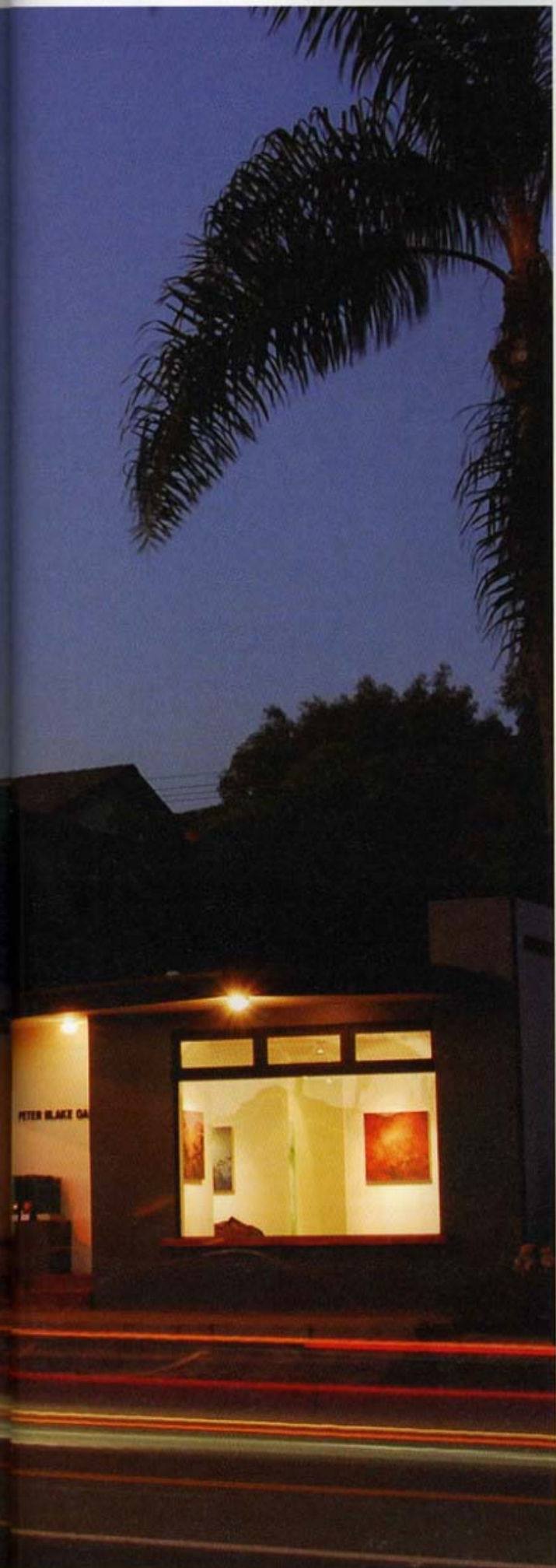


# LAGUNA

## A Place In the Sun

Orange County is coming into its own as an art destination





Orange County has been knocking on the door of the Los Angeles art scene with growing insistence for the past two decades. With the renaming of the Orange County Museum of Art (OCMA) in 1996, the Museum officially recognized the three million residents across the County's nearly 800 square miles. And with the success of recent exhibitions such as "Mary Heilmann: To Be Someone," which graced the cover of *Art in America* in November 2007, and the traveling exhibition "Birth of the Cool: California Art, Design, and Culture at Mid-Century," plus heightened interest in the Museum's long-running California Biennial, which occurs again this fall, OCMA has firmly established Orange County as an art destination.

Many of the leading contemporary gallerists in the area describe the increased dialogue between Orange and Los Angeles counties as akin to building a bridge. However, Orange County still maintains its own personality. As Peter Blake, a fifteen-year veteran of the Laguna Beach art scene, says, "Orange County is becoming a responsible neighbor to Los Angeles." Although the bridge metaphor may become obsolete as the two areas continue to merge, Orange County's art scene will undoubtedly maintain the distinctive essence that has been cultivated here, since artists' colonies sprung up along the coast at the turn of the century.

Bolton Colburn, Director of the Laguna Art Museum, says, "There is a growing and vibrant collecting scene particularly in Laguna Beach, but also in the coastal region of south Orange County." Colburn describes the Museum's role as aiding in "developing the interests of burgeoning collectors. It does this mainly through its exhibition and education programs as well as through its various councils. The exhibition program brings new thoughts and scholarship to these collectors, while the Museum programming gets these collectors involved with particular artists, curators, and historians." The Museum's three-part exhibition program addresses work in the historical, contemporary, and



"JAGE FLYER," 2007  
**Jimi Gleason,**  
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 24" X 24"  
PHOTO COURTESY OF PETER BLAKE GALLERY

## LAGUNA / OC ART GALLERIES

### Diana Ferrone Gallery

1951 South Coast Highway  
Laguna Beach, CA 92651  
[www.dianaferrone.com](http://www.dianaferrone.com)

### Laguna Art Museum

307 Cliff Drive  
Laguna Beach, CA 92651  
[www.lagunaartmuseum.org](http://www.lagunaartmuseum.org)

### Laguna College of Art & Design

2222 Laguna Canyon Road  
Laguna Beach, CA 92651  
[www.lagunacollege.edu](http://www.lagunacollege.edu)

### Mandarin Fine Art

1294 South Coast Hwy, Suite C  
Laguna Beach, CA 92651  
[www.mandarinfineart.com](http://www.mandarinfineart.com)

### Marion Meyer Gallery

354 North Coast Highway  
Laguna Beach, CA 92651  
[www.marionmeyergallery.com](http://www.marionmeyergallery.com)

### Peter Blake Gallery

326 North Coast Highway  
Laguna Beach, CA 92651  
[www.peterblakegallery.com](http://www.peterblakegallery.com)

### Rohrer Fine Art

346 North Coast Highway  
Laguna Beach, CA 92651  
[www.rohrerfineart.com](http://www.rohrerfineart.com)

### Sue Greenwood Fine Art

330 North Coast Hwy  
Laguna Beach, CA 92651  
[www.suegreenwoodfineart.com](http://www.suegreenwoodfineart.com)

### Wendt Contemporary Gallery

1550 Pacific Coast Highway  
Suite 102  
Laguna Beach, CA 92651  
[www.wendtgallery.com](http://www.wendtgallery.com)

### 98ten Fine Art Gallery

9810 Irvine Center Dr.  
Irvine, CA 92618  
[www.98tenfineart.com](http://www.98tenfineart.com)

### Orange County Museum Of Art

850 San Clemente Drive  
Newport Beach, CA 92660  
[www.ocma.net](http://www.ocma.net)

### Scape

2859 East Coast Highway  
Corona Del Mar, CA 92625  
[www.scapecite.com](http://www.scapecite.com)



ally to California. Many of these shows, particularly those in the contemporary and pop culture genres, are cutting-edge in their approach. Among recent examples was a two-person, large-scale exhibition of Tim Biskup and Gary Baseman, entitled "Pervasion."

The concept of Southern California Art Projects and Exhibitions (SCAPE) also reflects a commitment to art education. The product of a fifteen-year creative partnership between Diane Nelson and Jeannie Denholm, SCAPE combines an art advising business with exhibitions and projects series, both in and outside of the gallery setting. Nelson and Denholm kicked off their long-lasting series of "art house" projects at the home of a local architect in 1991. Denholm recalls the duo's excitement over "the idea of complementing art with architecture. We loved setting up a dialogue in that way." Denholm and Nelson



# SUZAN WOODRUFF

March 1st thru April 14th



*What Water Dreams II* acrylic/panel 60" x 96"

# NATHAN FISCHER

April 16th thru May 31st



*Fusion patina/bronze panel* 20" x 44"

## DIANA

## FERRONE

gallery & fine art consulting

1951 South Coast Highway  
Laguna Beach, CA 92651 949.715.1842  
info@DianaFerrone.com www.DianaFerrone.com



are currently in their third year of participating in OCMA's art and architecture tour. "We're always trying to put art into the context of people's daily lives. Our business is born from that," Denholm adds. "It's a real process discovering the kind of art that a client can live with. Some people come to us with specific ideas, or they already have a collection. Other people are really starting from the beginning. The key is a lot of exposure and reminding them not to buy with their ears. You should buy with your eyes," she adds. "We really try to get people past that hype and instead focus on an interest that runs deeper. Buying art to live with is not just about the artist's name; it has to be about the art itself."

This dual commitment to education and cultural stewardship is a vein that runs deep in the exhibition programs of many of the anchoring galleries of the contemporary art scene in Orange County. Peter Blake Gallery has also made great strides in providing access to the visual arts through the founding of Laguna Beach's First Thursday Art Walk. Blake, whose gallery recently celebrated its fifteenth anniversary, points out that the concentration of galleries in Laguna Beach is in fact representative of incredible diversity. Even now in its tenth year, the Art Walk still attracts between three- and five-hundred visitors every month. Blake says, "If individuals are open-minded they'll get a real cross section of work at the Art Walk." Making their way from the early California galleries at the south end of town, to the more commercial galleries in the middle of town, and winding up at the contemporary galleries to the north (where Peter Blake Gallery, Sue Greenwood Gallery, and Laguna Art Museum are located) many visitors make stops at all the galleries during the festive evening.

TOP LEFT:  
ART INSTRUCTION AT THE LAGUNA COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN

MIDDLE:  
"RIDICULE IS NOTHING TO BE SCARED OF," 2005  
**James Gobel**  
FELT, YARN, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS  
TRIPTYCH: 90" X 192"  
COLLECTION OF STEPHEN HEIGHTON  
COURTESY OF KRAVETS / WEHBY GALLERY

BOTTOM LEFT:  
"PRISM," 2007  
**Eva Carter**, OIL ON CANVAS, 48" X 60"  
PHOTO COURTESY OF MARION MEYER CONTEMPORARY ART

TOP:  
"GRANDMA'S STOCKS," 2007  
**David Lyle**, OIL ON PAPER, 24" X 24"  
PHOTO COURTESY OF SUE GREENWOOD FINE ART

"Art teaches nothing...



except the significance of life."

Henry Miller

### FOR ALL YOUR ART NEEDS

ART ADVISING    COLLECTION MANAGEMENT    EXHIBITIONS

# s c a p e

southern california art projects and exhibitions

2859 e. coast highway, corona del mar, california 92625    p 949 723 3406    f 949 723 3407    www.scapesite.com

spaces like OCMA and Laguna Art Museum as well as a handful of contemporary galleries, the areas in Orange County that were formerly stigmatized as quaint beach communities specializing in plein-air painting are finally carving out a niche on the contemporary art market map. Since the founding of Peter Blake Gallery in 1993, the gallery has shown a wide variety of artists, ranging from heavy hitters such as Charles Arnoldi and Tony Berlant to significant younger painters such as Jennifer Shaw and Orange County-based Jimi Gleason. Says Blake, "We have between twelve and twenty shows per year at the gallery. If people subject themselves to all these different types of art they start to develop confidence in their eye. If you show them enough, they start to get it and then to seek it out on their own.

The recently opened 98ten Gallery in Irvine also points to the growing cultural sophistication of Orange County. 98ten curator Sarah Park, formerly co-curator of Andrew Shire Gallery in Los Angeles, says, "I'm very realistic about my goals here; I don't imagine that we're going to be competing with the New York-Chelsea art scene in the next couple years. However we are committed to doing something here in Irvine and to bringing in artists who people might not see otherwise."

Citing plans for collaboration on a lecture series that will take place in a different location across the county every six weeks, Park and gallery owner Nicholas Tran aim to familiarize their clients with art in a broad range of spaces across Orange County. Tran, the owner of a custom software firm, has an abiding passion for the arts and commitment to making his space available as a locus for artistic experimentation and education. Just minutes away from the Irvine Spectrum at the intersection of the 5 and 405 freeways, from the outside 98ten Gallery is an unexpected site for contemporary art. Tran's corporate offices are located in the upper floors while the gallery occupies a large space with a distinctly urban feel on the ground level. Two side galleries are dedicated to the installation of artist projects and Tran's involvement with the tech industry will allow 98ten's artists enviable access to the newest in electronics for the display and creation of video and new media work.

Tran, who grew up in Irvine, remembers, "Orange County always seemed two or three years behind L.A. Our ultimate goal is to bridge that gap and get Orange County on pace with L.A."

After a century of proving its sustainability, no longer content to bask in the shadow of its sprawling northern neighbor, sunny Orange County is clearly ready to shine.

—KIM BEIL

## DISMANTLING DATA

Greg Colson  
*Untitled*  
2008, Pigment Print



March 1 thru April 26, 2008  
**OPENING RECEPTION** March 1, 6-9pm

FEATURING  
Greg Colson, Jenny Herrick, Asad Faulwell

Jenny Herrick  
*Untitled*  
2006, Gouache on Paper



98ten Fine Art  
9810 Irvine Center Drive Irvine, CA 92618  
gallery 949.727.4105 fax 949.752.7047  
www.98tenfineart.com