

Published February 28th, 2024

## SMC Museum of Art features three new art exhibits

By Vera Kochan



"Yemaya with Ibeji" by Harmonia Rosales Photos Vera Kochan

Saint Mary's College Museum of Art has introduced three new exhibitions: "Harmonia Rosales's Omega Alpha", "The Decisive Moment: Photo Urbanism in San Francisco Bay, 1930s - 1960s," and "Vignettes -- Select Views of SMCMA's Permanent Collection."

Marking her first Northern California debut is Afro-Cuban artist Rosales's Renaissance-inspired, "Omega Alpha" collection. Her six works on display offer a re-imagining of Western myths and Catholicism through the Black body, which are combined with tales of the Lukami religions and focusing on Black female empowerment while using layers of oil, pigment, and gold in her pieces.

"Rosales's paintings seamlessly blend religious and cultural belief systems," stated SMC Academic and Engagement Curator Britt Royer. "Her work challenges Western discourse yet pulls from these traditions to re-envision Greek heroes and Catholic saints. By intertwining the stories, histories, and beliefs of the African diaspora, Rosales casts visibility on Afro-Cuban heritage. It is an honor for Saint Mary's College to host her debut in Northern California."

In "Yemaya with Ibeji," African people of the Yoruba ethnic group experience a high birth rate of twins. This is interpreted as a sign of good luck, happiness, and prosperity. The common belief is that a single soul was split into two, which represents a balance in the physical world. Yemaya is considered the mother to all and the protector of the Ibeji.

"The Decisive Moment" exhibit includes 26 black and white photographs by Ruth-Marion Baruch, John Gutmann, Pirkle Jones, Peter Stackpole, Brett Weston, and Max Yavno. The images represent historical moments in Bay Area history by capturing what French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson called the "decisive moment," which according to SMC is "a coalescence of the camera's mechanical or 'innate honesty' with the observer's intuitive insight."

"Vignettes" includes over 40 works of art from SMC's permanent collection. Most prominent is the college's landscape collection of William Keith paintings. Additional works on display include modernist European prints by Georges Barque, Marc Chagall, Ursula Fookes, Kathé Kollwitz, Maries Laurencin, and Jacques Villon. Works dedicated to California waterways include pieces by Armin Hansen, Louis LaBrie, Bertha Stringer Lee, Gotardo Piazzoni, Lundy Siegriest, and Mireille Piazzoni Wood. There are pop art pieces by Corita Kent and Andy Warhol; Abstract Expressionism by Seong Moy and Ruth Wall; and contemporary art by Joe Doyle, David Maxim, Diane Rosenblum, and Kal Spelletich.

"Omega Alpha" and "The Decisive Moment" are on display through June 23. "Vignettes" is on display through May 12.

For more information visit: [www.stmarys-ca.edu/museum](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/museum).



"High-rise Construction and Coit Tower from Russian Hill, San Francisco" by Pirkle Jones

Reach the reporter at: [vera@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:vera@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA