

Gallery Los Olivos

Oil and Water

By TAYLOR ROSS / CASA

BY TRANSLATING BEAUTY from its reality in nature to its image in paint, Donna Moser hopes to inspire the preservation of open spaces. Those images will show at Gallery Los Olivos in a joint exhibition with Cathy Quiel titled "Oil and Water," opening Saturday, July 11th with a reception from 1 to 4pm.

When Moser was growing up in Compton, California, the area was rural. Tall blades of grass used to sway in the wind across the fields of Compton. "When I was there," said Moser, "it was all fields. It was a wonderful place. It's changed a lot." Moser watched as the buildings rose, the fields disappeared, and Compton became the dangerous inner city it



Donna Moser

is today. From that Moser drew a life lesson. Now, when she finds a beautiful place, she paints for preservation.

"I paint to try to capture the space," said Moser. "Just the thought of losing all these beautiful landscapes inspires me."

In 2002, Moser became a founding member of Southern California Artists Painting for the Environment (SCAPE). "The idea was to promote interest in the environment," said Moser, "to save all our landscapes. It seemed like a beautiful thing to do." The group, which has grown to over 200 members, holds paint-outs, workshops, and exhibitions designed to promote public awareness of the benefits of open spaces. Moser continues to participate as an Exhibitions Co-Chair and as an artist.

She is particularly active in preserving the unique beauty of Santa Barbara. As a member of The Santa Barbara Art Association and the Los Padres Watercolor Society, Moser participates consistently in environmental shows. When she and her husband were looking for an area to raise their children, Santa Barbara was the place. The community of Santa Barbara, combined with the city's beauty, is the reason Moser stays. "When outer State and La Cumbre were way out in the country, people in the know went to Kelly's Market to buy their meat. There is still a small-

town atmosphere, and we've worked hard to protect it," said Moser. "They wanted to build condos across from where we live, stacked down to the beach. The community got together and fought it."

Moser believes she has always been an artist. She said, "In school I was always drawing instead of paying attention. It's always gotten me into trouble!" Moser's professional education began at the age of ten, when her parents bought her a mail order painting class out of a magazine. At Compton College, Moser was an art major and did renderings for the school paper. Moser continued her education at Long Beach College and Santa Barbara City College. Moser went into architecture but painted on the weekends and began painting full-time twelve years ago.

For Moser, capturing a scene is as much about feeling as it is about what exists visually.

*White Cliffs of Avila* by Donna Moser

"I try to translate how I feel onto the canvas, whether it's a windy day and excitement or the waves splashing on the beach," said Moser. "I want people to appreciate the open areas that we have and to preserve them for future generations."

Gallery Los Olivos is located at 2920 Grand Ave. Hours are 10-5pm daily. For more information, call 688-7517 or visit www.gallerylosolivos.com.

*Carpinteria Bluffs* by Donna Moser