



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
San Diego Public Library

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Solo Exhibition of Works by Allan Morrow to Be Featured at Taylor Library
After a Twenty-year Absence from Art Scene, Noted San Diego Artist Debuts New Body of Work

SAN DIEGO – More than thirty recent mixed-media constructions and related watercolors by Allan Morrow will be featured in a solo exhibition opening Saturday, April 10 at the Pacific Beach/Taylor Branch Library. The Pacific Beach Branch Library houses the flagship gallery for the San Diego Public Library system. The exhibition, titled “Allan Morrow: Painting Fences,” will run through June 19, 2010. A reception for Morrow will be held from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on April 10. The exhibition and reception are open to the public and free of charge. Library and gallery hours are Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 12:30 to 8 p.m.; Thursdays and Fridays, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; and Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Reflecting the recent change in library hours, the branch is closed Sundays and Mondays. In addition, the gallery and exhibition will be closed April 29 to May 4 for a special event. For more information the public can call the library at (858) 581-9934.

As one of San Diego’s best known artists in the 1970s and 1980s, Morrow’s visually stunning paintings – abstractions grounded in landscape – were among the most memorable art produced locally and exhibited internationally during those decades. During the 1980s Morrow exhibited with the Bullmoose Group, described by one critic as “urban art guerillas,” whose members included Ron Williams, Eric Christian, Stuart Burton, Tom Frankovich, and Morrow. After an absence of nearly twenty years from the city’s art scene, Morrow has reemerged with a new body of work in which he reinterprets earlier themes while taking them in a fresh and surprisingly different direction.

Using fence iconography as a starting point, Morrow’s new pieces are highly structured, impeccably executed, framed and wall-mounted constructions incorporating flat as well as three-dimensional elements. The media used include paint, graphite, and photographs of San Diego’s urban areas taken and subtly manipulated by the artist. The fence components of Morrow’s constructions, painstakingly fashioned from balsa wood and other materials, add a sculptural element to the works. Morrow is particularly attracted to picket fences and construction fences. Picket fences are not only potent symbols of the American Dream, but their repetitive shapes add graphic interest. Construction fences can symbolize renewal (new construction) or decay (the graffitied fences that surround abandoned construction sites). These function as miniature blank canvases upon which Morrow creates witty miniature paintings that can be simultaneously read

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as abstractions suggesting landscapes, crude attempts to cover graffiti, and military camouflage. (Morrow is a Vietnam War veteran.) In some works, images from advertising or text are incorporated. Another compositional/symbolic element Morrow uses in many works is a three-dimensional, thin, linear, horizontal form representing a painted curb, but also bearing a strong resemblance to a military campaign ribbon.

Most of the completed works showcased in “Painting Fences” are intimately scaled and follow a long, horizontal format suggesting a panoramic view. They incorporate passages of bright color, but their architectonic, spare compositions juxtaposed with imagery that ranges from sunsets over the inner city to raging fires, are far from decorative or cheerful. And, like Morrow’s earlier landscapes, they continue to resonate with the spirit of life-long artistic influences including Robert Rauschenberg, Mark Tobey, and Richard Allen Morris. Taken as a whole, these works are not only exceptionally handsome and sophisticated arrangements of shapes and color, but the fact that they can be read on a number of different levels makes them a perfect marriage of concept and form.

NOTE TO EDITORS: A representative selection of high quality digital images is available on request from 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 Allan Morrow exhibition is the most recent of more than 125 museum-quality contemporary art exhibitions that have been organized by the Visual Arts Program of the San Diego Public Library since 1997. 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 Visual Arts Program, the public can contact the Library Curator at (619) 238-6627 or visit the Library’s website at www.sandiegolibrary.org

Learn about other events at the San Diego Public Library’s Central Library and 35 branches, find links to numerous additional resources, or search for materials in the Library’s catalog online at www.sandiegolibrary.org

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