

A Theme and Celebration of Five

Artamo Gallery celebrates its fifth anniversary

BY JOSEF WOODARD
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Last week, the Santa Barbara International Film Festival celebrated its grand silver anniversary edition with klieg lights and other fanfare accoutrements surrounding the Arlington Theatre. Meanwhile, just a block down and synched with the coincidentally timed "First Thursday" event at downtown galleries, the Artamo was busy celebrating its own, slightly humbler event, its fifth birthday.

Run by artist Jack Mohr, the accessible contemporary art-minded Artamo Gallery has officially braved the storms of rising rents and fickle collectors in Santa Barbara for a handful of years. As Mohr said at the celebration, his gallery is a proverbial hundred paces from the Museum of Art steps, but it can be hard to lure visitors down to his side of State Street. Still, the fight and the art go on.

For this occasion, Mohr has assembled a show called "Project A 5," creating a special work to appeal to many of the artists who have shown in or are otherwise linked to the space. The result is a happy mess of diverse styles and mediums, often with the number five brandished as a leitmotif.

Naturally, some of the pieces make nods, subtle and otherwise, to Charles Demuth's iconic 1928 painting "The Figure 5 in Gold" (based on a William Carlos Williams work), a metaphor for the increasing pace and sensory density of modern life. Michael Moon's "All Roads Lead to Artamo" makes the most obvious Demuth reference, while Mohr's own piece, "Striking Five," is one of his adept mixed-media constructs, based around the motif of four hash marks, gleefully punctuated with that bold diagonal mark, making five.

Abstraction has its day and a certain sway in this gallery, particularly in this exhibition. Patrick

ART REVIEW

'PROJECT A 5'

When: through Feb. 28

Where: Artamo Gallery, 11 W. Anapamu St.

Hours: Noon to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday, noon to 8 p.m. the first Thursday of every month

Information: 568-1400, artamo.com

Dintino's "Cycle of Five" works with blurry vertical color bands, while Elana Kundell's "A 5" adopts sensuous abstract tactics.

Mick Reinman makes art with rugged good looks and a brainy cowboy touch, as he does with the oil-on-rough-wood piece "Lone Star," outfitted with the proper Texan colors. With the cheeky "High Five for Five," Peggy Ferris rolls some dice, a starfish, a hand and other five-sided objects together.

Murky, milky white layers obscure the bustle of colorful activity in Madeline Garrett's "Five Shades of White." Tamar Kander's "Plain Good" folds collage elements into the blend of rough-surfaced abstraction, and Janet Bothne's "Change for a Five" is a slice 'n' dice job, splitting an abstract painting into five component pieces. Michelle Y. Williams's "Straight Five Any Way" goes in a similar direction, dividing her expression into a pastiche of composite squares.

In Julia Pinkham's "New Growth," vague flame imagery burns clean in the pictorial space, perhaps a goodwill gesture for future gallery health and growth.

And the list goes on, as "Project A 5" brings together a varied lot of artists — from the Santa Barbara area, Los Angeles, Montreal, Houston and elsewhere — this time creating work along the lines of art for gallery's sake.



Jack N. Mohr's "Striking Five," above right, Elana Kundell's "A 5," below right, and Michael Moon's "All Roads Lead to Artamo," above, are just a few of the works hanging at Artamo celebrating the gallery's fifth birthday.