

The Santa Clara Weekly

Santa Clara's Community Newspaper

Possibilities Abound at the Triton

By Melissa McKenzie



After winning the Triton Museum of Art's 2013 Statewide Painting Competition and Exhibition, possibilities have been abounding for Saratoga artist Holly Van Hart. With her new show, Possibilities Abound - named after the piece that won her the painting contest - Van Hart has seen her paintings resonate with a larger audience and learned more about herself as an artist.

"This solo exhibition is all about the unlimited possibilities we have in our lives," said Van Hart. "I think it is resonating with people as intended, because many reception-goers used the word 'inspiring' to describe it."

Using multiple layers of paint, brushed over textured canvases, Van Hart's show speaks to the nature of the Silicon Valley landscape and its "unique culture of creativity and unrelenting optimism. New technologies are created every day, and are transforming lives around the world. It is a place where anything is possible. I love that."

While most people identify with the eggs - new life, new beginning and new possibilities - the Triton's Chief Curator, Preston Metcalf, has found an alternate interpretation. Metcalf has recognized symbolism within the nests, saying that metaphorically, we are each a strand or twig intertwining with other strands or

twigs to find opportunities that are shown when the realization occurs that all humans are connected.

Possibilities Abound has also earned accolades from the art world, including garnering the attention of Art Ltd, ARTnews and Visual Art Source writer, DeWitt Cheng, who said, "Van Hart's hard-won painterly skills are undeniable and compelling. Her naturalistic yet symbolic paintings ... present their enigmatic subjects with both beauty and conviction, memorably."

Of the 17 pieces in the show, "Larger Than Life" is a personal favorite for Van Hart as it was the most difficult to complete - due to its six foot by four and a half foot size and 10 layers of paint - and reminded her of an experiment her mother had her do as a child - putting red pieces of yarn in trees to see if the strands would end up as part of bird nests, which they did.

Personally, Van Hart has been exploring opportunities as they arise. She recently became an art docent at Redwood Middle School in Saratoga, joined the parent advisory committee of the Saratoga Education Foundation, and throughout 2015 she will donate a portion of all art sale proceeds to The Global Fund for Children "to enable more opportunities and possibilities for children who would otherwise not have them."



"Seeing the 'Possibilities Abound' exhibition on the Triton's walls for the first time was one of the highlights of my life," Van Hart said. "It surprised me, but the experience was right up there with getting married to love of my life and graduating from college with honors. It felt tremendously validating to see my work on the walls of such a beautiful, contemporary art museum."

On Jan. 15 from 6 to 9:30 p.m. Van Hart will demo in front of her exhibit at the Triton's Night @tritonmuseum event. That same day, her next exhibition, featuring nests and eggs in a more abstract way, will debut at the University of California San Francisco, 2356 Sutter Street, San Francisco 94115.

Holly Van Hart: Possibilities Abound runs through Feb. 14 at 1505 Warburton Ave. in Santa Clara.

Images courtesy of Mark Evans and Melissa McKenzie

<http://hollyvanhart.com>