



**MORAGA**

See public meetings schedule on these pages and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements  
**Town of Moraga:**  
 www.moraga.ca.us  
 Phone: (925) 888-7022  
**Chamber of Commerce:**  
 www.moragachamber.org  
**Moraga Citizens' Network:**  
 www.moragacitizensnetwork.org

**Town Council Meetings:**  
 Wed., June 12, 6:30 p.m. and Wed., June 26, 6:30 p.m.  
**Planning Commission:** Tuesday, June 18, 6:30 p.m.  
**Parks and Recreation Commission:**  
 Mon., June 10, 6:30 p.m.

Share your thoughts, insights and opinions with your community.  
 Send a letter to the editor:  
 letters@lamorindaweekly.com



## EXPERIENCE MATTERS

**Linda Ehrich  
 Realtor**

93 Moraga Way  
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**925.698.1452**

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LINDA EHRIKH



## SMC's Class of 2024 artists featured in new exhibit

By Vera Kochan

"Chimeric -- Art Practice Capstone Exhibition" is the latest Saint Mary's College art installation on view at the campus art museum. What makes the showing unique is that the 12 featured artists are students of the school's Class of 2024.

According to SMC's exhibit, "The term 'Chimeric' has two definitions: one referring to the Greek mythological creature formed from the parts of various animals, and the other relating to a hope or dream that is impossible to achieve. Our multiplicity counters the futility of the second definition by showing such facets can exist within our newly created space. Through a body of work that is diverse in mediums and chimeric in and of itself, we encourage others to encounter our reflections, inviting introspection and conversa-

tion about our connection to broader society." Collectively, the student artists hoped to offer new perspectives on the human condition with a focus on race, culture, gender, psychology, media, childhood, and reality.

Upon first walking into the exhibit, guests are "greeted" by a large mural that was a team effort. It has no name other than being described as "'Chimeric' Graduating class mural", and serves the purpose of offering a glimpse of what is yet to come.

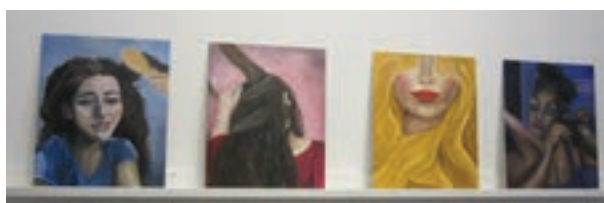
Keaton Gershen-Lewis contributed six pieces on display with titles such as "Sketch for a Propaganda Mural", "Dynamite", and "Screenshot". His grayscale paintings are "an examination of the contemporary cycles of imagery, emphasizing the focus on appropriated images of violence and sexuality, commonly encountered and reshared subjects throughout the digital space."

Alexa Andris' four paintings are titled: "Unprofessional", "2:36 a.m.", "Let's Not Split

Hairs", and "Eye of the Beholder". She explores the idea of what a hairstyle's first impression leaves upon the world. Andris "endeavors to create a space for empathy, understanding, and empowerment, inviting viewers to reflect on their own relationships with societal norms and embrace the beauty of individuality in all forms."

"Te Amo Mucho Much Mucho" could almost be described as a visit to someone's home. Celeste Xictlactli Escobedo uses various objects and photos to invite the viewer into her world. "Sourcing found objects that have been discarded or forgotten and giving them a new home works in tandem with my handmade pieces," she explained. "The physical artifacts that are produced through my practice play with the same themes of preservation, also bring in a manipulation to scale and context."

"Chimeric -- Art Practice Capstone Exhibition" is currently on view until June 23, 2024.



Alexa Andris

Photos Vera Kochan



Keaton Gershen-Lewis



Celeste Xictlactli Escobedo

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## 66-unit apartment building draws crowd

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Outdo's project manager, David Marshall, was in attendance to introduce himself before turning things over to Goetz Frank, the project's director with Form 4 Architecture of San Francisco. Frank's presentation included various slides that gave everyone an idea of the proposed apartment building's outward appearance; blueprint views of each of the four-story's layout; and any intended landscaping changes/additions. For many, this was the first glimpse of the project in detail.

According to the staff report by Moraga

Principal Planner Brian Horn, "The gross floor area of the proposed residential building is 88,060 square feet with 23,511 square feet of garage area. The building is proposed to be 49 feet in height to the top of the roof parapet and will be four stories in height."

The report adds, "To construct the building, three contiguous parcels (1600, 1640, and 1660 School Street) would be combined through either a parcel map or lot line adjustment prior to building permits being issued for the building, which would create a single 2.002-acre parcel. Currently, each parcel contains an existing commercial office building and shares an existing outdoor parking lot with a fourth commercial office building located at 1620 School Street. The existing office buildings on 1640 and 1660 School Street would be demolished and replaced with the new residential apartment building."

Proposed amenities would include landscape improvements to the area, a shared workspace, a wellness center, and an elevated outdoor courtyard on the second floor.

The Lafayette Moraga Regional Trail is situated within an easement that runs through the western side of the property. Beyond that is Laguna Creek. Neither of these sites would see



Image courtesy of Moraga Planning Department

any changes. However, 40 trees would be removed from the intended project's site, while 53 new trees are expected to be planted in addition to any landscape features.

The first of many public comments came from Head of Saklan School David O'Connell. As literally the proposed project's next door neighbor, he voiced many concerns: possible removal of the nearby redwood trees; blocked natural light for the building's height; the loss of privacy to the campus; disrupting noise emanating from the apartment complex; traffic and safety issues; and the "unharmonious" appearance of the building as compared to the rest of the neighborhood.

Other long-time residents expressed wildfire safety/evacuation concerns with respect to the potential addition of approximately 120 more cars to the area; a four-story building is too high and its occupants could

look into neighboring homes and yards; setback issues; the possibility of a subterranean garage, thereby eliminating one story; and lastly, a plea for new housing to begin at the shopping centers rather than established residential areas.

Not everyone was opposed to the new 66-unit apartment building. Some residents wanted to see more of this type of housing, which would make Moraga potentially affordable to young families, teachers who work in the local schools, and employees of local businesses. It was also put forth that the location would be close to public transportation (BART and bus), and as such, the traffic might not be as bad as feared. Others spoke in favor of the building's architectural style.

The project is tentatively scheduled to be brought back to the Planning Commission for consideration on June 18.

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