

Santa Ysabel Art Gallery

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SANTA YSABEL, CA . . .

MARGARET LARLHAM EXHIBIT “BRIAR WHISPER: PAINTINGS OF THE CHAPARRAL”

Opening at Santa Ysabel Art Gallery on Saturday, November 26, Thanksgiving weekend, will be a one person show, *Briar Whisper: Paintings of the Chaparral*. The exhibit will feature the pastel landscape paintings of well-known California artist Margaret Larlham and will run through January 8, 2017. Opening Reception for *Briar Whisper* is Saturday, November 26, 4 - 7 pm. Admission is free. The public is invited.

On display at the exhibit will be recent paintings from the artist, paintings focused on San Diego's wild and untamed local terrain with an eye to California native plants, particularly the chaparral. These Margaret Larlham calls “the self determined hardy things”. Larlham paints in oil as well as with pastel and currently creates phases in the year when she works exclusively with one or the other. She has been featured in [Southwest Art Magazine](#), and in recent years has been awarded several national painting prizes and been included in major national pastel exhibitions.

Margaret Larlham has been painting and exhibiting her work for many years and it is important to note that aside from painting she has led a broad creative life. Larlham has been active not only in the visual arts, but also in dance, storytelling and theatre all of her life. She recently retired as a tenured member of the faculty in the School of Theatre, Television and Film at San Diego State University where her focus was devising and directing plays with SDSU students for youth, both for touring schools and for the theatre. Originally from Durban, South Africa, Larlham came to this country in the 1980's when her husband joined the staff of the drama department at SDSU. She has also been an Artist in Residence with the San Diego Unified School District, filling a role as

official storyteller. She is now able to paint full time and it has become important to her to travel with "painting as she goes" in mind.

Margaret Larlham says of landscape painting in San Diego County: "I live next to Mission Trails Park in San Diego and regularly walk out and paint there in the afternoons." She feels a similarity between Mission Trails and the countryside with which she had such kinship for growing up in South Africa. My family and I have grown roots in this wild track of nature in our back yard. Endlessly changing, the park is a safe place - where we hike, walk the dogs, set up easel and enjoy uninterrupted stillness for a couple of hours - to be part of nature in the midst of San Diego urbanization."

Larlham explains her experience of pastel painting outdoors: "Since June I have painted in pastel at home and abroad. Certainly pastel is easier to transport when traveling, but there is in addition this wonderful freshness and immediacy possible. I have been drawn to the micro-world in, around and under the brush here in California. This unkempt landscape is similar to the African bush. In fact there are many common plants like Chia, etc. The mark and chips of pastel seem to help in this exploration. There is incredible diversity of dark, light, shade, form, and color to be found in these small worlds. What at first seems chaotic has a coherence that always surprises. Pastel captures the jamboree and fierce claims of these hardy plants."

Santa Ysabel Art Gallery is located at 30352 Highway 78 at Highway 79 in Santa Ysabel, seven miles below Julian. Admission to the gallery is free. Gallery hours are Thursday through Monday, 11AM - 5 PM, and by appointment. Closed Tuesday and Wednesday. For more information call 760.765.1676.