

Sullivan Goss:

Hank Pitcher's Montecito Beaches

By ANDRIA WATSON / CASA

USING BRUSHSTROKES THAT EVOKE the vivid and vibrant colors of summer, with a bold style that engages viewers to see Santa Barbara through a new lens, Hank Pitcher's paintings at Sullivan Goss aren't just another day at the beach; they're local history.

Pitcher, a graduate of and tenured professor at UCSB's College of Creative Studies, has been painting central coast land and seascapes for over 30 years and took time to answer these questions about *Montecito Beaches*, an exhibit of nine of his paintings, on view at Sullivan Goss through August 31st.

What's special about your exhibit at Sullivan Goss?

I think Santa Barbara is going through another "tipping point," similar to what happened when the cross-town freeway went in and the water moratorium was lifted. The remodeling of the Coral Casino and the possibility of the Miramar Hotel opening again seem to symbolize big changes today. When I realized that I had been painting those beaches for over 30 years, and that my paintings document some of the changes, it seemed appropriate to show a sample of those paintings, including the old and new Coral Casino. Frank Goss has supported the idea of this show and the catalogue as a suggestion for a more comprehensive exhibition and book to collect my paintings of Montecito Beaches over the last three decades.

Do you have a first art memory?

When I was six or seven, I went on a tour of a tuna-canning factory in LA. I was so impressed by the boats, the factory, and the films of catching tuna with poles, that I did a painting of it at school. I enjoyed



Woman in the Clouds by Hank Pitcher, 24 x 36 inches. Oil on canvas over board, 2008.

making the painting, and I enjoyed the enthusiastic response and attention I got from my teacher and the other students.

How did you become interested in art?

I like looking at pictures. About the same time I did the painting of the tuna boat I saw a painting in the window of a store and asked my mother if she would buy it for me. It was a print of Pre-Raphaelite William Holeman Hunt's painting *The Light of the World*. I was struck by the mysterious story the picture told and I wanted to look at it whenever I wanted to.

Did you have a mentor?

I was very fortunate to have a number of great teachers in public school here in Santa Barbara who really helped me out. Some of them are still around, like Bill Morez who taught art at San Marcos High School and John Stoney, my football coach. Marvin Mudrick, who founded the College of Creative Studies, was an inspiring and challenging intellectual. New York Painter Paul Georges was a friend and mentor until his death.

When starting a painting, what process, both mentally and physically, do you go through?

At this point it is part of a continuum, like a conversation with an old friend; it started a long time ago and just keeps evolving.

What has impacted your work the most?

Surfing, Federico Fellini, and Thelonious Monk.

What is the most rewarding part of being an artist?

The freedom to think.

Sullivan Goss is located at 7 E. Anapamu St and is open daily from 10 to 5:30pm. For information, call 730-1460.



Hank Pitcher



Night Swimming by Hank Pitcher, 24 x 48 inches. Oil on canvas over board, 1993.