

Maya Kobashigawa's Bold Aesthetics Highlight Exhibit

By Sophie Braccini



Maya Kobashigawa in front of one of her paintings. Photo Sophie Braccini

Maya Kobashigawa is the featured painter of the month of October exhibition at the Orinda Art Gallery. An abstract artist, she creates often large lyric pieces that evoke emotions and are highly decorative. Kobashigawa's striking style art has an aesthetic that fits very well with modern interiors.

The Kobashigawa family represents an eclectic mix that's perfectly at home in Lafayette. Her husband is American of Japanese ancestry (fourth generation) while Kobashigawa herself has an Indian father and a Bostonian mother of European ancestry.

She says that the love of art was instilled in her since her youngest years, even though everyone in her family works in the medical field. She majored in art history with the idea of becoming an art curator, but in fact joined a television news network as a writer, then producer.

As a young professional she wanted to decorate her first apartment but could not afford the art she loved, like large abstract paintings by Jackson Pollock or Wassili Kandinsky, so she started painting it herself. Of course all her life she had been taking art classes but had never envisioned it could become her profession. When her friends started asking where she got her art, and then asked for her to paint for them, she dared to give painting a chance.

"A lot of time in my work, I can

see a space, and I create a piece for that space," says the artist. Kobashigawa is sometimes commissioned or creates from her own desire. "The subject is not as important, it is more about the colors, the lighting, to transcribe an emotion," she says. She can start with spots of different acrylic colors, then she uses Pollock's technique of a wooden stick dipped in paint to create drip painting, or streaks of colors that she lets flow freely. The streaks create a rhythm and an ensemble with the color spots that are very harmonious and visually satisfying, creating a sense of balance.

Some of the pieces incorporate other material to the canvas. The creation called "Waterfall" is almost a 3D sculpture. On the canvas Kobashigawa has crunched a piece of fabric and added fragments of cellophane. She painted on the whole surface, mostly with streaks of greens, yellows and blues. She says that when she starts, she knows mostly where the painting is going to go, what colors are going to be used, but that things can evolve as the process unfolds. In an archival interview (SFMOMA.org), Pollock said that painting has a life of its own and that he tries to let it live. Kobashigawa seems to have that same sentiment.

Kobashigawa can make small paintings but is often drawn to the more dramatic sense of larger pieces. The series of processes

she needs take time, often several weeks, which gives her the time to think.

Besides the Orinda Library Art Gallery, Kobashigawa shows at Valley Art Gallery in Walnut Creek and in Allison McCrady's aMFA gallery in Theater Square in Orinda.

The Orinda Gallery in the library building is curated by the Lamorinda Arts Council. More information can be found at www.lamorindaarts.org.



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This Harvest Season, Crush it in Paso Robles

By A.K. Carroll



Photo A.K. Carroll

Fall has arrived and harvest is on its way. While many Lamorindans will trek north for the long-standing traditions and overpriced accommodations of California's Napa Valley, consider heading the opposite direction.

An autumn weekend in Napa will get you sunny hills and trendy tasting rooms, as well hours of bumper-to-bumper traffic as you crawl up the freeway, eager for the moment you'll have a glass in hand. But take a turn south on California's scenic coastal highway, and head for the equally lovely but far less audacious wine country of the central coast. For small town charm

and abundant harvest festivities at a fraction of the price, set your sights toward Paso Robles.

The trip down to Paso can be a long one — roughly six hours if you take the scenic route and go by way of Big Sur — so take your time traveling and plan for plenty of snapshots as you meander down California's breathtakingly beautiful Highway 1, less crowded as of late on account of recent fires. Though most parks are closed, epic views remain unobstructed. (For a quicker trip, trek inland on highway 101. You'll miss the ocean, but you'll make it in a fraction of the time.) ... continued on page B8

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