

THE ISLAND BRIDGE

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MUSEUM CELEBRATING LOCAL ARTISTS

UNDER COVER

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

Tiffany Pepys Hoey hatched the idea a year ago. Then local artists started approaching. “Becomes a domino effect,” Pepys Hoey said.

The idea the Balboa Island Museum Newport Beach executive director sketched out was to feature several local artists in the museum’s gallery, which greets visitors at they enter 210 Marine Avenue. “Celebrating Our Local Artists” went live in mid-March featuring five artists.

“We’ve had other artists individually, never together like this, Pepys Hoey said. It’s the color and style that came together to make it cohesive. Bright. Cheerful.”

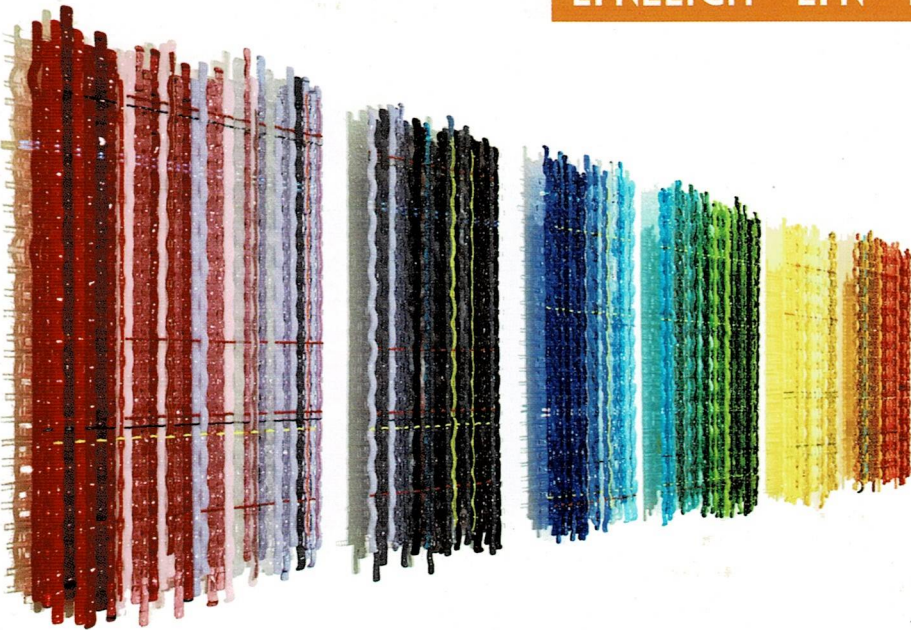
Mixed-media specialist **Marie Lavallee** was one of those featured in the past in her own museum exhibit. She helped Tiffany get the ball rolling.

“The museum is such a fun environment to be in, Lavallee said. I hang around with a lot of other women artists. Two of my friends, I thought their work would be a good fit with the museum. And I introduced them to Tiffany.

Those artists were fellow another mixed-media specialist, **Lara Ralston**, and the unique glass weaving artist, **Lynleigh Love**. Meet our artists on the following pages.

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LYNLEIGH "LYN" LOVE



"Absolutely thrilled, love the other artists, they're colorful, lively, Love said. The artists are all local, but diverse in art and background.

Take Love, who signs her work Lynleigh and transitioned from a 25-year career as a geologist, to work at her hobby fulltime.

"Hung up my hard hat," Love said.

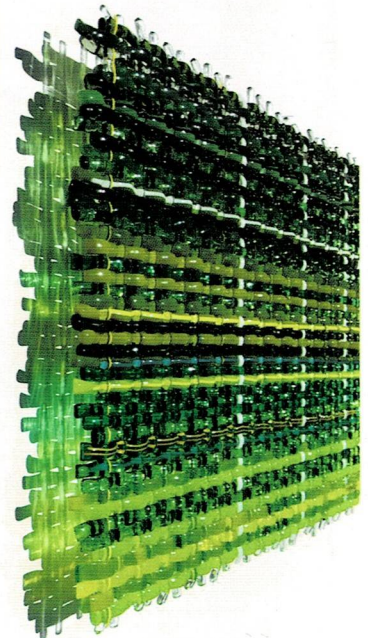
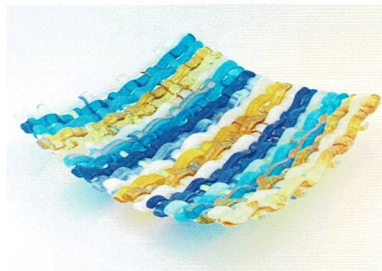
As a geologist, she'd spend her time drilling and sampling, looking for soil and groundwater contamination. Love fused her two careers.

"There's a high degree of science in working with woven glass. You have to be fairly precise," Love said as she fused her two careers.

She's been perfecting her glass-weaving over the last decade and is quite possibly the only glass sculptor of her kind in the world.

"Might be one or two others who do detailed glass weaving, Love said. Takes a lot of time. It's quite difficult. I've never met anyone who does it quite the way I do...the transitional colors."

Love has five pieces on the wall and some dishes - "smaller versions of the wall weave."



Love's glass-woven sculptures can each take the artist upwards of 50 hours

JAN STEELE



Steele met Hoey when she was a volunteer at the museum’s cottage location just over the bridge. She had moved down to her Little Island beach cottage in 1998 and loves to paint scenes around the bay.

“Paint something you love, and that other people love, Steele said. Here it’s Balboa images.”

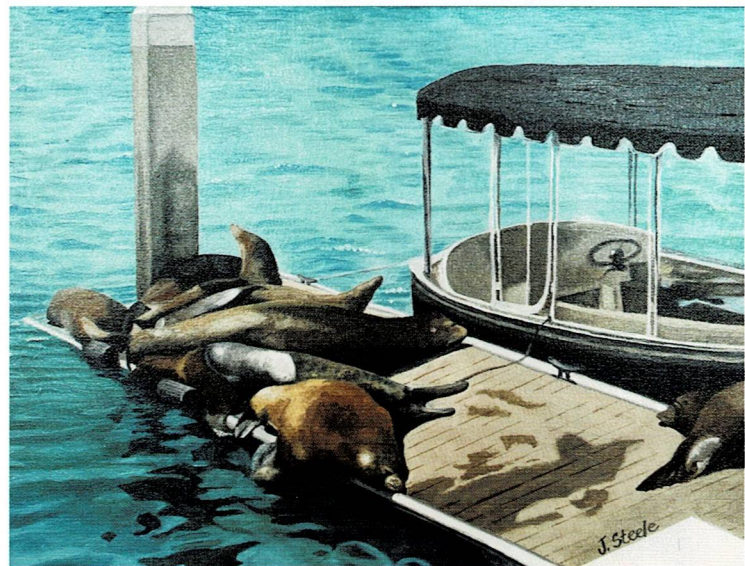
The Pavilion, the famous couple on the bench on South Bay Front – Herman and Lois Dorkin, sculpted by another local artist, Miriam Baker – and the sea lions on the pier at the end of Crystal are just some of her favorites.

“A good friend would go around taking photos on the Island, best in morning or evening, Steele said. I painted from those for a long time, sold most of them in the art walks, lot of old boats. Did one of a blue heron.”

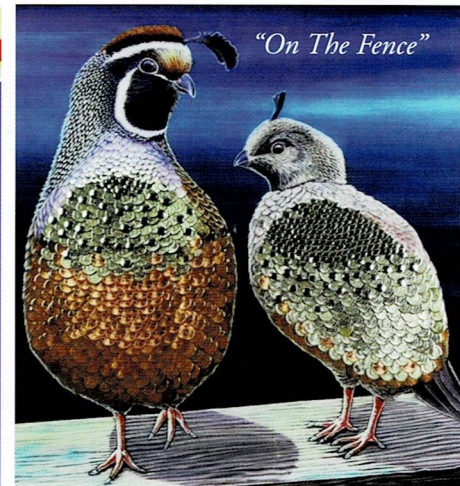
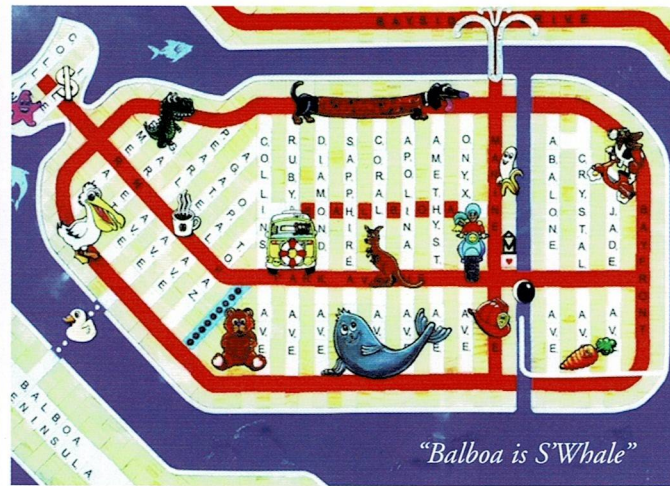
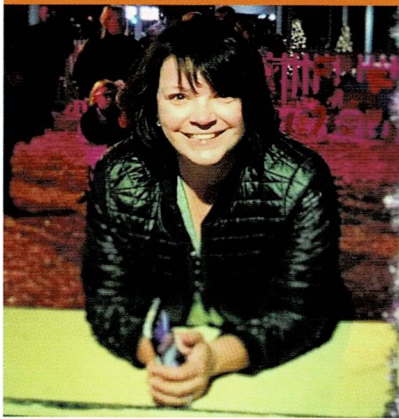
Besides being the ultimate local, her art fit perfectly into the gallery theme of “boats, birds and water.”



*“Paint what you love, what has emotional attachment.”
– Little Island Resident Jan Steele*



MARIE LAVALLEE



Lavallee transitioned from a career in jewelry design. “Late bloomer”, the native of Quebec City said. Her hometown, birthplace of Cirque du Soleil, is famous for its devotion to art of all forms.

“I always had it in me, Lavallee said. I said to my husband, ‘once the kids go to college.’”

“My problem is choosing which idea to work on.” She started working with scrabble letters, then coins.

“Now I’m working with stamps. The trick is to distill it in language that is relatable...like working with birds. It’s nature...pleasant for the viewer and brings the sense of wonder, evokes the word wow.”

Lavallee paints “with a lot of gusto and a quirky sense of humor.” She just finished “Mr. Positive,” a bird of dimes and pennies, gazing optimistically while on a sign that says WRONG WAY.

One of her first works was a whale made of scrabble letters, “Balboa is S’Whale sold in a week.

“It’s everything to me. It’s geography. It’s a family together, playing scrabble. It’s fun.”

Her art meshes with Curator Hoey’s eye.

“Very, very receptive. That’s a great quality of Tiffany, she’s looking for stuff that’s different.”

What’s helped this gallery stand out is what hovers above – an installation of colorful umbrellas.

“Ceiling exhibits have become very popular, Pepys Hoey said. Birds, beach balls...March 13 was National Open an Umbrella Indoors Day.”

“Sherman Library & Gardens, features a large umbrella installation just past it’s entrance in Corona del Mar. (The Museum just partnered with Sherman on a joint exhibit. “Elegance Afloat: Yachts from a Bygone Era,” is at Balboa’s museum.)”

The exhibit tells visitors “umbrellas (are a) universal symbol for protections from the storms of life...In ancient cultures of the Far East, Africa, and Europe the umbrella represented royalty and power.” And the umbrellas work.

“More engagement from this exhibit than any other,” Hoey said. People are enthralled. They stand there. They’re amazed.”

All the artists credit Pepys Hoey’s vision, her and design and curating expertise.

“It’s a fabulous exhibit, Steele said. Tiffany’s done a great job of connecting them, of pulling up that theme. Plus, it’s near the front of that museum. it’s a privilege to be part of it.”

The local-artists exhibit succeeds a collection from Wyland, the world-renowned marine-life artist.

This gallery will be around through spring. All the artists have several pieces, and no small thing, they’re all selling. Come summer, Pepys Hoey wants to continue the new tradition, anew.

“People, artists want to be in here,” she said.

It’s just such an honor. It’s a dream,” Love said.

Also new and greeting visitors before they reach the “umbrella exhibit,” are the Bathing Beauties, which back in the 20s attracted lot buyers to the island. The pieces of art are on display in the museum window.

May brings another new exhibit, “Boats on the Bay,” courtesy of Duffy-boat inventor, Marshall “Duffy” Duffield.

Visit Balboa Island Museum Newport Beach – enjoy the local artists gallery and discover Newport Harbor’s rich history. Monday – Thursday 10am to 4pm, Friday – Sunday 10am to 5pm. Free general admission. Become a member. balboaislandmuseum.org/become-a-member/

LOCAL ARTIST LINEUP:

Marie Lavallee

Costa Mesa, mixed media

Jan Steele

Little Island, oil painting

Lynleigh “Lyn” Love

North Tustin, glass weaving

Lara Ralston

Irvine, mixed media

Fred Zolan

Pacific Palisades, photography