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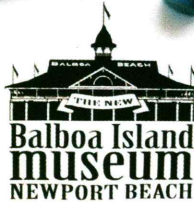
A PRIVATE SOCIAL PUBLICATION EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE RESIDENTS OF BALBOA ISLAND • October 2020



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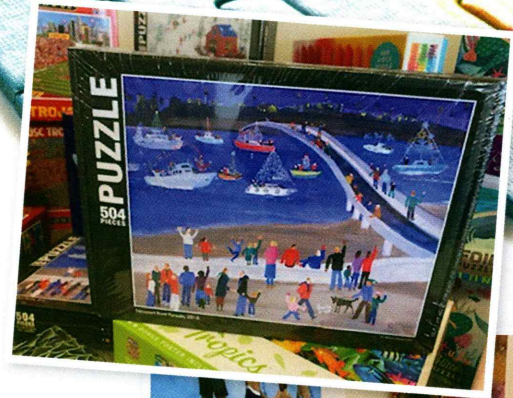
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history

By Pete Weitzner – Co-Producer, "The Golden Age of Newport Harbor"



Local Artist Finds *New Medium* ...

Museum "Can't Keep Alexa's Puzzles in Stock"
Alexa Alexander caught the artist bug late.

"Didn't pick up a paintbrush till 30, Alexander said. My family is science, dad worked on Apollo missions. Must be a latent gene."

The gene expressed itself. The 15-year ceramics teacher at Corona del Mar High School "woke one morning and said, 'I think I want to paint.' Most teachers teach their whole lives. I took the plunge."

Twenty-five years later Alexander is an oil painter, just adding the booming format of puzzles to her pallet. She splits time between Newport and Santa Fe, NM, where she migrates to the city's famed Museum Hill art enclave.

A scene of Santa Feans walking up Canyon Road on Christmas Eve is her local signature. "I've never done it again, so complicated. Took three months."

Much of what the folk artist paints are scenes of Southern California. Tops is the Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade.

"I love the boat parade. I've painted six boat parades."

She started with orange groves from her Glendora upbringing. Those gathered dust till a friend suggested she show them at Haute Cakes Caffe on

Westcliff Drive. Alexa's paintings sold like hotcakes, launching a commercial career.

Recently, Alexander began re-producing her favorite art as jigsaw puzzles.

"These women would come to me at shows and say, 'you should make puzzles of these.' It was a jump financially - but every show I went to I'd sell out."

Tiffany Pepys sells every puzzle she can get her hands on. The Museum's executive director calls Alexander "my best seller, can't keep her puzzles in stock." Pepys also sells Alexander's note cards, going back to the Museum's 331 Marine Avenue location.

Boosting space for puzzles in 2020 is smart business. Shelter-in-place mandates have boosted worldwide sales 300 to 400 percent say puzzle-makers.

My producer in Canada says 'you're gonna be on a long waitlist,'" Alexander said. Fortunately, she doubled her recent order for Pepys and a few other retailers.

Alexander paints oil on canvas, a time-consuming process. "I always paint indoors. I have a small studio (at home) and the bedroom light is perfect. I get that 2 o'clock light."

She's working now on three paintings, one of Balboa Island.

I thought I should paint people wearing masks ... then I thought that people may not want to be reminded of that so I'm painting people indoors, on South Bay Front, enjoying conversation and a cocktail, looking out at the Pavilion ... might put a few masks on a table."

Might make a good puzzle.

Visit Balboa Island Museum Newport Beach – join the fun, discover the Island, and Newport Harbor's rich history. Monday-Thursday, 10am to 5pm, Friday-Sunday, 10am to 6pm. Free general admission. We gladly accept cash donations! Become a member. balboaislandmuseum.org/become-a-member