

Artamo Gallery: Happy 4th!

By ERIN J. SMITH / CASA

KNOWN FOR BRINGING BOLD, CUTTING-EDGE CONTEMPORARY ART TO THE SANTA BARBARA ART SCENE, Artamo Gallery is celebrating its four year anniversary with *Review 4 Preview*, back-to-back shows now on display through March 1st.

“Art should make you think, challenge you, evoke feeling,” said Artamo Gallery owner Jack Mohr. “We have to sell art to survive, but there are things that lift us up. It’s more a passion thing than a business thing.”

Review 4 Preview marks the turning of a new year for the gallery, giving viewers a chance to absorb and reflect on the past four years with the added preview of what is to

come in the future. The show exhibits roughly two dozen artists represented by the gallery, including Teri Blodgett, John Goetz, Gordon Huether, Françoise Issaly, Pat Kenny, Michael Moon, and Rimi Yang. Mohr, also an artist, has work included in the show.



Jack Mohr

Mohr moved to Santa Barbara twelve years ago. As he became involved in the local art scene, he felt something was missing, prompting him to open his own gallery. “I think Artamo fills the gap of contemporary abstract art in Santa Barbara,” said Mohr, who opened the gallery in 2005. “I kept thinking there should be more abstract art. The feeling grew in me and if no one else was doing it, maybe I could take the risk.”

Although German is his native tongue, Mohr seems to have a knack for creative word play in English, which explains the clever title of the show, *Review 4 Preview*, and also how the gallery got its name. “I didn’t want to use my own name,” he said. “I wanted to incorporate the word ‘art’, but have it be something that could be pronounced several different ways and still be beautiful.”

Mohr’s love for art and design can be traced to influences during his youth. Mohr was born in Berlin, Germany to a father who was a graphic designer and a mother who was a fashion designer. At first Mohr was torn between studying electronics or graphic design, but when he was accepted to the



Lester Leaps In, 40"x30" by Norton Wright

State University for Creative Arts in Berlin, it seemed like a natural choice. Mohr studied art and visual communication and graduated with a Master’s degree in graphic design.

When Mohr visited California, he fell in love with Santa Barbara and decided to make a life here. He has lived here continuously ever since. “I love Santa Barbara wine country, the weather, the openness, the cultural scene,” he said.

As a working artist himself, Mohr sometimes finds that his life as a gallery owner can be challenging when he goes to work on his own art. He is self-conscious of the fact that certain brush strokes or colors belong to the artists represented in his gallery. “But,” he said, “I have to find my own way.”

Artamo Gallery is located at 11W Anapamu St. Regular hours are Tuesday through Sunday, noon to 5pm. For more information, call 568-1400 or visit www.artamogallery.com.



Untitled, 48"x48" by Jack Mohr