

Diversity in the City: Celebrating Art in the Bay Area

By Kimberly Ramos

Since its opening on Santa Clara University's campus in 1955, the de Saisset Museum has brought a vast array of artwork to the San Francisco Bay Area. Currently on display, *Keep, Care and Collect On* demonstrates the museum's everlasting commitment to diversity and showcases the variety of artwork that the museum has collected over the past four years. The exhibit will run from April 10 to June 14 and features a collection of sculptures, prints, and photographs. Included in the exhibit is work from California-based artists including pieces by Renee Billingslea, Enrique Chagoya, Gustavo Ramos Rivera, and Joe Zirker. Works by Fletcher Benton, Wynn Bullock, and Jo Whaley exhibit the museum's dedication to showcasing art of various mediums and techniques. Prints by Wayne Thiebaud and Andy Warhol enhance the collection and highlight the museum's ability to bring works by renowned American artists to the Santa Clara Valley community. *Keep, Care and Collect On* demonstrates how the museum has presented and continues to celebrate all types of artwork. In making a wide variety of artwork available to the public, the de Saisset Museum broadens the horizons of its visitors by presenting them with thought-provoking and captivating artwork.

A chromogenic photograph printed on a 20x24" paper, "Tropea Luna" (1999) by Jo Whaley is one of the most memorable and stunning pieces of the entire exhibit. In the center of the piece and taking up more than half of the space is a white moth. The photograph beautifully captures the most delicate details of the moth, from the nerves running across its wings to the comb-like, feathery antenna. In contrast with the pale form of the insect, the background is a tie-dye pattern of white and dark blue, resembling sea foam on ocean waves. The longer one looks at this piece, the clearer the photographer's message becomes. In setting a close-up view of an insect against a man-made background, Whaley creates a marriage between art and science. As a result, "Tropea Luna" showcases how the beauty of the natural world can be found in the most unexpected places—and in the smallest of specimens. By including "Tropea Luna" in *Keep, Care and Collect On* the museum

encourages and invites its visitors to view not only artwork, but the world through a new lens. In addition, this piece demonstrates the museum's celebration of many mediums, one of which is photography.

In the print "Green Gumball Machine" (1970), Wayne Thiebaud uses vibrant colors and defining lines to turn an everyday object into the subject of an interesting work of art. The piece is named after its focal point, a gumball machine in the center of a 24x18" paper. The globe of the gumball machine is completely filled with a mix of solid-colored and striped gumballs ranging from black, white, and red to pink, green, and blue. The green body of the gumball machine contrasts with the pink shadow it casts upon a white surface. The background of the piece is an array of horizontal lines, light blue in the upper half of the painting and green in the lower region. The multiple colors, stripes, and lines make "The Green Gumball Machine" the perfect mix of whimsy and reality. In this way, Thiebaud's depiction of an ordinary object in a visually appealing way demonstrates the charm and allure that can be found in everyday life.

Whaley's mesmerizing close-up photograph and Thiebaud's spirited still-life display the de Saisset Museum's interest in collecting works on paper and are only two of the many scintillating pieces that can be found at the *Keep, Care and Collect On* exhibit. Other works such as "Sentinal" (2005) by Joe Zirker and "The Ship on Twisted Pylons" (2005) exemplify the museum's inclusion of various sculptural forms. The exhibit as a whole demonstrates how the de Saisset Museum continues to grow and enthrall visitors, making *Keep, Care and Collect On* a must-see celebration of the arts. By showcasing art ranging from different mediums and movements, the museum remains a relevant force in creating an artistic legacy for the Santa Clara University community and greater Bay Area.