

Santa Ysabel Art Gallery

30352 Highway 78 . P.O. Box 480 . Santa Ysabel, CA 92070 . 760-765-1676

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CONTACT: ANNIE ROWLEY
760-765-1676

SANTA YSABEL, CA . . .

SANTA YSABEL ART GALLERY PRESENTS THE APRON FOREST ART FESTIVAL

At Santa Ysabel Art Gallery, September 2nd through October 8th, 2017, will be *The Apron Forest Art Festival*, a special eight person exhibit, guest curated by and including Santa Ysabel Gallery artist Johanna Hansen. Opening Reception for *The Apron Forest Art Festival* is Saturday, September 2nd, 4 - 7 pm. Admission is free. The public is invited.

Johanna Hansen was the gallerist at The Next Door Gallery on Beech Street in San Diego's South Park for years. The gallery exhibited art that was politically astute and often expressed a strong connection with the psyche. There was a grand sense of the naïve to the art on display at The Next Door Gallery. In this Santa Ysabel Art Gallery exhibit the artists that guest curator Johanna Hansen has chosen are those that she showed at her gallery or artists whose relationship with her stem from the fact that they are the makers of pieces that hang in her own extensive "art brut" collection.

Apron Forest is a real spot where Hansen lives and makes her art. Here she has a large outback studio where she makes her painted and whimsical clay creations. At Apron Forest Hansen has outfitted the many trees with stiffened recycled aprons that bear little clay gifts in their pockets for the curious. There are accommodations for her house guests in brightly painted antique trailers on the grounds that she refers to as Kitten's Trailer World and Artist's Retreat. In Johanna Hansen's self-made creative realm her colorful ceramic work is in evidence all around: hanging from branches, hiding in the bushes, and, along with her interesting installations (a long row of

many small and weathered children's chairs on a porch), creating a kind of constantly changing and movable dreamscape, a mini sculpture park with surprises to see and experience as one walks through the forest.

Another clay artist in The Apron Forest Art Festival who is on the playful side is Carol Mayfield. Mayfield describes her process as "carefully carving stories." Mayfield put together "Clay for Kids", a mobile ceramic studio that she drove around to public and private schools, teaching children the art of making with clay.

The painters in the exhibit are J.T. Brodie and Peter J. Geise. Both artists paint in acrylic. Brodie creates "fabulous beasts," pieces constructed with expressive brushwork painted on irregular shapes. In addition to paint, Peter J. Geise uses collage and script to add to the depth and expressiveness of his work.

Collage artist Lupita Shahbazi and embroidery artist Ollie Zinn are also in the show. Shahbazi uses found objects in her mixed media collages, which give her pieces a mystical, surreal, and haunting presence. They remind one of Mexican magical realism. Zinn embroiders simple, figurative images, some isolated on carefully chosen places within the picture frame. The overall feeling in her pieces is one of a mystery to be solved.

Robert Christy is exhibiting his painted wooden wind-up toys. Before becoming a professional artist he taught and studied philosophy, and being true to the philosophical voice, he calls himself a Faux Folk Artist, his toys being a comment on what is commonly referred to as Naïve Art.

Also in the show is Amanda Schaffer, an artist who has walked Europe's famous pilgrimage, The Camino de Santiago. One will see Schaffer's small "ex votos," sculpted wax votive offerings that she makes and leaves at shrines and churches along the pilgrimage route.

Santa Ysabel Art Gallery is located at 30352 Highway 78 at Highway 79 in Santa Ysabel, seven miles below Julian. A feature of the gallery is the James Hubbell room, where the art of Hubbell, San Diego County's internationally known artist, poet, and builder of organic houses is on exhibit. There is no admission fee. Gallery hours are Thursday through Monday, 11AM – 5PM, and by appointment, closed Tuesday and Wednesday. For more information call 760-765-1676.