

Art and music mingle

GRAYSPACE GALLERY TO REVEAL NEW EXHIBITION DURING FUNK ZONE ART WALK



COURTESY PHOTOS





GraySpace Gallery

When: 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., July 19: New exhibition runs until August 25. Regular gallery hours: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday and Sunday and 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Where: GraySpace Gallery, 219 Gray Ave., Santa Barbara

Information: artsfundsb.org.

Those who wander around the Funk Zone next Friday evening can catch the opening of “RazzamaJazz,” a new double-media art show at GraySpace Gallery that will have its doors open for the July 19th Funk Zone Art Walk. The show will be GraySpace’s second under the leadership of Ruth Ellen Hoag, whose musically-themed paintings will adorn about half of the wall space in the studio. The remainder will display the offbeat porcelain works of sculptor Joan Rosenberg-Dent, who told the News-Press her pairing with Ms. Hoag makes “RazzamaJazz” a “perfect name.”

“What brought us together was that we rhythmic patterns going on in our work. My pieces are a lot of repetition and have that feel to it, and her pieces definitely refer to music,” Ms. Rosenberg-Dent said.

When one takes a look at Ms. Hoag’s paintings, the connection to jazz and music in general is clear. With a background playing French horn, Ms. Hoag was primarily a classical musician, but her New York upbringing meant jazz was always part of her “heart and soul.” Amongst the pieces that will be displayed for “RazzamaJazz” will be a painting of a French horn player and a mural depicting the history of the Funk Zone, which includes a plethora of different musicians. When the News-Press stopped by GraySpace on Wednesday afternoon, the mural and a few smaller paintings were tucked into the studio’s back room while the walls of the studio’s main room weren’t yet adorned, but Ms. Hoag’s vibrant use of color made the paintings hard to miss.

On the other hand, Ms. Rosenberg-Dent works almost exclusively with porcelain because of her love of white, made all the more apparent by the all-white outfit she wore during the News-Press’ visit. She explained her preference for ceramics over 2-D art forms is related to her days as a dancer, during which she viewed herself as

“the form” and was very aware of the space around her.

“When I stopped dancing, my pieces became the form and I choreographed the space around them. So that’s kind of how I’m a very 3-D person... I don’t like to do paintings or drawings. I need to feel the material, and see it on all sides, and embrace it and touch it. It has to be a thing,” she said.

Ms. Rosenberg-Dent prefers “naked porcelain” and doesn’t glaze her ceramics so they retain a translucent quality. One wall piece making its debut during the art walk is named “Reveal,” and includes six square pieces of symmetrically arranged porcelain peeled back at their bottom right-hand corners to varying degrees. When hung on the wall, its depth will be enhanced by specific lighting, which will create shadows that become “part of the piece.”

“I’m always aware when I make my pieces that I do want the shadows to get involved with the piece, so make them with that in mind,” she said.

For Ms. Rosenberg-Dent, she hopes the upcoming exhibition will “inspire and excite new eyes” and show the public a method of doing porcelain ceramics beyond ordinary pottery. She added that her art will be “mind-boggling” to people who have yet to see her work, as they may initially wonder what kind of material her pieces are made from.

Ms. Hoag concurred and recalled how this happened at GraySpace’s first show, which featured a few of Ms. Rosenberg-Dent’s pieces.

“People would look at it and go, ‘What is it?’ because it looks soft, but it’s china,” Ms. Hoag said.

In the remaining week, Ms. Hoag will be preparing her studio so “RazzamaJazz” is a different show than the gallery’s last. This entails not just arranging and mounting the art pieces in a unique way, but repainting the walls on which they hang. Ms. Hoag told the News-Press that she intends to change up the studio with each new show held there, as she wants “people to come back because they know it’s going to be a different experience, not just paintings on white walls.”

GraySpace Gallery will be open from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. on July 19 and the new exhibition will run until August 25. Regular gallery hours are 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Thursday and Sunday and 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. GraySpace Gallery is located at 219 Gray Avenue.

The Funk Zone Art Walk will be held between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. on July 19 and will have around 20 studios, galleries, and art-centric venues opening their doors to the public, according to artsfundsb.org. ■