

ART | GALLERIES • MUSEUMS

Art and water beyond watercolors

ARTISTS seeking inspiration from the waters of Venice Beach have two aquatic extremes from which to draw — the epic expanse of the Pacific Ocean or the contained pleasures of the city's picturesque canals. Both bodies of water play vital roles in two gallery shows opening this week.

In "Nancy Evans: Psychic River," the Venice-based artist has created a series of sculpted mer-creatures at play in their watery habitats.

To create the look of an undulating river, Evans collected seaweed from the nearby beach and poured hot wax over them to create molds. She then sent the molds to a foundry to cast the bronze equivalents of flowing currents.

"You have to work quickly because the seaweed starts to stink after a while," she says.

To create the abstract figures that populate her sculptural collages, Evans collected fallen leaves and other objects from along the canals and surrounding neighborhood.

For this show, which opens Saturday at Cardwell Jimmerson in Culver City, the artist used banana-tree leaves, small rocks and flower petals from magnolia



LA Louver, Venice, CA
"Lucia" from Jason Martin's "Oceania" show.

trees.

"I like the idea of a river and what it represents," Evans says. "A river doesn't change, but it's constantly being replaced."

For the second show, "Jason Martin: Oceania," Martin found inspiration in the vastness and mystery of the sea. His abstract paintings depict huge aqueous swirls that double as Rorschach-like patterns.

Martin constructed his own brushes that enabled him to execute single strokes covering the entirety of his canvases, which range in height from 5 feet, 7 inches, to 6 feet, 4 inches.

The show opens today at LA Louver, on Venice Boulevard just two blocks from the beach.

Martin says the gallery's proximity to the sea gives visitors the opportunity to absorb real and abstract ocean-scapes.

"It's an ideal place to show these paintings," he says. "The ocean gives you the opportunity to gaze. It

puts you in a more reflective state. When you look at the sea, it's a live meditation."

"Oceania" consists of 10 monochrome paintings that are both minimalist and expressionist.

"I hope they push people into talking about the works figuratively," the artist says. "I also want them to push the boundaries of what we think of as abstract painting."

Born on the Isle of Jersey, Martin says the ocean has always been part of his life.

But he doesn't want people to automatically interpret the paintings as depictions of water. In one work titled "Sweet," the brush strokes are arranged to suggest a vulva. In another work, "Lock," the lines vaguely suggest a giant lock of hair.

"You really have to keep moving around the paintings," Martin says. "It makes the whole experience physical."

— DAVID.NG
@LATIMES.COM

**'NANCY EVANS:
PSYCHIC
RIVER'**

WHERE: Cardwell Jimmerson Contemporary Art, 8568 Washington Blvd., Culver City

WHEN: Runs Sat.-May 17; 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Tue.-Sat.

PRICE: Free

INFO: (310) 815-1100, cardwelljimmerson.com

**'JASON MARTIN:
OCEANIA'**

WHERE: LA Louver, 45 N. Venice Blvd., Venice

WHEN: Runs today-May 17; 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tue.-Sat.

PRICE: Free

INFO: (310) 822-4955, lalouver.com