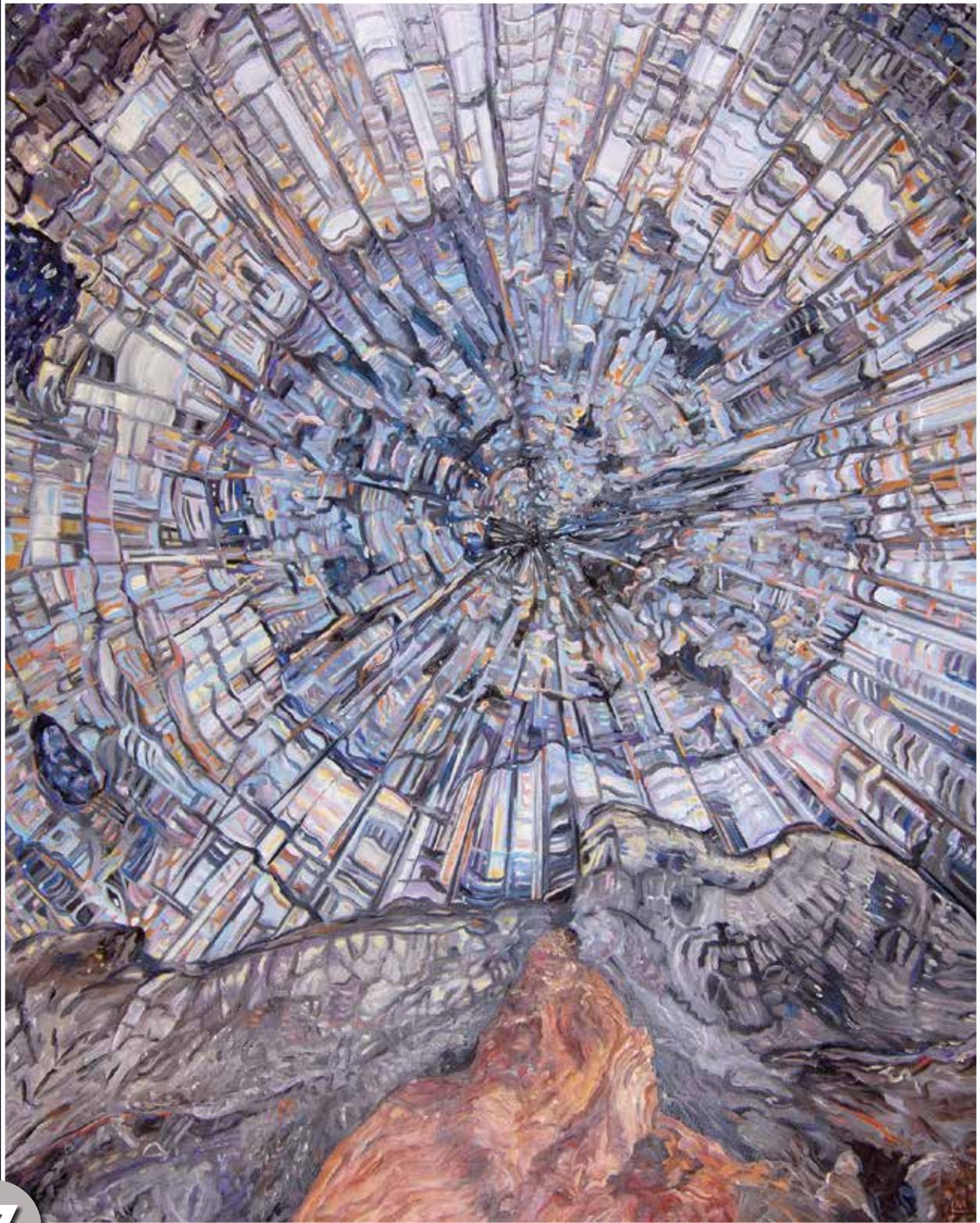


MARK MAKERS'

California's Rural Art & Artists

Quarterly



#7

Linda MacDonald *Rising, Richardson Grove, Oil on Canvas, 60x48*

Gallery Spotlight



SK Gallery & Studio

A Destination Worth the Drive

By Tempra Board

Can your home also be a successful working art gallery and studio? Absolutely, says Heidi Endemann, a master painter and owner of the SK Gallery & Studio, a destination gallery that is also her home and studio (open by appointment) on a sunny acreage above the hamlet of Gualala in Mendocino County.

The SK Gallery, formerly known as the Stewart Kummer Gallery (a name reflecting Heidi's and her late husband Don Endemann's mother's maiden names) has quietly thrived for more than 43 years, hosting an extraordinary selection of

artists working in oil, acrylic, watercolor, ceramic, bronze, wood, and more, from California and beyond.

I had a chance to visit the SK Gallery on a warm, sunny day in early December, to see Heidi's current exhibit and to discuss the history of the gallery, including how it has evolved since Don's death in 2018. Many of the current artists have been with the gallery for 30 to 40 years, so what is different now? Namely, that Heidi made the bold choice to move her own studio space right into the middle of the gallery.

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This was, in part, necessary because she had rented out her studio building, but the change resulted in unexpected synergy between Heidi’s work, her gallery artists, and visitors to the gallery.

“I was shut away for 30-odd years, and loving it, that aloneness,” Heidi confides. “But now I’m surrounded by other artists, and I happen to also

love them as people! And I find it inspirational. Why should artists do their work completely shut away?”

One of the best parts about producing this magazine has been the opportunity to meet artists and see their work (including a peek at works in progress), as well as to see what inspires them. What kind of art, in addition to their own, do art-

(opposite) A combined studio and gallery space takes up one of the rooms at the SK Gallery & Studio. *(below)* Heidi Endemann, artist and gallery owner. Photos by David Yager Photography





Roberta Tewes Doll & Birds *Acrylic & collage on panel, 24 x 20*



Linda Fong *Symphony* Acrylic on panel, 24 x 36

ists surround themselves with? Whether it be a gallery or a home—or in this case, both—seeing how artists curate their own spaces provides a glimpse into their mind, heart, and soul.

Roberta Tewes has helped manage the gallery since its inception and is one of the artists whose work is also featured there. Remembering how it started, Heidi says, “I knew Roberta as a knitter, and when we got to know her better, Don said to her, ‘you’re good with your hands. Why don’t you learn picture framing?’” The gallery also included a framing business, and Roberta became indispensable to the couple as their framer. She also continued to paint, which she had studied in college.

Roberta’s works are fascinating surrealist collages embedded with deep layers, visually and metaphorically. She uses acrylic paint and collage to create shadows and perspective, similar to what you’d see with still lifes and botanical illustration.

But her subject matter and surprising juxtaposition of objects turns the classic still life on its head.

Now that Don has passed, Roberta remains as indispensable as ever. “She knows everything! She knows where the bodies are buried,” jokes Heidi.

Another artist in the gallery whose work I was immediately drawn to is Linda Fong. Her bright, colorful abstract landscapes in acrylic and casein have a graphic quality, and her use of perspective and shading create depth and interest, as your eye moves around the frame from one bright element to the next. I find myself alternately trying to suss out what I’m looking at and just getting lost in the feeling and flow.

And of course I was also drawn to the political portraits by Wendy Reising Bailey. Her wood block prints, embellished with gouache, watercolor, and colored pencil, are excellent likenesses.



es of current political figures. I found her pieces to be not only inspiringly well-done, but simultaneously hilarious and depressing, much the way I feel about the current administration (though most recently, the hilarity is seriously waning).

Bay Area artist Carol Dalton is, according to Heidi, “my only true abstract artist.” Carol creates large-scale abstracts in acrylic and mixed media that reflect nature’s elements, textures, patterns, and color. Her work is popular with architects, designers, and residents of the iconic Sea Ranch, located just a few miles from the SK Gallery on the far northern Sonoma coast.

Linda MacDonald (featured on this issue’s cover) is another artist who paints semi-abstract pieces. Her monumental oil paintings of redwood trees, particularly the interiors of their hollowed out, burn-scarred trunks, start with a recognizable form, and then expand into a riveting kaleidoscope of color and texture.



(above)
**Wendy Reiswig
Bailey**
Saint Zelensky
Hand-colored
woodblock print,
15.5 x 11.5

(left)
Carol Dalton
Abacus IV
Mixed media &
acrylic on panel,
34 x 47

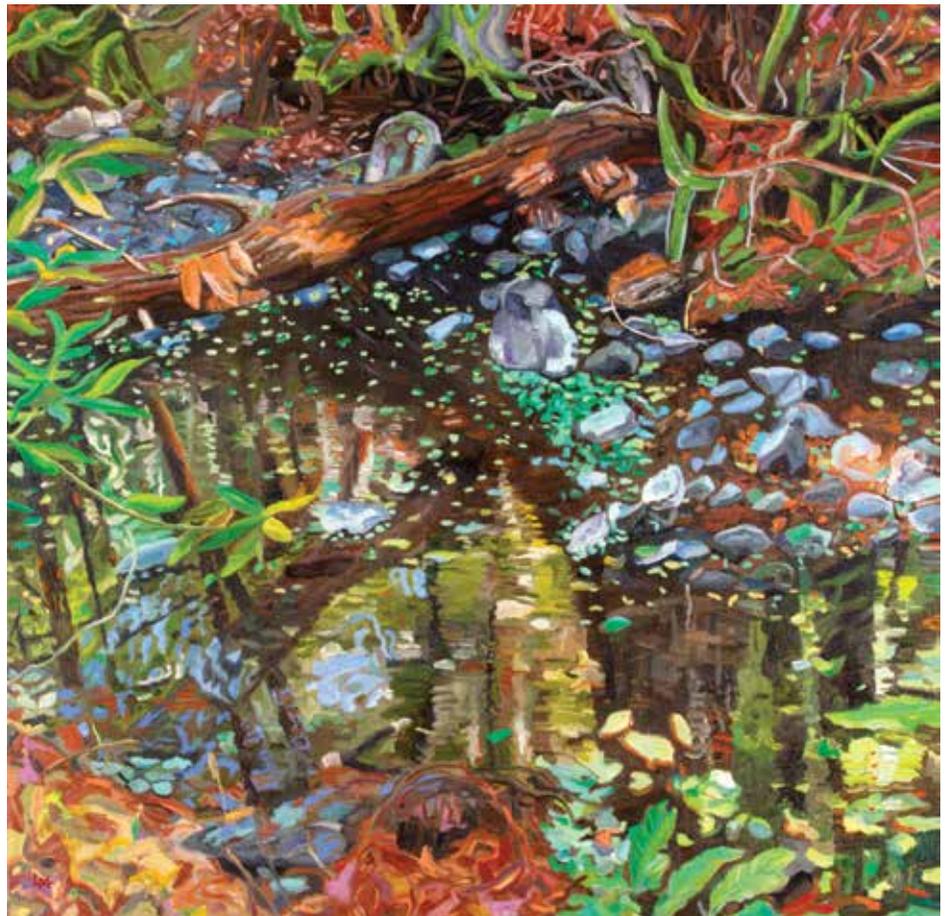


On the other end of the spectrum from abstraction is Pamela Glasscock, whose masterful watercolor botanicals are luscious. As Heidi says, Pamela's work "goes beyond mere botanical illustration because of her modern, yet lyrical compositions." I found it easy to fall in love with Pamela's joyous, bursting, sensuous flowers.

Barbara Médaille is a Healdsburg-based artist who has been with the SK Gallery for over 30 years. Her dramatic landscapes and seascapes in oil could actually be called "skyscapes." Stormy skies seem to take up the majority of her compositions, with a strip of land or sea along the bottom of the canvas, partially lit up by breaks in the clouds.

Three-dimensional art is also featured at the gallery, including the exquisite wood, stone, and bronze sculptures of Nick Lamb (also described by art collector Bob Hartstock in issue #6 of *MMQ*). First carved

in wood, then cast using a mold and the lost-wax method, Nick's bronzes have the look of highly-burnished wood. His sculptures often feature birds and other animals, and range from the tiniest (1-2" tall) Netsuke miniatures to large-scale pieces. (An ancient Japanese artform, Netsuke were originally used by men as ornate fasteners to wear with kimono.)



(above) **Pamela Glasscock**
Dahlias Watercolor on
paper, 18 x 38

(right) **Linda MacDonald**
Floating Oil on canvas,
30 x 30

Judith Stewart's haunting female figures and busts, both in clay and bronze, grace the gallery inside and out. Some—stiffly posed, finished in monotones, silently gazing forward—are reminiscent of the early kouros nudes of ancient Greece. Others show the shifted weight and muscle tone of classical Greek goddesses, but rather than fetishizing female beauty, many of the bodies have purposeful cracks and missing limbs, perhaps highlighting our imperfections and vulnerabilities.

And then there's Heidi Endemann herself, who, it seems, has never not painted. She grew up in Ger-

many and went to art school at age 16 in Cologne. After completing her education at the age of 20, she had the opportunity to spend a year in New York, where her sister was living. She jumped at the chance, but didn't even spend a year in NY. On a visit to San Francisco, she met her future husband, "and that was it! I never moved back home."

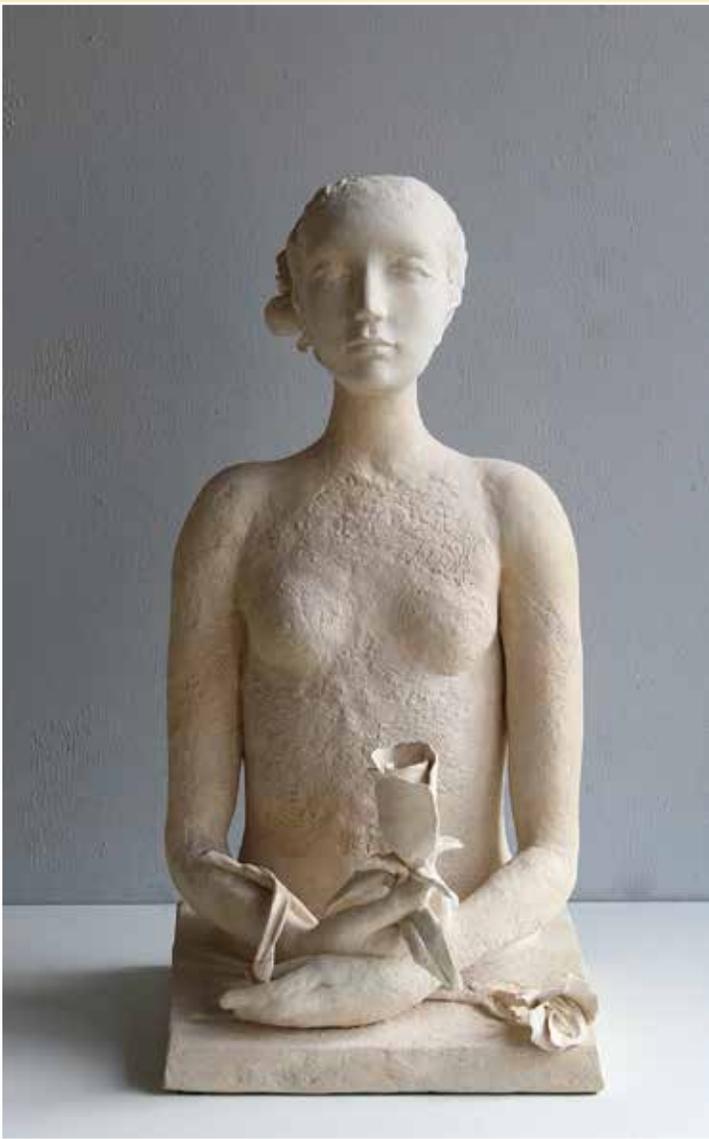
Heidi, with her foundational education, followed by several decades working in multiple mediums, is a true master of realism. Her works usually convey a message, often about the state of our world and the impact of humans on each



(left)
Barbara Médaille
Cloud Break
(Manchester Beach)
Oil on canvas, 54 x 52

(opposite)
Judith Stewart
Flora
Ceramic
21 x 12 x 15

Nick Lamb
The Rivals
Masur birch
17.5 x 11.5 x 5



other and the natural environment. Though the subject matter may be daunting to some, the paintings are so beautiful that you cannot look away.

Her current effort, *Flora in Grisaille* (the International Flower Series) grew out of a need to “make paintings that would sell.” In 2011, rather than the work she had been doing, which she describes as “paintings with overtly environmental, social, and political content,” which she admits “made them a hard sell,” she thought about what could hold commercial value, but wouldn’t feel like a sell-out.

Ever-popular florals were an answer, but how to paint them in such a way that Heidi’s voice and purpose could still find an outlet? She embarked on a floral series depicting the national flower of each country, along with other socio-politically important imagery (e.g.,





Heidi Endemann and Roberta Tewes in the early days.

Don Endemann and Chico when the gallery was in Cypress Village in Gualala.

Photos courtesy of Heidi Endemann



the background of the *Italy* painting at right is a pin-striped suit pattern, such as a mafioso might wear). In each piece are the words—in the national language of each country and prominently placed—“I painted this because I can ... and I need the money!”

So far, Heidi has finished more than 80 pieces featuring 30+ countries. After initial sketches, she completes a small, fully-detailed (and masterful) painting, typically around 24 inches. If she likes the results, she will then adapt the piece and scale it up, often up to six feet tall. Painting in oil, Heidi also uses 23K gold leaf (a signature of hers for decades), not only for its luminous quality, but as a symbol of money and riches.

On the easel during my visit was Heidi’s scaled-up “England.” Flowing across the bottom of the canvas is a classic London skyline with Big Ben at dusk. The cloudy sky fades upward to become a soft gray backdrop in which floats a giant gold velvet royal crown, bedecked with pearls and topaz, from beneath which spill white and red rose vines (symbolizing England’s national flower, the Tudor Rose). Of course, across the top is the tagline in a medi-



Heidi Endemann Italy (Flora in Grisaille series) Oil and 23K gold leaf on linen, 72 x 72

In each piece are the words, in the national language of each country, and prominently placed: “I painted this because I can ... and I need the money!”

Roberta and Heidi today at the SK Gallery & Studio

*Photo by David Yager
Photography*

eval-looking gold script, written with a humorous Old English twist.

Heidi seeks to exhibit these works in a forum large enough to do them justice. In the meantime, they are in storage, but you can see a sampling on her website at HeidiEndemann.com.

While Heidi continues with her current project, she must also, of course, manage the gallery. “My life has been my work,” she admits. “But now I have to also run the gallery and do everything Don was doing.” I asked her if Don also painted, which was met with an immediate, “No, thank God, no! I think if he’d have been an artist, we would have been in trouble! He was just totally supportive,” Heidi adds, “But he was a gallerist, a guy with a vision and a very keen eye.”

The Endemanns purchased the land where the gallery and home now sit back in 1969, a period when many “back to the landers” were coming to the hills of Northern California to find a slower pace of life that was in tune with the natural world. “We were really young,” Heidi remembers. “We were of that era. When we first came, there was nothing here. No water, no electricity.” They built their home in the early 70s, and a decade later opened the gallery in town in Gualala (first in the old Dolphin building, then in Cypress Village, where Studio 391, local photographer Paul Kozal’s gallery, now sits).



The gallery has one big event every year on the last weekend in August (also during the North Coast Artists Guild’s Studio Discovery Tour), and will do so again this year. Different artists are also spotlighted throughout the year, rotating through a lovely nook near the entrance of the SK Gallery’s main building. Opening in early Spring will be work of the late Carol Summers (1925 – 2016), whose semi-abstract, large-scale wood block



SK Gallery & Studio foyer features "Spotlight" artist, Carol Summers *Photo by David Yager*

Carol Summers

*A Former Life of Buddha 1996
Color woodblock on porous paper, 26 x 20*

prints showcase his signature technique of printing on porous papers, made from mulberry, that he collected from Japan and India. Carol refined a printmaking process that came to be known as the "Carol Summers Method." As Heidi says, "He often printed on both sides of the paper to achieve a bleeding and luminous effect."

I feel honored to have been able to spend time with Heidi, surrounded by her own works and those of her talented cadre of artists. SK Gallery & Studio is an elegant space in a beautiful and peaceful country setting "just up the road." If you'd like to visit the gallery, contact Heidi for an appointment at 707.884.3581 or visit the website: SKgallerygualala.com. ■

