

Santa Ysabel Art Gallery

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

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CONTACT: ANNIE ROWLEY
760-765-1676

SANTA YSABEL, CA . . .

SANTA YSABEL ART GALLERY TO EXHIBIT LARRY GROFF SALTON SEA PAINTINGS

At Santa Ysabel Art Gallery, January 20th through March 4th, 2018, will be a one person exhibit featuring oil paintings by San Diego County painter Larry Groff. The title of the exhibit, *a splash quite unnoticed, Salton Sea Paintings*, refers to the region in and around the Salton Sea, the subject matter of this recent group of Groff paintings. Opening Reception for the Larry Groff exhibit is Saturday, January 20th, 4-7 PM. The public is invited. There is no admission fee.

In an Artist's Statement for this exhibit, Larry Groff makes these comments: The Salton Sea is a perfect destination for landscape painting, drawing and photography. The light and atmospheric conditions surrounding the mountains and sea make for a devastatingly beautiful environment. The haunted desolation and its post-apocalyptic ambience is a major draw when looking for visual authenticity and refuge from shopping-mall sameness.

For many years my work has been primarily on outdoor landscapes based on observation from life. I recently have been exploring a new direction with more studio-based inventions and imaginary treatment of the landscape. I have been interested in incorporating a greater narrative component to my work and felt the environmental issues faced by the Salton Sea had many possibilities in terms of pictorial expression. Many of the issues around the Salton Sea are universal ones, such as drought, loss of wildlife habitats, and pollution. I wanted to seek out ways to have landscape painting address my long held involvement with environmental issues.

The Salton Sea was accidentally created by an engineering mishap in 1905 and is California's largest body of water. In the 1950's and 60's it was one of the most popular fishing and resort destinations in California. Gradually, as the lake became far more salty than the ocean, most of the fish died off and the tourist industry collapsed.

For many years agricultural runoff from the Imperial Valley has prevented the lake from evaporating. However, starting in January of 2018 this inflow will cease and eventually cause the lake to shrink dramatically, threatening air quality, wildlife habitat and the local economies. Large swaths of lakebed will become exposed to winds that will send dust and agricultural chemicals to populated areas in Mexico, Imperial Valley, and Palm Springs.

The Salton Sea area provides habitat for more than 400 species of birds and is one of the most important wetlands along the Pacific Flyway. It supports nearly 90% of the migratory route's white pelicans". Groff makes this comment in regard to his upcoming Santa Ysabel Art Gallery exhibit: "I wanted to add my voice to those who celebrate and protect the Salton Sea.

The title of the show, *a splash quite unnoticed*, takes its name from the ending of a poem by William Carlos Williams, *Landscape With The Fall Of Icarus*. Larry Groff holds an MA in painting from Boston University in addition to studying painting at the Massachusetts College of Art. He is editor and owner of the popular website *Painting Perceptions.com* and, in addition to painting, interviews notable painters from around the world.

Santa Ysabel Art Gallery is located at 30352 Highway 78 at the intersection of Highway 79 in Santa Ysabel, seven miles below Julian. Gallery hours are Thursday through Monday, 11 AM-5 PM, closed Tuesday and Wednesday. For more information call gallerist Annie Rowley at (760) 765-1676.