

Published March 21st, 2018

Perlmutter gallery exhibition challenges the mind and pushes boundaries

By Sophie Braccini



Parents and children at Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery experience creatures of the Cambrian period as seen through the eyes of an artist. Photo Jennifer Perlmutter

Expect to be challenged in a positive way when you visit Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery - challenged to encounter art in a way that is different from what is usually expected, and challenged to reflect as well as to experience the art that is on display. The current "Bio-Genesis" exhibit, which is on display until April 7, propels visitors through the intersection of art and science, delighting the intellect and stirring emotion.

On the wall of the gallery located at 3620 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette, beautiful and strange creatures seem to have crawled out from ancient times, coming back to life in vivid colors. The detailed paper sculptures of Judith White Marcellini come straight out of the Cambrian Explosion, when these strange creatures emerged on Earth 540 million years ago.

White Marcellini recreated the creatures in a larger scale - most were only a few millimeters long - using collected fossils from the period. From the flat images set in ancient rocks, she visualized and generated 3D organisms painted in brilliant hues. With the displays, the artist provides explanatory cards that describe what these living things were like.

Also set on the wall is a striking timeline starting with the dawn of existence, represented by a scale of what we know as the evolution of life on Earth, with the arrival of mankind represented by a sliver at the top of the scale. Like the artist, one can't help but wonder what caused the Cambrian Explosion, what caused the relatively sudden multiplication and diversification of life forms after billions of years in a world of simple, single cell life forms.

Next to the creatures from our past, Perlmutter offers a juxtaposition with Jill Taffet's work, whose visual creations explore the relation between creation and consciousness. Taffet is known for her large-scale immersive video installations, motion drawings and New Media. Taffet would have liked to fill an entire dark room with motion drawings at the Perlmutter gallery, but the space does not permit it. Instead, screens have been installed to exhibit the artist's lively creations.

Each animation is made of original paintings, created frame by frame by Taffet. The short videos show the transformation of her vision and repeats itself continuously. Frames representing a specific phase of the work can also be purchased and displayed. Visitors can download an app on a tablet or smartphone and when pointing to the still painting, the entire animation comes to life on the tablet. The artist says her pursuit is to discover new ways of looking, thinking and experiencing the universe in which we live. Her intention is to create phenomenological experiences that evoke wonder and provoke inquiry.

The artistic animations that she created can be purchased on a thumb drive and projected on any screen.

The Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery is open Wednesday through Saturday, from noon to 6 p.m. and by appointment. For more information, visit jenniferperlmuttergallery.com.

Reach the reporter at: sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA