

## Rafael Perea de la Cabada at the Architectural Foundation Gallery

# Spaces We Touch/Espacios Que Tocamos

By **Kerry Methner** / CASA

**F**ROM THE BEGINNING, people have negotiated the space between, reaching out to connect, to collaborate, to survive.

Artist Rafael Perea de la Cabada's current show at the Architectural Foundation Gallery on exhibit through August 26th, takes on that space between, populating it with life and pulsing intensity.

"We're [artists] here to shake the ground of what is being accepted, to renew what is stagnant," Perea shared. "You can't do that without questioning yourself."

For Perea, in the *Spaces We Touch/Espacios Que Tocamos*, as the show is titled, lies the only way through to the other. That way through is a focus of one of the families of work - the Blue Series - in this exhibit.



Rafael Perea de la Cabada

Perea created the work while collaborating with pre-Hispanic/pre-Columbian music expert Luis Perez. Perea listened to the music, learned to make an instrument, work on clay objects, and eventually collaborated on a show with Perez.

Those ancient resonances shaped his response, offering him a stepping off point that somehow also included all the millennia in between.

One-eyed petroglyphic figures that are also reminiscent of Pablo Picasso and Keith Haring

populate the work, offering up the complexity of making connections.

"I keep working until the pieces cease to demand my attention," he explained. "It is to be somehow surrounded by things that are not totally formed until something happens and we can understand it and complete them. We form things in space...*spaces We Touch*. It's the way we connect and communicate."

Perea perceives that in the relationship process borders or edges are important - though each individual is different. In this series the borders are one of the focuses. He works with concrete vs. fluid borders, in a way contrasting and stereotyping men and women.

Born in Mexico City, Perea has lived in Santa Barbara since 1987. He received a degree from the National School of Painting, Sculpture and Printmaking in Mexico City and went on to earn his MFA from UCSB.

"I had a natural awareness that I would follow the arts," he recalled of his early years in Mexico City where he played in his father's office supplies warehouse. "It was up to me to develop the discipline, work habits, education, all the stuff that compliments being an artist." But he shared, "My father knew I also would have to learn to pay for my own materials."

He has passed some of that vision and practical sense on to his own family. Of his own three children who range in age from 14 to 21, Perea shares proudly, "They've captured the vision of 'We've been given a talent to use.' It's given them purpose. Each one of them has a vision of what they want to do and we support it. But then they put in a lot of work as well."

This is the legacy he has for his children. "The wealth I pass along is the vision to be committed to your vision in life."

Perea's vision, commitment, and elbow grease have manifested as a rich life of an artist. He has exhibited at many galleries and museums in Southern California including the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, the Contemporary Arts Forum, The Armory Center for the Arts in Pasadena and the Hunsaker-Schlesinger Gallery in Santa Monica and his work is included in numerous public and private collections throughout Europe and the Americas. He also teaches at SB City College and has served as a Master Artist for multiple projects for both SBMA and The Arts Fund.

The exhibition is also home to a second Perea family of work. Both families are "connected through the visual exploration of sound and speech as 'shape/space forming' and energy giving components of our daily life interactions."

"Art brings you into a space where you are aware of your humanity and immortality, and, more importantly, that you are not alone. Period," this wise man shared.

Cabada's archeological work will continue in his next major show at Westmont College in 2012 where his gaze turns inward to assist with a retrospective of his life work. But Perea is also looking forward... designing sets at the new Dos Pueblos HS theatre and...something else... he's not sure what, right now.



*Spaces We Touch*, by **Rafael Perea de la Cabada**



A 1st Thursday reception will be held on August 4th from 5 to 8pm.

Perea recently completed an important public art project in collaboration with designer Richard Irvine. The collaboration was part of the West

Beach Improvement Project on the Santa Barbara waterfront, and includes three landmark designs of bronze and mosaic along the promenade.

Sponsors of this exhibit include: Brian K. O'Connor, Attorney at Law; Fred Fisher, Trinity Capital Management LLC; David Dart DDS; Timothy Quiroz; and The Arts Fund.

The Gallery is located at Garden and East Victoria Streets and is open Tues-Fri, 9-2pm, and by appt. For info call 965-6307. For info on the artist visit: [www.rafaelperea.com](http://www.rafaelperea.com) or [www.irvinecabada.com](http://www.irvinecabada.com)