

“Echoes: Women Inspired by Nature”
Co-Curated by Betty Ann Brown and Linda Vallejo
at the
Orange County Center for Contemporary Art (OCCCA)

Exhibition Dates

April 5 - May 20, 2007

Opening Receptions

April 5 and May 5, 6-10 pm

Full Color Catalog

[Link to Pdf Here](#)

*with essay written by Dr. Betty Ann Brown and
designed by Dr. Paula DiMarco, Roadwork Design*

PAINTING HERE

Linda Vallejo, "Electric Oaks on the Hillside," 2007, Oil on Canvas, 5' x 7'

Echoes: Women Inspired by Nature will be presented at the Orange County Center for Contemporary Art (OCCCA) from April 5 through May 20, 2007. Curated by art historian Betty Ann Brown and visual artist Linda Vallejo, the exhibition will highlight the work of 21 women artists who focus on the natural environment. In artwork that ranges from traditional easel painting, to the newer media of photography and installation, to the very Postmodern use of non-art materials such as Gummy Bear candies, these artists call out attention to the beauty and wonder of the natural world, and to humanity's deep and abiding connection with it. They also address issues such as pollution, over-consumption of resources, scientific atrocities and animal abuse. This exhibition will coincide with the *WACK!* Exhibition at MOCA and other related pan-Southern California exhibitions focused on women's art during that period.

We don't need to have seen Al Gore's compelling documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, to become aware of the devastating environmental changes in recent years. On an almost daily basis, television newscasters report on the destructive results of toxic spills, raging fires, rising pollution, or the horrific storms exacerbated by climate changes. Although artists are neither politicians (no matter how politically engaged), nor environmental scientists (no matter how intrigued by the vicissitudes of scientific inquiry), they can and do respond to the state of the natural world around them. In creating new and intriguing images of nature, artists can compel us to view our natural environment with fresh eyes. As Rachel Carson has noted, "The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe about us, the less taste we shall have for destruction."

A full color catalog has been published in conjunction with the exhibition with essay written by art historian, critic, and curator **Dr. Betty Ann Brown**. Dr. Brown was trained in Latin American art history, receiving her B.A. from Southern Methodist University, her Masters degree from the University of Texas at Austin, and her Ph.D. from the University of New Mexico. After moving to Los Angeles in the late 1970s, her interest began to shift to Chicano art and, ultimately, to contemporary art. She has worked as a contributing editor

for Arts, Artweek and the Los Angeles Reader, writes frequently for Artscene, and was founding editor of Visions, the Los Angeles art quarterly. In her writing and curating, Brown has focused on feminism, identity, and the use of art as a community building tool. She and Arlene Raven co-wrote Exposures, Women & Art, a volume with essays on fifty contemporary American women artists. Her edited anthology, Expanding Circles: Women, Art & Community, was published by Midmarch Arts Press. Her volume on Surrealism, Gradiva's Mirror: Reflections on Women, Surrealism & Art History won the CSUN Scholarly Publications Award in 2003. Brown is a professor in the Department of Art at California State University, Northridge. **Dr. Paula DiMarco and her company Roadword Design** have designed the "Echoes" catalog. Dr. DiMarco is a design educator, researcher, and graphic artist with an interest in social awareness in the design of visual culture. She is a professor in graphic design, at California State University, Northridge and has worked for over ten years in design education. Originally from the east coast, Paula worked independently as a graphic designer for Met Life, MTV, SPIN Magazine, and a variety of design studios in New York City. Roadwork Design and she has been involved in design solutions for several non-profit organizations. Her mission is to humanize graphic art and design through didactic and reflective imagery in a visual culture society.

"ECHOES" ARTISTS

The "Echoes" artists listen to nature and tell of the stories they have heard. Some of the stories glory in nature's beauty and power. Others bemoan our ongoing abuse of nature. But all of them acknowledge our oneness with nature and our desperate need to respect and love her. The artists respond to nature in three elegantly interconnected ways. They create art that reveals an awe of nature's beauty and power. They create art that manifests a feeling of meditative oneness with nature (rather than domination over nature or separation from it.) And they create art that mourns the losses from environmental abuse.

IN AWE OF NATURE'S BEAUTY & POWER

"Joy in looking and comprehending is nature's most beautiful gift." Albert Einstein, German physicist

- **Patsy COX** uses the intense, saturated colors to fill up, even overwhelm, her installation space of clumping cactus
- **Astrid PRESTON** creates riveting images of trees and flowers that are so finely crafted they astonish the viewer
- **Susan SILTON** returns birds to the gorgeous rush of nature's cycles
- **Linda VALLEJO** participates Native American ceremony and is keenly aware of the sanctity of nature
- **Miriam WOSK** presents dense, rich, and elaborate views of the ocean depths
- **Takako YAMAGUCHI** recalls the decorative elegance of Japanese scrolls and screens

MEDITATIVE ONENESS WITH NATURE

"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." William Shakespeare, English dramatist

- **Judith F. BACA** depicts the ancestors united with the rocks and hills and caves
- **H. Barbara CUTLER** assembles nature's detritus and recycles it into sartorial statements about our connection to the constantly regenerative powers of nature
- **Cheryl EKSTROM** senses the continued beauty in the world, of our oneness with natural cycles, and our need to press on even in grief

- **Suvan GEER** focuses on the body's time and the cycles of nature
- **Pamela GRAU TWENA** is troubled by humanity's ongoing disregard for nature and wonders what nature may do in response
- **Akiko JACKSON** evokes poetic allusion through forms sharing physical and functional affinities
- **Lezley SAAR** combines found black and white photographs with whimsical yet sophisticated drawings focused on natural forms

MOURNING THE LOSSES

"Ultimately, it is the earth – which has supported us and loved us and caressed us –that we must now stand up for, for she is under the gravest danger ever in the history of man." Chief Eddie Benton Banai, Grand Chief of the Three Fires Society

- **Kim ABELES** presents a potent testimony to governmental disdain about pollution
- **Rabyn BLAKE** creates fragile boats evoking a nostalgic sense of loss
- **Yaya CHOU** asks "Why are these artificially flavored and colored products so widely present and persistent?" with her Gummy Bear sculpture
- **Cheryl Marie DULLABAUN** asks what we have done to the paradise of nature
- **Samantha FIELDS** combines the tradition of landscape painting with contemporary environmental concern
- **Linda FROST** explores the abuses of genetic research and manipulation.
- **Cheri GAULKE** shares the artist's concern about the loss of numerous frog species
- **Holly TEMPO** is concerned about the accelerating destruction of the tropical rain forests

The Orange County Center for Contemporary Art (OCCCA) is an artist operated California non-profit corporation dedicated to the pursuit of professional excellence and freedom of expression in the arts. It provides emerging and established artists a forum to explore and develop ideas in contemporary art in an atmosphere that promotes experimentation and risk-taking, but without the specter of censorship. In addition, OCCCA develops and actively participates in public educational, outreach and community art services. The Orange County Center for Contemporary Art is committed to cultural diversity.

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