

Santa Barbara Museum of Art:

Isabel Barbuza To Present Gallery Talks

By ANDRIA WATSON / CASA

**WITH HER HANDS
OUTSTRETCHED AND
HER EYES CLOSED,**
Isabel Barbuza

has a memory of feeling a piece of velvet in school, and then being asked to write about the sensations she experienced. This experience started a life-long passion for textures. Barbuza's sculpture *Re-Designing My Library* is on display as part of the *Identities* exhibit from the permanent collection at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art.

"I'm a very curious person. I explore my ideas in journals, and then start constructing a puzzle using textures and materials that appeal to my sense of touch and sometimes even my sense of smell.

Barbuza's sculpture at the Museum of Art is made from discarded books that she found in the trash. She chose to explore books as an object, altering the contents into kimonos that are presented in a closet-like presentation. The piece was made in 1994, and was originally interactive at the Contemporary Arts Forum.

"I chose to cover the books

into kimonos because they have a very symmetrical shape. It's very connected to performance art. When it was on display at CAF, viewers were able to try the actual sculpture on," Barbuza explained. "The hats are covered with pages from a self-help book, while a pair of large pants are plastered with text about cellulite...so it has a lot of humor," Barbuza laughed.



Isabel Barbuza

Barbuza was born in Mendoza, Argentina, in a time that was ruled by dictators, the oldest of four children. Her mother was an English professor and her father a doctor. Both of her parents were avid art enthusiasts, who encouraged classes, provided countless art books, and supplied encyclopedias for Barbuza to study.



Targeta by Isabel Barbuza



"I grew up during a difficult time. Artwork reflected political issues. It was such a change when I came to this country because I found the art to be surprisingly conceptual. Artists like Ann Hamilton moved me beyond previous ideas into new styles of art. The exploration of form and textures became my undivided passion."

Style is an understatement with Barbuza. After becoming interested in the social patterns of bees, she decided to learn everything she could about them, even meeting with a bee keeper out of fascination. Barbuza constructed a sculpture made from 250 honey wax combs into a globe of the world. "I liked the transparency of the wax, and I loved the smell. I wanted to show the social aspects of these insects and how they relate to ours as humans, and what a community can create when they work together."

Barbuza is an Associate Professor of Sculpture at the University of Iowa, and is currently working with Santa Barbara High School as part of the Visual Art & Design Academy.

VADA is one manifestation of a state program through the Department of Education called California Partnership Academies. They are designed to be a small learning



Re-Designing My Library by Isabel Barbuza

community with a specialized area of focus. For SBHS it's visual fine art and design.

Barbuza will offer three artist talks at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art on her work and current projects during 1st Thursday, March 6th, beginning at 6pm.

"I don't see myself being anything other than an artist," Barbuza shared. "Every piece is like solving a puzzle, and I can't stop until I achieve what I'm looking for. This is it... art is my life."

The Museum is located at 1130 State St and is open Tu-Sun, 11-5pm. Sundays are free. For information call 963-4364.