

Laguna Beach Independent

"Our Town-Our Paper"

Galleries Gain Two Newcomers

[Daniella Walsh](#) | February 8, 2012 | [1 Comment](#)



An example from the George Gallery's first exhibition.

"There's a New Girl in Town, and its name is George," went the announcement for a new gallery that opened this month on North Laguna's gallery row.

George may be a puzzling moniker for a gallery dedicated exclusively to contemporary women artists, but newly minted gallerist Lisa Aslanian has named it in honor of George Sand (1804-1876), a pseudonym for 19th century writer Aurora Dupin, who took on a male identity in order to be taken seriously in the male-dominated milieu of 19th century France.

By honoring the icon, Aslanian who has taught courses in contemporary art in New York and earned a Ph.D in philosophy and art sociology at New York's New School, acknowledges the obstacles women artists have faced to be recognized as well as how far they have come. "As an academic, I've always lived in my head, but now running a gallery has put me together with a practical side of art, which I have come to love," she said. "It opened up a whole new side of me but, at first I had no sense of how much work really needed to be done."

Aslanian has designed the [gallery](#) at 354 N. Coast Highway formerly occupied by Marion Meyer Contemporary Art as an elegant white-washed space that will compliment any variety of art. She has made a remarkable first impression with "Accomplished," a show comprised of seven artists who address gender related issues, such as women taking solace in pretty household objects (Livia Marin's series "Broken Things,"), the use of symbolic severed braids to address coming of age, religious dogma and even Armenian genocide as seen in Talin Megherian's series title "Braids."

The show is free of overwrought rhetoric common in emerging feminist art. Even so, all works are visually beautiful and most leave some room for personal interpretation.

Aslanian is ambivalent whether it still matters if a work has been made by a woman, though she notes inequities in pricing and marginalization of some art as craft. "The art world does and does not care. There's no flatfooted ideological or pedantic feminisms behind the gallery. Gender is an open question for me..." she said.

Meanwhile she credits Carla Tesak Arzente of Salt Fine Art (with whom she interned to learn the finer points of selling art) and Peter Blake as having become tastemakers. "It is hard to predict what will sell in Laguna, but it has little to do with whether the work is being done by women or men. It all depends how many people will come to see more than a simple seascape or a (generically) uplifting picture," she said.

Another New Entrant

The mix of international gallerists gained another newcomer featuring the stylistically diverse, multi-media works of Ivan Guaderrama.

[Guaderrama](#) paints on a variety of surfaces, canvas, board, glass, and even a surfboard is currently on display at the eponymous gallery, 1452 S. Coast Highway. Mediums include acrylic paints and resins. Much of his work is religiously inspired or contains spiritual elements. He will visit clients' homes and create custom works to fit their decor.

A native of Cuauhtémoc, Chihuahua, Mexico, he has learned his craft in New Mexico and Colorado. He also maintains galleries in San José del Cabo and Cabo San Lucas. "My passion is to share art internationally that is not only decorative but that also speaks to the heart, soul and spirit of each person," he said.