

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California



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PierceModern Gallery

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Paso Robles Gallery to Exhibit Famed California Artists' Paintings in Fundraiser for Cal Poly

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Contemporary fine art paintings by celebrated California artists Duane and Annie Armstrong will be on exhibit from Saturday, Nov. 19, through January 2012 at the PierceModern Gallery in Paso Robles. An opening reception is scheduled from 6 to 9 p.m. opening day, Nov. 19.

The husband-and-wife exhibit includes 59 paintings the Armstrongs donated to Cal Poly's Graphic Communication Department. Annie specializes in detailed images of shells and floral designs; Duane is known for tranquil landscapes and modern expressionism. The oil paintings, some with 70 coats of paint, range in size from a few square feet to approximately 7 feet by 7 feet.

Pat Waters, a 1973 Cal Poly graphic communication graduate, helped arrange the donation. "Duane Armstrong is one of America's most published painters and is no newcomer to the world of contemporary fine art," Waters said. "His paintings became so popular in the 1970s, they ranked among the top five in print sales in the nation."

During his four decades as an artist, Duane Armstrong, who was raised in San Luis Obispo, has created more than 7,000 paintings and has influenced countless young artists. His work has been reproduced and distributed by Heritage Publications and the Illinois Moulding Co., Windsor Art Co., Turner Art Company, Continental Art Company, and Art Market International.

His paintings are in the collections of people from all walks of life as well as some of the largest corporations and banks in the United States. His artwork has been displayed at numerous galleries throughout the U.S., and he has been honored with two retrospective fine art shows: the first, at Les Cuisins Gallery in Concord in 1980, and the second at Stanford University in 2003.

"With brilliant shocks of color boldly presented on giant canvases in an abstract manner of visual messaging, clues to the nature of Armstrong's whimsy are not only found in the oil paint on canvas but also in the title of each work," said art historian Dina Scoppettone. 'Vladimir's Black Hole Compressor' is one example that every viewer will confront with childish curiosity, as if it were a puzzle to be solved. Armstrong's paintings beckon the viewer to look deeply at the details that program each work, large scale or otherwise."

Harvey Levenson, head of Cal Poly's Graphic Communication Department, called this an "outstanding collection and a tremendous investment, because art tends to appreciate." All the paintings have been appraised by an independent art appraiser, and all purchases will be accompanied by an original appraisal. Proceeds from sales of the paintings will help fund department scholarships, program development endowments, and Learn by Doing initiatives.

PierceModern Gallery was selected because it looks and feels similar to exclusive galleries found in New York City and Los Angeles and because of the up-and-coming status of Paso Robles as a hot spot for fine art, Levenson said. The gallery is located at 617 12th St. in Paso Robles.

Images of the 59 pictures Armstrong donated to Cal Poly can be seen online at http://www.grc.calpoly.edu/armstrong/index.html.

For more information on the Duane and Annie Armstrong exhibit, contact gallery Director Rachel Eckert at 805-975-4860 or piercemodern@gmail.com or Levenson at 805-756-6151or hlevenso@calpoly.edu.

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