

Urban Legends and Country Tales

The Digital Art Guild brings an international print exhibit to the San Diego area. Abigail Kurtz Migala says of her Alien World I that it "depicts the idea that there are other life-sustaining planets supporting civilizations in our universe besides our own. This glowing globe exists somewhere out in the nether regions, perhaps trillions of light years away, never to be encountered by the likes of us except in our imaginations."

Urban Legends and Country Tales at the Bonita Museum
International art show 6 Oct 4 to Nov 15

The Digital Art Guild brings an international print exhibit to the San Diego area. Fifty outstanding prints demonstrate the multiple directions art has taken in the contemporary art world — both in pluralism of styles and the hybridism of technique and media. In addition to the print exhibit, a companion exhibition book is available from the Digital Art Guild. Please email urbanlegendsandcountrytales@gmail.com.

Figure 1. Marie Otero, Robotic Stepford Wife - Version 2060 (left); Fred Marinello, Urban Totem Poles (middle); and Pete Axcell, Room With a View (right).

Just five years after the digital art cooperative was formed in San Diego, it has firmly established itself both in regional and international art communities. The Digital Art Guild worked closely with the San Diego Art Institute in its first International Digital Fine Art Exhibit in 2006. The Guild's members include authors of digital art, including Joe Nalven (The Practice and Vision of Digital Artists), Jack Davis (How to Wow: Photoshop CS3 for Photography), Stephen Burns (Advanced Photoshop CS3 Trickery & FX (Graphics Series), and Cher Threinen Pendarvis (The Photoshop and Painter Artist Tablet Book).

The opening and public reception for Urban Legends and Country Tales will be 6 to 8:30 pm on Saturday, Oct. 4th. Admission is free to the Bonita Museum, 4355 Bonita Road, Bonita CA 91902. Hours are 10:00am - 4:00pm - Wednesday through Saturday. For museum information, contact Vicky DeLong, Museum Director, 619-267-5141.

An educational display will join the print exhibit, including digital media on metal, canvas and duratran prints in backlit boxes. The educational display is being organized by Jim Respass. For more information on the education exhibit, contact Jim at jim@greenflashphotography.com.

Artists represented in Urban Legends and Country Tales are from San Diego, Los Angeles, Sacramento, Hawaii, New York, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, Florida, England and Canada.

Here are some of the fanciful and often provocative thoughts that these artists embedded in their old and new versions of Urban Legends and Country Tales, many of which provide a deeper insight into the ways in which imagery continues to evolve:

Michael Wright/Los Angeles, CA/Manu

The Avatar is our mask in virtual worlds (such as Second Life), allowing us to communicate across borders, cultures, time zones, forming new relationships, alliances and social networks. The avatar is an interactive, social representation of its user. The avatar becomes a character in a real-time unfolding narrative that is both personal and social. In virtual worlds the avatar is the urban legend.

Andrew Mercer/Lancaster, England/Twin Towers

One of a series of digital works that originated with a small sketch of an urban sunrise. I added a clear blue sky to give some blank contrast to what was then a very busy and detailed image. I had no intention of creating a picture about the Twin Towers but as soon as I added the sky I knew where the picture was heading. This tragedy was instantly etched into the memories of millions of people around the globe. I'm sure I am not alone in remembering exactly where I was and what I was doing when the news broke. From the tales of legendary heroism to the continuing speculation surrounding the causes of the disaster. The terrible events of that day have now become legend. I have dedicated this work to the British victims of this disaster.

Marie Otero/Dix Hills, NY/Robotic Stepford Wife — Version 2060

The 's;sub's;—Urban and legendary robotic Stepford Wife, - complete with up-to-date body art, a range of new enhancements and ready to ship to a planet near you! No garden required.

Pete Axcell/San Diego, CA/Room With a View

Everyone loves an ocean view. We need our comforts of home but still desire natural beauty at the same time. Urban living often shuts out nature, but what if it was all one?

This concept began years ago when I rendered a 3d model of a lounge chair into a beach scene. It was intriguing

because it was so absurd. Later, after several incarnations it grew into room without walls and has been placed in several natural environments.

Vladimir Kone ni/Solana Beach, CA/Guernica at Piazza Brunelleschi, Florence

A large, torn poster of Pablo Picasso's Guernica at what is perhaps the most run-down piazza in Florence — yet one named after Filippo Brunelleschi, a 14th century native son and the genius who designed the Duomo and invented perspective for the ages.

Mary Ahern/Northport, NY/Sunflowers in a Makkum Pot — Homage to Van Gogh

These Van Gogh inspired sunflowers are the dominant feature in this still life of flowers sitting in a piece of Dutch Makkum pottery. My parents, who were born in Holland, raised me in America on all things Dutch. The Art, the gardens, the history of commerce and the expansion of the mercantile industries were part of my development as it was for Vincent who also did not always live in the Netherlands.

Van Gogh, a Dutch artist, struggled with system and conformity in a culture noted for tradition and discipline. His work introduced into the vernacular the element of raw passion in his imagery and brushstroke.

The use of computer technology and the inherent distance the medium places between the subject and the Artist would have been entirely antithetical to Van Gogh's visceral immersion into the locations and materials which constituted his oeuvre. He would never have accepted creating without the visceral feel of the paint and the wafting sounds and smell of his environment.

Ann Tracy/Sacramento/Utter Fear

It was a dark and stormy night when the young woman was leaving from her job in a department store to go to her car which was parked at the very end of the parking lot, where the light had burned out. She thought about the email she got today about how to protect yourself against male attackers, so when the woman came up to her as she was trying to get her key into the lock, she thought she was safe.

Jurors

The jurors for this exhibit included Don Archer, the founder in 1993 of the world's largest online computer art museum - MOCA; Andrew Darlow, author of 301 Inkjet Tips and Techniques: An Essential Printing Resource for Photographers (inkjettips.com), and editor of imagingbuffet.com; and Mel Strawn an artist for over six decades; published in Going Digital: The Practice and Vision of Digital Artists.

Instead of picking a best of show and risking a compromise choice, the jurors opted to pick their own personal favorite. Mel Strawn picked Urban Totem Poles by Fred Marinello. Mel observed: "The image is both graphic and effective in the color/space language of painting. The luminous, overall tonality, play of textures and color and complex organization of space, including integration and contrast of the near and far structures (poles, wires and buildings) all create a symphonic transformation of a common, even grubby reality we've all seen around us."

Andrew Darlow was drawn to Room With a View by Pete Axcell. "This is a beautiful image that almost looks as though it was photographed without any human intervention. This image conjures up so many different thoughts about how man and nature interact (and are affected by) one another. Urban legends and country tales often center on relationships between nature and people, and this masterfully produced image achieves that, despite the fact that there are no people in the image. Is this a warning about global warming? Maybe it's simply an illustration of the artist's ideal living room. The viewer can decide for him or herself what it means, and that's the power of great art."

Don Archer picked Marie Otero's Robotic Stepford Wife - Version 2060.

Details of these images are pictured above in Figure 1.

For more information, contact urbanlegendsandcountrytales@gmail.com

Selected images from exhibit — artist statement above.
Figure 2.

Upper left: Michael Wright / Manu
Upper right: Andrew Mercer / Twin Towers
Middle left: Vladimir Kone ni / Guernica at Piazza Brunelleschi, Florence
Middle Right: Pete Axcell / Room With a View
Lower left: Ann Tracy / Utter Fear
Lower middle: Mary Ahern / Sunflowers in a Makkum Pot, Homage to Van Gogh
Lower right: Marie Otero / Robotic Stepford Wife - Version 2060

The artists in Urban Legends and Country Tales are: