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Art show at Orinda Books celebrates instinct to stick together

By Kara Navolio



Cassie Tzur of Walnut Creek attended the artist's reception for "The Herd Instinct" on display at Orinda Books. Photo Kara Navolio

"The Herd Instinct," the newest art exhibit on display at Orinda Books, speaks to the instinct we all have to come together. Most of the paintings feature animals, from cows to ladybugs and whales to jellyfish, in various groupings, sometimes in a whimsical manner.

Bay Area Studio Artists provided the works for this show, which will run through Oct. 31. BASA, a group of Bay Area women who have been painting together for 11 years, meet on Thursdays and Saturdays at Marcy Wheeler's studio in Walnut Creek. They have exhibited together throughout the Bay Area and at several locations in Napa.

The current exhibit features large and small canvases by group members Suzun Almquist, Jeannette Baird, Ellen Reintjes, Sharon Tama, Joanne Taueffer, and Wheeler, along with two guest artists, Ruth Stanton and Lassie Colebourn.

"Marcy is the mentor of the group," stated Tama. "After we paint, we have critique sessions which enhance the experience for everyone."

Almquist added, "Marcy creates a safe environment to critique. We trust each other, and each artist's work becomes better as a result."

Everyone in the group paints what they enjoy painting. The group then examines everyone's work and how it might fit together for a theme. Once a theme is decided upon, others in the group might paint a work specifically for the theme.

"Some of my most important life work has been working with these women (in BASA)," stated Wheeler. "We each have our own strengths that we bring together in this group." The group has even made some collaborative large scale paintings where each member paints a few small canvases that are brought together at the end to create one large piece. A favorite was one of Robin Williams that can be seen on the group's website: www.bayareastudioartists.com.

Maria Rowland, owner of Orinda Books, is proud to provide a venue for local artists to show their work, something the store has been doing for many years now. Each show runs for one month, and her schedule is booked through 2019.

"The artist's reception is something that I added after I bought the store," explained Rowland. "It's a great chance for the artists to talk about their work and kick off each show." For more information, visit www.orindabooks.com.

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