

Christine Brennan @ Santa Barbara Arts

Running Amok With Me

By ERIN J. SMITH / CASA

MAGICAL CREATURES AND ANIMALS WITH SOULFUL EYES characterize artwork created by Christine Brennan, but if you look a little closer, you'll find lyrical stories told without words.

"I intentionally leave my work untitled," said Brennan. "My work implies a narrative through potent symbolism that gets communicated on a gut level. I don't want titles to get in the way of the stories."

Brennan's paintings will be on display at Santa Barbara Arts through the month of December. An opening celebration will be held during December's 1st Thursday from 5 to 8pm. Also on view are sculptures by Ojai artist Sandy Wolk.

Brennan grew up in a New Jersey home surrounded by art and music, but as one of seven children, she often got lost in the shuffle. "I was a quiet kid in too large of a family and I was starved for attention," said Brennan, who often found solace after school in the art room while in high school. "My art teacher in high school was the first person who helped me see that I could create art for a living."

After graduating, Brennan headed to the Rhode Island School of Design, starting out in the painting department. She soon moved

to the illustration department, which provided a more well-rounded art education including photography, printmaking, ceramics, and even furniture.

Brennan earned her BFA and set out on the open road for Santa Fe, where she and her boyfriend at the time were headed for their dream job: fulltime caretakers of a ranch. While on the road, the deal fell through and Brennan

found herself unexpectedly living a nomadic existence. They

continued on to California where Brennan had a sister in Los Angeles before making their way to Santa Paula, ultimately settling in Ojai.

Brennan now makes her living as a full-time artist. She works out of her Ojai studio, which she opens to the public twice a year. Brennan's artwork appears in local museums and galleries, as well as the collections of Drew Barrymore and Sir Anthony Hopkins. She has been a member of the Ojai Studio Art Tour for 18 years. "I hope my work touches people on an emotional level," said Brennan. "I aim to celebrate the sweetness of humanity."



Christine Brennan



Untitled (PA710), 24"x24," Oil on board by Christine Brennan

While most of the time her creations come easily, Brennan does have a trick up her sleeve for the times she struggles. Scribbling gets her juices flowing again, allowing Brennan to find inspiration in the shapes.

"I never know what's going to happen when I sit down and start drawing," said Brennan, who works primarily with oil on board and sometimes includes gold leaf. "I just start sketching my little creatures and imagine where they are in space. I surprise myself with what I create. There's something magical about that."

Santa Barbara Arts is located at 1114 State Street #26, in La Arcada Court. For more information, call 884-1938 or visit www.christinebrennan.net.

