

## Brad Nack @ Tennis Club of Santa Barbara

# Reindeer Games

By ERIN J. SMITH / CASA

**WITH AN IDEA JUST CRAZY ENOUGH TO GET SOME ATTENTION,** artist

Brad Nack embarked on a challenge to create 2,009 reindeer paintings over the course of the past year as part of “The 25 city 100% Brad Nack Reindeer Art Show Tour” with stops from London to New York, and Tulsa to Miami. Nack will bring twenty of his reindeer to the Tennis Club of Santa Barbara through January 5th. A reception with the artist will be held December 11th at the Tennis Club from 5:30-7:30pm.

“I think people respond to the reindeers’ expressions, which aren’t necessarily cheery or Christmas-y,” he said. “They’re morose, quizzical, and melancholy, which is how many people feel, especially at Christmas.”

Twelve years ago, Nack created his first reindeer as a gift for a friend’s mom, which was then hung in a gallery for a winter solstice art show. “It attracted a lot of attention and could have sold over and over again,” said Nack. “Over the years, my reindeer have attracted a cult-like following.” Collectors have been known to bring their own red dots along to the opening so they can claim their piece as



Brad Nack

soon as they decide which one they want.

“Each reindeer speaks individually to different people. It’s captivating to watch them figure out which one is theirs,” he said. “I’ve noticed two typical responses to the paintings. The first type of person looks at them once and moves on. The other spends time imagining which one they would

choose if they were going to get one for themselves, trying to pick the one they feel the most connected to.”

As a kid growing up in Santa Barbara, Nack was surrounded by art and artists. Both his parents were artists and his father was formerly the head of the art department at SBCC. Instead of going to college after graduating from Santa Barbara High School, Nack took

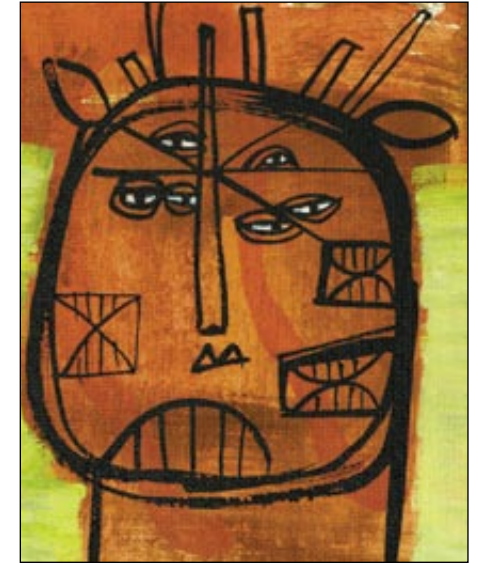


The Party by Brad Nack

off with a friend on a whirlwind adventure and traveled around the world using only alternative means of travel, including hitchhiking, train-hopping, and sailing across the Atlantic. When he came back to Santa Barbara, he started a new wave band, The Tan, and eventually went on to become a songwriter for Warner/Chappell Music. Nack is also known for his connection to Toad The Wet Sprocket, the Santa Barbara-based band he worked with for about three years before becoming disenchanted by the business and administrative side of the music industry.

Although he holds no formal college degrees, Nack has become the best kind of student: the lifelong learner. He’s racked up over 260 units at SBCC taking everything

from music to theatre arts and most recently, film editing. He has a long history with the college and started with a night class in sculpture as a teenager. In addition to studying art with his father, he cites Bob Frame as one of his mentors. “I think SBCC is a great resource everyone should take advantage of,” he said. “The view is amazing, the library is great, and they have some of the best equipment around. An education is what



Spagetti by Brad Nack

you make of it. If you approach it with a desire to learn, you’ll get the most out of the experience.”

Although he has lived the kind of spontaneous life artists dream of, Nack resists the ‘artist’ label. “I feel like it’s easy for anyone to say ‘I’m an artist’ even if they never create anything,” he said. “But at the same time, being called an artist doesn’t seem very special to me. It seems like a very egotistical thing to say, because I believe everyone is creative in their own way. Some people just put more into it than others.”

Tennis Club of Santa Barbara is located at 2375 Foothill Rd. Hours are 10am-9pm, daily. For more information, call 682-4722 or visit [www.bradnack.com](http://www.bradnack.com).