

The Frameworks & Caruso-Woods Gallery

Of Love and Lace

By ERIN J. SMITH / CASA

USING BOTH SYMBOLS AND ELEMENTS OF FOLK ART FROM HER NATIVE NORWAY, artist Matti Berglund paints deeply textured and vibrant narrative paintings that explore love and relationship. A selection of Berglund's most recent work will be on view at The Frameworks & Caruso-Woods Gallery for the month of April. An opening reception with the artist will be held on 1st Thursday from 5 to 8pm

on April 1st.

"I'm not a purist, but I definitely have roots in both old world and folk art," said Berglund. "Art shouldn't be about the ego, but rather the human need of expressing feelings that are unique for them."

Berglund grew up on an island off the west coast of Norway, where she found

inspiration in the surrounding churches and the symbolic images in religious art. "The weather was always harsh, even in summer, and we stayed mostly indoors," said Berglund. "We had a little wood shed where I could play, and I collected drift wood and whatever I could to create artwork."

Berglund was also inspired by her mother, who she remembers for her

strong and loving character as well as her creativity. A seamstress by trade, her mother is present in Berglund's artwork, particularly through images of Queen Elizabeth and other strong women featured in her paintings.

"There were always all these ladies coming over to our house for dress fittings," said Berglund. "My mother would draw on these beautiful fabrics and then rip them up to make the dresses. You can see some of this in my work – especially the white stitching lines and the textures. I am fascinated by clothing. Fashion, on a deeper level, is not about just the clothes, but how people perceive you when you wear them."

Berglund's father, an Olympian coach in the javelin, travelled frequently for work and always brought fabrics home to Berglund and her mother from as far away as Tokyo or Thailand. A creative and resourceful child, Berglund once cut the arms from her father's winter coat to make coats for her dolls; but it was also he who took his young daughter to the National Museum in Oslo, where Berglund first saw Edvard Munch's painting *Sister Inger*. "It was so beautiful," she said. "I realized that even sadness can be a very beautiful thing. The painting expressed so much love and loss for his sister, who was dying of tuberculosis. It was then that the dream of being an artist came to me."

Berglund decided to pursue her dream and attended the University of Denver, earning a BFA. "I didn't think I'd be good enough if I stayed in Norway, so I took a chance and left," she said. "It was a small, very nurturing art school, but I learned not



Photo by Christy Schuler

Matti Berglund



Photo by Tai Kerbs

Lace (36 x 36) by Matti Berglund



Photo by Tai Kerbs

The Mistress (18 x 24) by Matti Berglund

to hesitate jumping into things and to give it my all." Berglund has been a full-time artist for over 20 years. After living in Denver, New York, Denmark, and Sweden, Berglund came to Santa Barbara ten years ago in search of the sun.

"I get the most pleasure from the feedback of the viewer. I hope people feel the friction that causes them to stop and say, 'how did she do that?' or that they get goose bumps from a feeling they cannot pinpoint," said Berglund. "I feel really good about the work in this show. It's got a little 'oomph' to it that I feel in my gut."

The Frameworks & Caruso-Woods Gallery is located at 813 Anacapa St. Hours are 10am to 5pm, Tues through Fri, and 11am to 3pm, Sat. For more information, call 965-1812 or visit www.mattiberglund.com.