

The following six artists' work were the inspiration for this year's Art Tales. They are part of the City of Ventura's Municipal Art Collection on display at Ventura City Hall.

### **Catherine Jessie Botke** (b. 1951)

*Midnight Storm*, 1997, *aquatint*.

For this innovative and eclectic artist, atmosphere is more significant than realistic detail. Although Catherine Jessie Botke belongs to a remarkable, and famous family of artists from whom to draw her inspiration, she has developed her own inimitable style and technique. (This artist is the granddaughter of Jessie Arms Botke and Cornelis Botke, and sister-in-law of Frances Botke.) "In the morning I look south to that same hill and there is usually a long horned cow or two making distinct outlines waiting for the sun to come up. I tend to texture and detail my drawings, but as I finish them in a print they always make me happier when they are stripped to a more bold and simplified illusion."

Catherine Jessie Botke is a graphic artist working in printmaking and drawing, drypoint, intaglio, mono-prints, and some watercolor and oil. She was born in Ventura County and attained a BA in printmaking from the UC Santa Barbara. She has shown her work at significant local venues such as the John Nichols Gallery, Buenaventura Art Association Gallery, Carnegie Art Museum and the Museum of Ventura County. Winning first place in the Santa Paula Art & Photography Exhibit in 2000, is among her many artistic achievements.

### **Alberta Fins** (1931-2009)

*Filtered Vision*, 1999, *print on paper*.

Multi-media assemblages, prints, and acrylic painting are the materials and techniques of choice for this highly prolific and provocative artist. Alberta Fins' innovative work uses re-designated partial images and deliberate brush-strokes, to comment on the human condition. She believes that art is about being inventive, searching and daring. It should disturb, upset and also enlighten. She explains, "When I work, I think of what I feel inside, of what I have to say. These feelings start welling up, and there comes a time when it all comes out....Art is about integrity and being honest."

Alberta Fins was born in Newark, New Jersey, and after moving to Los Angeles County in 1965, she studied art at UCLA. She has lived and worked in Ventura County since 1985 and is an active member of the Los Angeles Printmaking Society and the Ojai Studio Artists. She has participated in dozens of national and international exhibitions, including the Taipei Museum in China, and received numerous awards for artistic achievement.

### **Katherine Chang Liu**

*Field Notes #24*, 2001, *monotype*.

Katherine Chang Liu, who is widely regarded as one of the West Coast's leading artists, draws inspiration from both the Modernist aesthetic and ethos and her Chinese heritage. Through her use of Chinese brushstrokes, subtle collage, and realistic imagery as well as through her inherent sense of line, rhythm and composition, the artist's delicate abstractions produce rich surfaces that reveal a distinctive self-portrait. She says, "I believe that we pick up peripheral information from all our incidental exposure, and these small pieces of information, whether visual, verbal, literary, or even musical, continuously reshape our perceptual mind. My imagination, as a result, is constantly stimulated and enriched by this compounded experience."

Katherine Chang Liu, born in China and educated in Taiwan and the US, received her Master of Science degree in biochemistry from the UC Berkeley. She has held many solo, invitational exhibitions of her work in the United States, Canada, Australia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, France, and Finland and has served as an invited juror for over eighty national, regional and statewide art exhibitions and competitions. She is a former recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts grant, and has had her work featured in numerous art books and magazines.

### **Debra McKillop** (b. 1950)

*Migration #8, 1996, mixed media on paper.*

Much-admired for her visual reflections on the nature of time, artist Debra McKillop explains, "Time has been a recurring theme in my creative explorations, and a constant source of inspiration. I am fascinated by various ironic and often contradictory themes." To that end, she allows each theme to suggest a certain mood, palette, or medium. Then she begins to compose on paper or canvas, allowing the process of art making to follow its course.

*Migration #8* is part of a series honoring an event involving huge flocks of robins that landed in her neighborhood during a storm, triggering insights on the nature of time as it relates to the natural cycles of migration. The light of this piece is reminiscent of the look of the day at the moment they "lifted off."

McKillop found her artistic footing early in the game, winning her first art contest at the age of three. Since earning a B.A. in art & photography and an M.A. in Art, McKillop has exhibited her work throughout the United States and Europe. She has been an important influence for emerging artists in her position as a popular studio and business art instructor as well as in her work as a competition juror and as a former City of Ventura, Public Art Commissioner.

### **Jane McKinney** (b. 1943)

*A Break in the Hedge, 1998, pastel on paper.*

Artist Jane McKinney evokes a sense of the beauti-

ful and the sublime in her atmospheric landscapes. Using soft pastels on paper, she conjures lush landscapes inspired by morning and evening light and shadows. "These drawings are meditations for me as I do them," McKinney says, "and I hope people who see them also recognize and enjoy their dream-like quality."

McKinney received her master's degree in English from Wake Forest University in North Carolina. Upon moving to California in 1971, she studied at the Brooks Institute of Fine Art for three years. McKinney continues the arts tradition not only as an artist but also as an arts educator. She currently teaches sculpture to Ventura County School District students through the Artist-in-the-Classroom program. She has received numerous awards for her work from juried exhibitions at national museums and galleries as well as locally at the Museum of Ventura County. Her paintings can be found in private collections throughout the United States.

### **Elisse Pogofsky-Harris** (b. 1941)

*Birthday of the World, 1991, oil on paper.*

The compelling paintings of Elisse Pogofsky-Harris are steeped in personal symbolism and art historical allusions, creating an ephemeral world where multi-layered dreams and reality overlap. She admires baroque painters, particularly Caravaggio, whose energetically manipulated drapery complements and emphasizes human gestures and feelings. Drapery, with an absence of the figure, becomes a dramatic icon for deeper consideration. In the artist's own words, "The alienating influence of the technological age has created in me the need to construct my own world of mystery and romance. I want these works to provide a mirror, where my stories allow viewers to reflect on their own stories."

Elisse Pogofsky-Harris was born in Chicago, Illinois and has a Bachelor of Science in Design from the University of Michigan. She has participated in solo and group exhibitions at The Carnegie Art Museum, The Frye Museum in Seattle, Washington.