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by

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Still the best 'lil gallery you never heard of.

You didn't know it was there unless you live in South Bay, that is....because Cannery Row's shows get a ton of press in Easy Reader & The Beach Reporter, and the openings are well-attended by locals. Including me.

Not only are there opening receptions but closing receptions as well. One recent invite said it's a "celebratory atmosphere" & this is certainly true.

The current show of Japanese art, curated by Emiko Wake & John Cantu, ends Sunday, day after tomorrow. The opening night offered, in addition to interesting artworks, great food and spirits and music, as always. I met artists, art teachers, art lovers from all walks of life. After perusing two rooms of art, I parked myself in a chair in the middle of the party and did some serious people-watching, camera in hand.

I know from personal experience (as a former gallery owner) that organizing monthly shows is a lot of work: selecting themes & artists & works, hanging & unhangng, packing, hauling, promoting...designing & printing invites, giving interviews to the press, making signs....it's endless. Sometimes you sell some stuff (even artists have to eat), but the true driving force behind the effort is a pure love of visual art.

(I will say that, when dealing with a slew of offbeat, normally temperamental artists, it helps to be one yourself.)

Picasso is credited with saying that "art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life" but I like this quote of his even better: "Art is the elimination of the unnecessary."

On a lighter note, Andy Warhol said that "art is anything you can get away with."

For me, whether I'm creating art or viewing it, art bridges the gap between escape and returning home.

So Cannery Row's next show opens the evening of October 1st. It's a 50 year retrospective + new works by Wilfred Sarr. He was painting in the parking lot in front of the gallery the other day, I love it. He gave me a bunch of promo material for his upcoming show & referred to it as "propaganda".

Artists are delightful people if you can get past the fact that we're all crazy, I mean visionary.

I'm trying very hard not to work as an artist again, trying to avoid the pile of newly-purchased canvases cluttering my garage. Over my lifetime I've breathed enough paint fumes & pastel dust to choke a herd of horses and I'll be damned if I'll ride that train again.

Which means I'd better stay away from that inspirational place called Cannery Row, but I don't think I can...