A group of plein air artists' work fortuitously found its way into Jennifer Perlmutter's Lafayette gallery recently after Jerrold Turner stumbled in one afternoon, and astonished Perlmutter with a book called "Evolution of Style" (Arts Benicia) from a show he had curated. Much of the art in the book was created by members of the Outsiders, a group of painters of which Turner is a part.

"I was stuttering over my words," recalled Perlmutter. All it took was one flip through these playfully striking paint-filled pages, and a casual afternoon quickly became the inspiration for Perlmutter's newest gallery exhibit.

Plein air art, best known for its affiliation with 19th century Impressionists (including Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and Vincent Van Gogh), is art that was created outdoors, in natural lighting. "What ties these pieces together is the friendship these artists have and the fact that many of these paintings got their start outdoors," said Perlmutter of the work that will be included in the "Outsiders" exhibit. The California plein air art scene typically

"Outsiders" will be on exhibit through Oct. 3 with an opening reception from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 10. In memoriam, group member and artist Pam Glover's work will also be included. The public is welcome to enjoy the exhibit Tuesdays through Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and by appointment at Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery, 3620 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette. For more information, contact Perlmutter at (925) 284-1485 or [jp@jenniferperlmuttergallery.com](mailto:jp@jenniferperlmuttergallery.com).



"Passage" by William Rushton Image provided

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