

## SULLIVAN GOSS - AN AMERICAN GALLERY

# LIFE LIKE WATER

By **Kerry Methner** / CASA

**S**TEALING the “language of abstraction” from her new home’s landscape, much of the recent work of contemporary abstract artist Connie Connally alludes to palms trees, tide pools, and the various refuse that washes up on her new favorite spot to walk - Hendry’s beach. An exhibition of her work titled *Life Like Water*, will open this 1st Thursday and run through March 28th at Sullivan Goss - An American Gallery.

A new resident in Santa Barbara, having moved here full time about a year and a half ago after she and her husband purchased a home in 2005, Connally is thriving in what she finds to be an artist friendly and empowering environment. “Santa Barbara is very impressive for how supportive the community is for the arts. There are venues for artists of every level,” she noted. “Artists are also a gift to the community,” with their work preserving the natural environment.

After moving here, Connally’s had little time to explore, first working on a solo exhibit

that went up in Texas, then one for San Francisco. Now she’s home and her newest exhibit will be her Santa Barbara solo debut. It represents her last year’s work.

While Connally started out her career as a fine arts illustrator, she shared “I have no memory of not being an artist. I grew up with a pencil drawing.” Soon after receiving her BFA from Wichita State University, she began a successful decade as portrait artist. Her portrait projects

became large and eventually she “slipped into the fine arts.”

But the call of the landscape beckoned when she returned to school at for an MFA at Southern Methodist University in 2002. After meeting the work of Abstract Expressionist Joan Mitchell, her work began to evolve.

A month long residency in Taos offered her the opportunity to try her hand at expressing her experience of the landscape and solidified her new direction.



**Connie Connally**

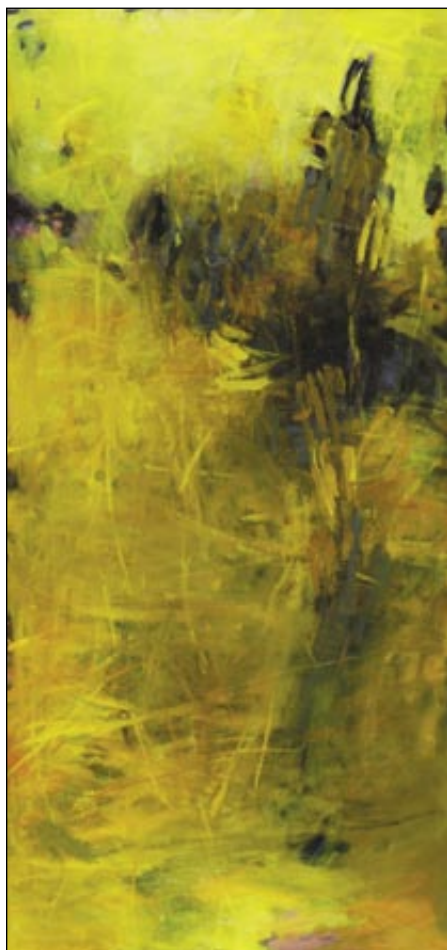


*Sally's Grisaille* 2008 55x72 oil on canvas by **Connie Connally**

While Connally is inspired by local landscapes, her paintings record the traces left behind by her personal experiences of the people, places, and things that inspire her - all captured in on the spot with plein air drawings and then gathered back to her studio for exploration. “My paintings are about intense feelings I have in a place and the desire to re-create them,” she explained. They can “reveal the spiritual qualities of the landscape.”

Connally does explorative work with an explosive use of color and dynamic brushwork. She communicates the mood of her experiences and layers it with flashes of life.

Also on exhibit are works by Martha Mayer Erlebacher; Betty Lane; Lockwood de Forest; and Colin Campbell Cooper.



*Gathering Scattering* 2009 72x34 oil on canvas by **Connie Connally**