

**THE EIGHTH ANNUAL INVITATIONAL DRAWING SHOW
July 21 to October 19, 2008**

**Earl & Birdie Taylor Library/Pacific Beach Branch
San Diego, California**

CURATOR'S STATEMENT AND OVERVIEW OF THE FEATURED ARTISTS

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San Diego Public Library**

“The Eighth Annual Invitational Drawing Show” will undoubtedly rank as one of the most exciting and diverse exhibitions in the history of the San Diego Public Library’s Visual Arts Program. I would like to extend a special thanks to the invited artists, many of whom spent months rigorously confronting the challenge of creating works especially for this event. Their enthusiasm was inspiring and gratifying.

As in previous years of drawing exhibitions, the long-time professionals who were selected for the current drawing show remain reliable and consistent, represented by beautifully resolved and thought-provoking drawings that attest to a lifetime of training and experience. However, for the first time, a group of younger artists (in their twenties and thirties) make up nearly half of the participants in the exhibition. Their drawings are ambitious in scale, concept, and execution, reflecting prodigious talent and dedication. I believe that art aficionados will be elated by this vitality, especially in a world of new media where fundamentally skilled draftsmen continue to struggle for recognition.

The purpose of “The Eighth Annual,” like that of its predecessors, is not to advance a particular conceptual or stylistic agenda, but rather to demonstrate the beauty and versatility of drawing media in the hands of accomplished fine artists. The fact that most of the works on display this year are grounded in some form of representation or figuration is purely coincidental. It should be noted, however, that many of the selected works have a pronounced abstract quality, and it is this attribute that gives them an edge.

The “Annual Drawing Shows” are diverse enough to offer something for everyone from serious collectors to the man on the street, but their target audience is art students who rarely have the opportunity to view drawing exhibitions and who are at a critical juncture in their creative and technical growth. In the opinion of this curator, whether students eventually become the most obsessive realists or anti-object-making conceptualists, developing well-honed drawing skills will make them better artists. Sensitivity to visual and art media is increased, and communication and observational skills are sharpened in unequalled ways. For curators and others who are called upon daily to hastily evaluate works by artists unknown to them, the strength of an artist’s drawing skills (especially in the discipline of life drawing) can provide invaluable insight into his or her mind-set and fundamental competence.

Drawing is an exceptionally elegant and poetic means of expression, so I am addressing not only technique, but also nuance and restraint on many levels. This insight comes with artistic maturity and is a level of sophistication that many so-called professional artists never reach. Certainly, nothing fosters the connection between the viewer and artist more than the immediacy of the mark-making that is integral to the drawing process.

THE ARTISTS

Bill Canales – Bill Canales’ love of drawing began in the third grade. Largely self-taught, Canales has been a tattoo artist for 16 years and cites Asian tattooing as a major influence. His skills have earned him several awards. The two nearly life-sized, graphically powerful works by Canales in “The Eighth Annual” are drawings for “back pieces” and demonstrate his talent for creating large designs that integrate perfectly with the human form. Canales owns a tattoo studio in Ocean Beach and lives with his wife and daughter in the College area.

Joshua Eggleton – Meticulously rendered in graphite, Joshua Eggleton’s large-scale, representational drawings are surreal and autobiographical. Their themes, conveyed through imagery like power tools, construction rubble, and full-figure depictions of himself (some or all of these elements may be seen floating mid-air) relate to his work in the construction trades. Eggleton’s drawings have been exhibited in several important exhibitions and galleries nationwide. He received his MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2007 and lives in Encanto Heights with his wife Xuchi, who is also an artist. The artist’s statement about his drawings is available on request.

Ken Goldman – A dedicated artist and teacher, Ken Goldman is one of San Diego’s most popular realist painters and draftsmen. Goldman’s best known subjects are landscapes depicting the coastal areas of San Diego, but his true mastery emerges in his life drawings. Among Goldman’s works in this exhibition is a pair of pastel drawings, *Calico I* and *Calico II* (pictured on the exhibition postcard.) These portraits of white rabbits with mottled markings shown in profile against light backgrounds demonstrate Goldman’s masterful draftsmanship and extraordinary sense of light and color. His use of the pastel medium is simultaneously sumptuous and sublime. Goldman lives and works with his wife, Stephanie (who is also a well known artist), in the Sports Arena area. In 2002, Ken and Stephanie Goldman, his brother Robert, his mother Maxine, and his half-brother, Samuel Dana Pottish, were featured in a Visual Arts Program group exhibition, “A Family of Artists.”

Scott R. Horsley – Currently an MFA candidate at UCSD (with an emphasis in drawing), Scott R. Horsley received a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. He created the largest drawing in the exhibition, executed in graphite on a single sheet of watercolor paper measuring four by nine feet. Titled *Disintercourse*, Horsley’s chilling work depicts two lines of dozens of figures “posing” in full-body-protective hazmat suits. The image, made all the more threatening by the elaborate breathing apparatus covering each individual’s head, is part of an ongoing series of dream-like drawings that explore the relationships between masculinity and technology in the context of sex, violence, and absurdity. Horsley is already being noticed by cutting-edge dealers and collectors locally and in Los Angeles. He is a resident of South Mission Beach. The artist’s statement about his drawing is available on request.

Neill Ketchum – Neill Ketchum, a resident of Fallbrook, is best known for prints, paintings, and mixed-media drawings depicting densely wooded countryside. In some works, barely visible creatures creep through the underbrush or glide through the treetops. Although Ketchum’s imagery appears to be relatively loose and spontaneous, her major drawings require considerable preplanning. Working from sketches made on location, photographs, and studio drawings, Ketchum’s line work is executed on top of detailed, preliminary images resembling watercolors

(subtly colored washes used in combination with a liquid frisket masking technique.) *Hawaiian Forest*, an ambitious work that is dark in tonality and mood, was inspired by the artist's visit to a remote forest surrounding Captain Cook Monument on the island of Hawaii. The subject of another important Ketchum landscape in the exhibition, *Live Oak Creek, South*, is a stream flowing beneath the trees on the artist's sprawling Fallbrook property. Ketchum earned a Master's Degree in Art, a Ph.D. in art education, and has taught at the university level.

Clayton Llewellyn – Clayton Llewellyn's astonishing imagery depicts worlds in which mechanical and organic forms have coalesced or morphed into grotesque entities. Sometimes Llewellyn's scenarios seem futuristic, and at other times, they appear to depict elements in a medieval hell. In one odd pair of drawings, *Evolutional Whimsy I* and *Evolutional Whimsy II*, pouches of skin bulge with indeterminate contents. *Synchronicity II*, a triptych spanning eight-and-a-half feet, offers a panoramic view of a colony of mutated cylindrical whistles whose bubbles percolate upwards in a sea of green liquid. These reflect Llewellyn's latest experiments with earth-toned, delicately tinted backgrounds suggesting antiquity or alien atmospheres of other planets. Llewellyn received his MFA in 2006 from the San Francisco Art Institute and teaches art-related courses at local colleges. Llewellyn's drawings have been included in several prestigious exhibitions and publications and he is scheduled for a solo Visual Arts Program exhibition in 2009. He lives in City Heights.

Alexia Markarian – Respected as one of the most distinctive artistic voices in the city, Alexia Markarian's thought-provoking and irreverent drawings are populated by quirky, disenchanting figures operating on the fringes of sanity. In some ways, her drawings are even more immediate and visceral than her paintings which were the subject of a recent, critically acclaimed Visual Arts Program solo exhibition. Two books of Markarian's drawings, published in conjunction with her solo exhibition at the library, are available for purchase in the gallery during the run of "The Eighth Annual." In 2008, Markarian's works were featured in a Visual Arts Program solo exhibition. The full text of the library curator's statement on Markarian's art is available on request. Markarian lives and works in La Mesa.

Colby Nichols – A designer and illustrator with a quirky sense of humor and edgy style that set him apart from other artists of his generation, Colby Nichols received his art education at the Art Institute of California, San Diego, in 2004. Nichols' works comment on life in general and, according to the artist, "Every piece has a message and a story behind it." Two of Nichols' drawings in "The Eighth Annual" deal with episodes of vertigo he recently suffered. Nichols, age 25, is the youngest artist in this exhibition. He is a resident of Rancho Bernardo.

Herbert Olds – Herbert Olds has been described as one of the most important representational artists and teachers of his generation. As a professor of art at Carnegie Mellon University for thirty years, Olds taught anatomy, life drawing, beginning and advanced drawing, art theory, and other art-related courses. His skills rival those of Van Eyck, Dürer, Rembrandt, Ingres, Degas, and other masters from whom he has derived spiritual, thematic, and technical inspiration throughout his career. Olds' most ambitious drawings (such as *Anatomy Lesson* in this exhibition) are large, compositionally complex works featuring the human figure (usually himself, his family, friends, and neighbors), animals, objects, abstract passages, and even collaged elements. Many of these reference art history extensively. However, Olds is not above spending weeks drawing subjects as lowly as trussed chickens ready for the oven in a roasting

pan. *Market Window*, a pair of charcoal drawings depicting the front and back views of a hanging chicken, is unorthodox in the artist's choice of subject. At first glance, the similarity of a plucked chicken to the human body can be unsettling. In its symmetry and simplicity, *Market Window* delivers a graphic tour de force. Olds' art was featured in a major Visual Arts Program solo exhibition in 2002 and he was the subject of the first "Profiles" artist television interview.* His drawings have been included in almost all of the Annual Invitational Drawing Shows. Olds and his wife Elaine retired to Pacific Beach from Pittsburgh in 2000. Working from a large studio in his home, Olds continues to pursue his passion for drawing and occasionally lectures to artists, students, and collectors.

Richard Reyes – The dark, irreverent subjects depicted in the highly polished graphite drawings of Richard Reyes delight cynics and outrage traditionalists. Primarily self-taught, Reyes began drawing at age five to compensate for a severe stutter which he overcame in later years. Heavily influenced by graphic novels, comic books, and black and white movies, Reyes' style and outlook fuse an impeccable technique with an undercurrent of psychological unrest. A major Reyes drawing project that took him a year was illustrating the children's classic *Peter Pan*, but in a manner that preserved the disturbing and violent nature of the original. Not surprisingly, Reyes' most controversial and memorable series depicted malicious clowns, often interacting with children. For many children and adults plagued by *coulrophobia*, an irrational fear of clowns that afflicts a surprisingly large number of children and adults, Reyes' drawings brought their nightmares to life. In 2005 Reyes' art was the subject of a Visual Arts Program solo exhibition and an in-depth "Profiles" artist television interview.* His works in "The Eighth Annual" are selected from several series, including one inspired by the current Bush administration. Reyes lives in Hillcrest. The full text of the library curator's statement on Reyes' art is available on request.

Robert Treat – Robert Treat is one of the region's foremost practitioners and teachers of painting in the medium of encaustic (pigmented beeswax). His large abstract paintings are prized for their elegance, challenging imagery, and technical complexity. Treat's myriad influences include nature and natural forms; children's art; folk and tribal art; cave paintings; and modern masters like Willem de Kooning, Robert Motherwell, and Richard Diebenkorn. Always experimenting with different materials and processes, Treat recently produced an extraordinary series of drawings using encaustic, gouache, and ink. The artist's sensitivity to materials can be traced back to his endeavors as a printmaker early in his career. In 2007, Treat's works were featured in a Visual Arts Program solo exhibition and he was interviewed for a "Profiles" television program.* Treat lives in Normal Heights. The full text of the library curator's statement on Treat's art is available on request.

Michael Wheelden – Michael Wheelden is an artist and art teacher in area colleges. Wheelden's signature works are paintings of ordinary, architecturally mundane buildings ("vernacular architecture") commonly found in area neighborhoods. The artist deconstructs and reassembles images of these structures into elaborately engineered, meticulously executed paintings whose components fit together like three-dimensional jigsaw puzzles. Although Wheelden is regarded as a painter, he's an extraordinary draftsman whose drawings range from classically oriented nudes to tightly rendered studies for paintings. Wheelden's drawings on canvas resemble his paintings, but the images are more monochromatic and linear. Wheelden holds regular life drawing sessions for artists in his University Heights residence and studio. In 2004, Wheelden's

works were featured in a Visual Arts Program solo exhibition and he was interviewed for a “Profiles” television program.* Wheelden’s statement about his drawings in this exhibition is available on request.

** “Profiles” is an on-going television series featuring in-depth interviews with artists exhibiting through the Library’s Visual Arts Program. The interviews range in length from a half-hour to an hour and air frequently on CityTV 24, the City of San Diego’s government television station. “Profiles” is hosted, written, and co-produced by the library curator.*

The San Diego Public Library’s Visual Arts Program is a nationally recognized series of exhibitions, lectures, a television program, and other art-related activities. The mission of the Program is to demonstrate the Library’s role as a cultural institution embracing a broad range of disciplines, while assisting San Diego’s mid-career and older professional artists in achieving wider local, regional, and national attention. Visual Arts Program exhibitions are made possible, in part, by contributions from individuals, volunteer efforts, and the Friends of Central Library. For more information about “The Eighth Annual Invitational Drawing Show” or the Visual Arts Program, the public can contact the library curator at (619) 238-6627 or visit the Library’s website at www.sandiegolibrary.org