

PREVIEWART

Eight painters take 'Road Trip' in Belmont

THE CREATIVE PATHS of eight Bay Area painters are explored in "Road Trip," an exhibition on view through Jan. 24 at the 1870 Art Center Gallery in Belmont. A reception for the show is scheduled from 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday.

Among the featured artists are Carlo Abruzzese, Sherrod Blankner, Lorrie Fink, Judy Levit, Jane Norling, Michael Sacramento, Anne Subercaseaux and Jon Wessel.

The multigenerational and multicultural group, named Roadtrip Artists, began in 2005 as a critical forum for presenting works in progress. It since has expanded into a monthly gathering for the exchange of ideas, sharing resources and offering one another support.

Wessel lives in San Francisco and has his studio at the 1870 Art Center. Previously, he focused on experimentation with digital manipulation of scanned paintings and drawings. More recently, he has incorporated segments of old posters and fliers into mixed-media works.

He first noticed the random patterns made by multiple copies of the same poster or ad plastered on plywood walls protecting construction sites. Over time, he saw how the layers of paper became thicker, providing a kind of "archeological record."

He began to include scraps of found posters in his artwork, combining the fragments with his own practice of gestural mark making. As he worked, he discovered he was more intrigued with the undersides of the paper fragments than with their surface. "Compared to the front sides, the hidden undersides revealed a subtler, unexpected and strangely rich world where language

was backwards and colors were often more muted," he says in his artist's statement.

Themes of temporality and notoriety have emerged from Wessel's current work. "My appropriated materials remind me that fame and notoriety are



BONNY ZANARDI

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fleet-
ing, that human endeavors fade with time, that eventually the famous and the forgotten become indistinguishable," he notes. With some irony, Wessel finds comfort and hope in this idea. "Removed from the harsher realities of time, I'm left with the present moment, a place full of possibility."

Abruzzese, an architect based in San Francisco, is a self-taught painter. In his art he experiments with an interplay between linear perspectives and the "unruliness" found in the organic realm.

In his artist's statement, he points out his use of "simple materials — acrylic paints, graphite pencils and rulers — to create complex, layered paintings." As an artist, Abruzzese says he is "motivated by exploring the oscillations between the linear and the organic in the physical world, and between inner and outer experiences."

Blankner, a member of the Fourth Street Studio artists' community in Berkeley, has studied landscape painting for many years. She notes the influence of Monet, Hopper, Diebenkorn and Thiebaud in developing her aesthetic sense. "You can tell they loved to paint and you can imagine their arms moving rapidly across the canvas with different brushes,"



1870 ART CENTER GALLERY

Jon Wessel's 40-by-30-inch mixed-media work "Broadway" is part of the "Road Trip" exhibit at the 1870 Art Center Gallery through Jan. 24.

she says. "They weren't dabbling timidly at their canvasses, but roughly embracing their art."

Fink, an Oakland-based painter and designer, was raised in Washington, D.C., and often enjoyed beach-combing adventures along the Atlantic coast. Her colorful oil paintings are inspired by the natural world. Fink is a founding partner of the Seventeenth Street Studios design firm.

Norling, too, grew up on the East Coast. She graduated from Bennington College and designed books at Random House before moving to San Francisco in 1970. A muralist, graphic designer and poster artist, Norling has a passion for

environmental issues. She says she derives great joy from interpreting glaciers, river canyons and other places of vast natural beauty she has visited. She has a painting studio in Oakland and a design studio in Berkeley.

Levit, an Oakland-based psychotherapist, uses a variety of materials, including charcoal, acrylic, hand-painted collage papers, newsprint and fabric, to create abstract paintings. In her work as a psychotherapist, she listens for things unspoken or unconscious. "In painting, I think of the lines and marks that appear and disappear as the thoughts and impulses living within me and all of

us, unspoken but articulate," she says in her artist's statement.

Sacramento, originally from the Philippines, earned his Bachelor of Arts at San Francisco State University. Like Blankner, Sacramento's art is informed by Thiebaud and Hopper. His work also is influenced by comic books and urban art.

Subercaseaux spends time in the South of France as well as in San Francisco. In her art, she juxtaposes man-made constructions with natural elements in the landscape. Shadows cast on surfaces yield abstract imagery in her work.

In addition to the larger pieces on exhibit, "Road Trip: Eight at the 1870" includes a collection of 4-by-4-inch artworks created especially for the show and priced at \$50 each. The Roadtrip Artists will donate a portion of the show's proceeds to Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo counties.

The gallery is at 1870 Raiston Ave. Hours are 1-5 p.m. Thursdays-Sundays. Admission is free. Contact 650-594-1577 or www.1870artcenter.org.

Student artists

Portraits created by Wendy Smithers' third-grade students are on display through Dec. 18 at the San Mateo County Office of Education Art Gallery. The youngsters are students at Spruce Elementary School in the South San Francisco Unified School District.

They created layered portraits using photographs, tempera paints and pastel line drawings on tracing paper. Check out their wonderful work at 101 Twin Dolphin Drive, Redwood City. Gallery hours are 8 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays. Call Gaila Jennings, elementary

The Peninsula Arts Council has added a special Amazon shopping section to its Web site, which features works by artists, writers and filmmakers with a connection to the Peninsula and other locales.

art resource teacher, at 650-877-3973.

Open on the Coast

This weekend, more than 40 artists are participating in the 2009 Pacifica Small Works/Open Studios event at the Sanchez Art Center. Admission is free.

Hours are 7-9 p.m. today and 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday-Sunday at 1229 Linda Mar Blvd., Pacifica. Visit www.pacificapenstudios.com.

Local talent

The Peninsula Arts Council has added a special Amazon shopping section to its Web site, which features works by artists, writers and filmmakers with a connection to the Peninsula and other Bay Area locales. You can order books, films and other goods through the site and benefit the PAC at the same time.

The DVD film collection, curated by the PAC in conjunction with the San Mateo County Film Commission, features more than 65 movies filmed in San Mateo County, including "Heaven Can Wait" and "The Wedding Planner," both shot at Filoli Mansion. Visit www.peninsulaartscouncil.org.

Reach Bonny Zanardi at Bzanardi@aol.com.