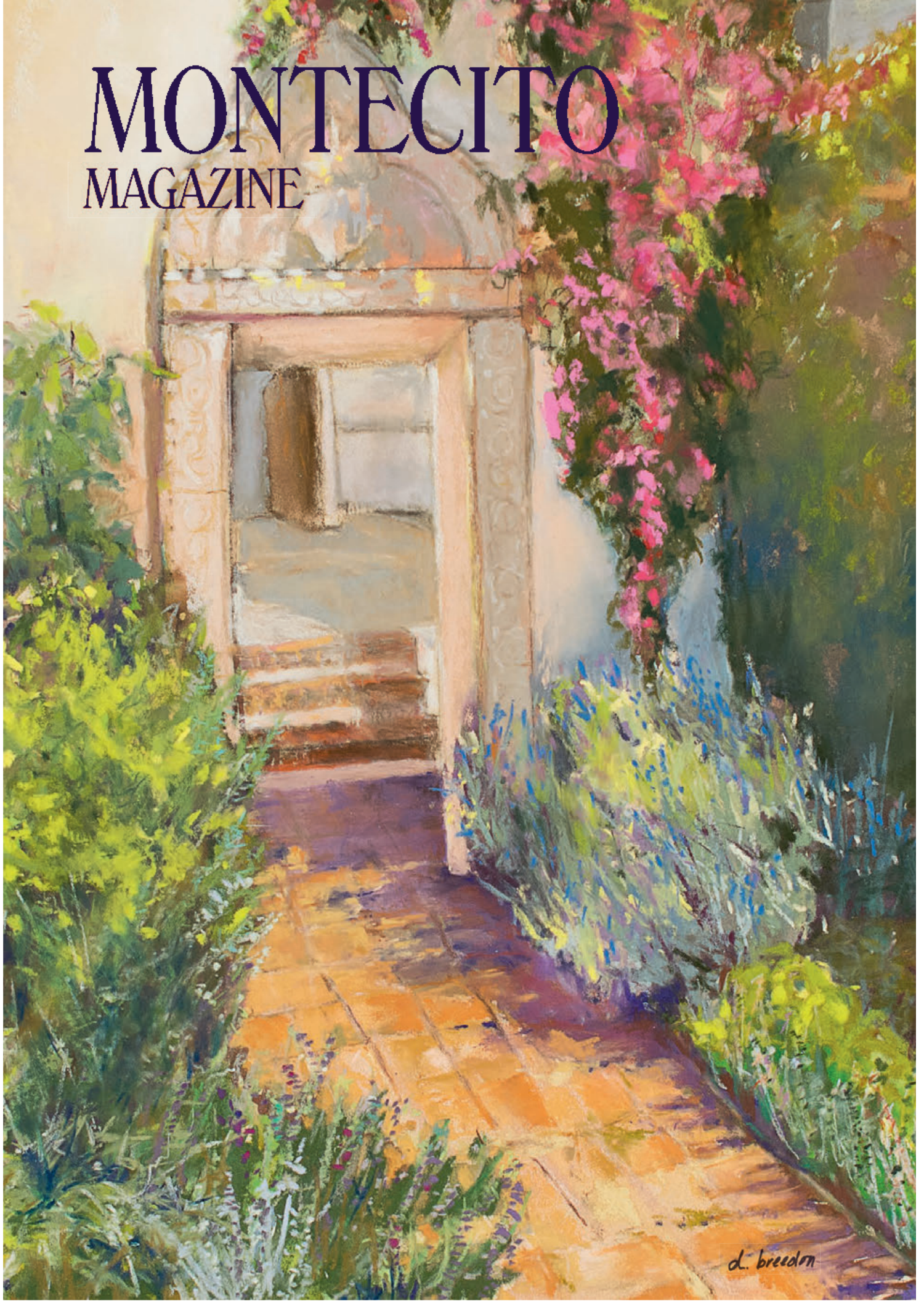


# MONTECITO

MAGAZINE



*d. breedon*

# MONTECITO MAGAZINE

Fall 2016/Winter 2017

A Century of Hands-on Beautification

## The Garden Club of Santa Barbara ~ 20

*Celebrating its centennial, the first garden club established in the western United States reflects on the important role it has played in shaping and conserving Santa Barbara's world-famous botanical beauty.*

By Matt Katz

A Restoration Specialist Rises to a Daunting Challenge

## Crafts Man ~ 30

*After remodeling and restoring a number of historic houses, including his own Craftsman-style home, contractor Robert Taylor was ready to take on the historical landmark residence of city beautification and preservation legend Pearl Chase.*

By Mark Lewis

## Illustrated Map of Montecito ~ 40

By Janice Blair

A Vibrant Link to Lotusland & Montecito's Glamorous Past

## Hania Tallmadge ~ 42

*In 1947 Hania Tallmadge moved from Poland to Lotusland, her aunt Ganna Walska's home. Now ensconced in a cozy apartment at Casa Dorinda, Hania regales us with memories of glamorous times in Montecito.*

By Cheryl Crabtree

Every Picture Tells A Story

## Holli Harmon's Portraits of the Central Coast ~ 52

*Painter and project creator Holli Harmon has spent the last six years painting portraits of local residents who have left an indelible mark on our community.*

By Michel Miller

UCSB Arts & Lectures

## Entertain. Educate. Inspire. ~ 64

*UC Santa Barbara's popular Arts & Lectures program promises a 2017 lineup packed with perennial favorites and a few new faces.*

By Adele Menichella

Cover Artist – Deborah Breedon

## Plein Air Paintings in Pastel ~ 66

*Breedon is among a handful of local artists who specialize in pastel plein air paintings; she happily roams about the county to capture a "sense of place" in various settings.*

By Cheryl Crabtree

## Art, Wine & Food ~ 72

*Highlights of the fall and winter season's culinary and cultural calendar, plus Santa Barbara studio artists.*

By Nancy Ransohoff



FROM THE COLLECTION OF CIVIDINI

**antoinette**  
always fashion

1046 COAST VILLAGE ROAD  
MONTECITO 93108 805-969-1515  
antoinetteboutique.com

**NOT WHAT YOU NEED,  
BUT WHAT YOU WANT.**



**WILLIAM  
FURNITURE • GARDEN • ANTIQUES  
LAMAN**

**1496 EAST VALLEY ROAD  
MONTECITO, CALIFORNIA 93108  
TELEPHONE: 805.969.2840  
FAX: 805.969.2839  
www.williamlaman.com**

*Publisher*

**Peter Freitag**

*Director of Art & Design*

**Christine Flannery**

*Story Editor*

**Cheryl Crabtree**

*Production Assistant*

**Keith Flannery**

*Copy Editor*

**Lindse Davis**

*Circulation*

**Jon Jessup**

---

**ADVERTISING**

Peter Freitag, Christine Flannery, Keith Flannery

**CONTRIBUTORS**

*Writers*

Cheryl Crabtree, Matt Katz, Mark Lewis,  
Adele Menichella, Michel Miller, Nancy Ransohoff

*Artwork*

Janice Blair, Deborah Breedon, Sydney Hall, Holli Harmon,  
Gail McBride Kenny, Martha Inman Lorch

*Photography*

Bob Faulkner

*Historical Photos & Art*

Hania Tallmadge, Santa Barbara Historical Museum, John Woodward

*Resources*

Esther Jacobsen Bates–Elverhoj Museum,  
Laura M. Bridley–Casa del Herrero,  
Jane Buchanan & Debbie Geremia–Garden Club of Santa Barbara,  
Meghan Bush–UCSB Arts & Lectures,  
Betsy Collins–Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, Bob Craig–Lotusland,  
Kendra Marme–Casa Dorinda, Michael Redmon–Gledhill Library,  
John Woodward

---

**ADVERTISING AND EDITORIAL OFFICES**

1144 Edgemound Drive, Santa Barbara, CA 93105

**Corporate Office**

Phone (805) 682-8335 / Fax (805) 682-0887  
montmag@montecitomag.com

**Design & Production Office**

Phone (805) 966-2445 / Fax (805) 966-6103  
art@montecitomag.com

**www.MontecitoMag.com**

Montecito Magazine is published by

Montecito Magazine™, Inc.

Volume XXXVI, Number 2

© Montecito Magazine, Inc. 2016, Santa Barbara, California

All rights reserved worldwide.

Copyright and trademarked contents may not be reproduced in any  
manner or form without prior written permission of  
Montecito Magazine™, Inc.

**COVER**

Deborah Breedon  
Casa del Herrero  
pastel





Every Picture Tells A Story

# Holli Harmon's Portraits of the Central Coast



By Michel Miller • Art by Holli Harmon

*“Don’t look at the big overwhelming issues of the world.  
Look in your own back yard. Look in your heart.”*

~ Mike deGruy ~

For those who live elsewhere, Santa Barbara and Montecito are synonymous with celebrity. While many recognize the area for its architecture and landscape, more probably know it by the rich and famous who dwell under its Spanish tile roofs. Oprah Winfrey, Jeff Bridges, Kathy Ireland, Julia Louis-Dreyfus and Kenny Loggins have all contributed to the area’s lore (and lure) to varying degree, but far from the glare of the spotlight, countless others—whether by trade, deed or ancestry—have influenced the culture of the region. Holli Harmon wants to paint them.

Harmon, a member of the Santa Barbara Studio Artists group and former board member of SCAPE (Southern California Artists Painting for the Environment) has spent much of the last six years rendering portraits of people who will likely never be on the cover of *People* magazine, but have nonetheless left an indelible mark on the Central Coast. Her *Portraits of the Central Coast*, which recently celebrated its inaugural exhibition (*Revelations: Culture and the Human Landscape of the Central Coast* at Elverhøj Museum of History & Art in Solvang), is more than a series of paintings; it’s a historical record of people who, without fanfare or even much recognition, have shaped the region.

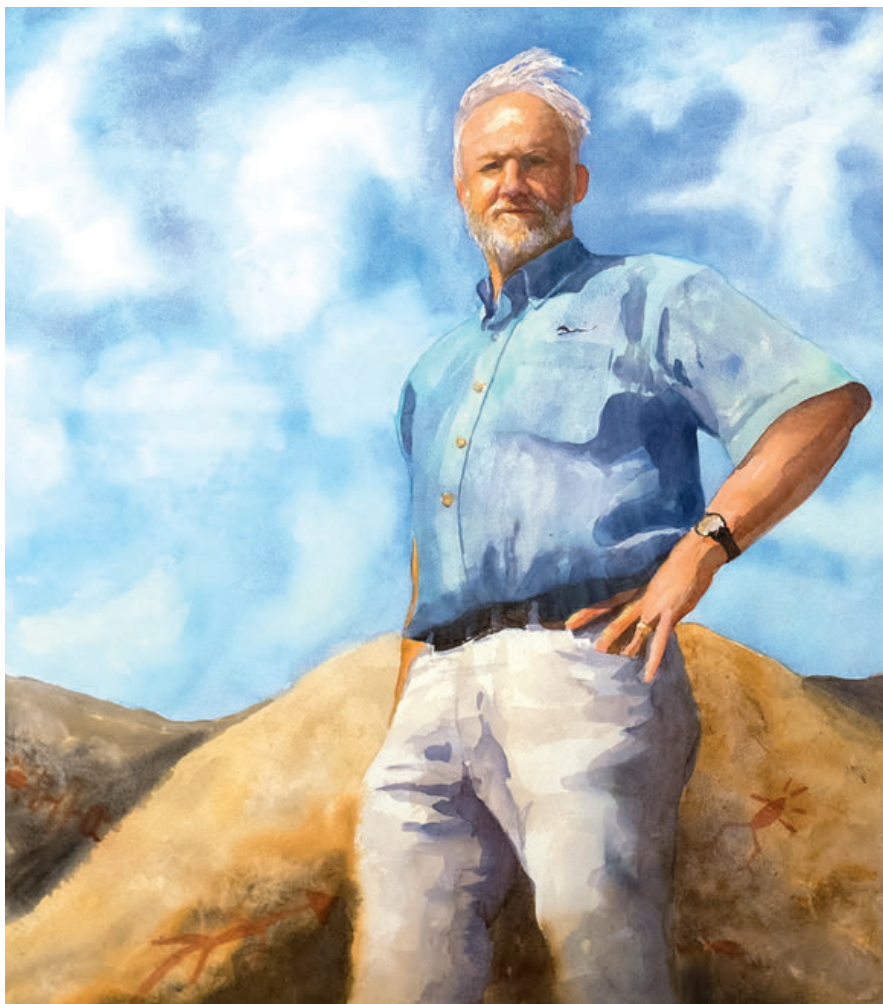
---

Left – **Dr. Lyndal Laughrin**, the first subject of *Portraits of the Central Coast*, inspired Holli Harmon to launch the project. His portrait evokes the famous photograph of John Muir and Theodore Roosevelt standing on a promontory overlooking the Yosemite Valley.

Above – **Holli Harmon**, the artist who developed the *Portraits of the Central Coast* project, presents her subjects through paintings, stories and oral history videos to reflect their dreams, history and accomplishments.



Top – **Ernestine Ygnacio De Soto**, a Barbareño Chumash descendant, continues to educate people about her culture. Featured in the background of her portrait is the Old Mission Santa Barbara, where she worked as a nurse and cared for many of the elderly padres. As a Chumash elder, she is an advocate for Chumash concerns on local advisory councils.



Left – **Dr. John Johnson**, curator of anthropology at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History and Chumash culture specialist. His research on California Mission archives and Native American genetics provides a richer understanding of early human migration and the history and prehistory of our region.

---

Using videotaped interviews, written biographies by Katherine Bradford—and some by local students in UCSB professor Mashey Bernstein’s Writing for Art class—and Harmon’s self-described “contemporary traditionalist” style of painting, the multimedia project tells the stories of 16 (and counting) ostensibly ordinary Central Coast residents and their extraordinary lives.

“I don’t want to have a *who’s who* society page,” says Harmon. “I don’t want it about celebrity. So I was looking for people who are not known by name, but their story is well known. The housekeeper who came here and supports her family, that’s a common California experience,” explains Harmon in reference to Genoveva Gonzalez, a Mexican-American immigrant from a family of artists whose portrait is included in the project.

“When you are doing the portrait of a community,” she says, “you’re doing a portrait of everybody. When I’m painting these individual portraits, it becomes a self-portrait of us all. Everybody will recognize themselves in it. I own a cowboy hat or I eat Mexican food on Christmas or I buy local organic food at the farmers market,” she continues, citing some of the common ways multiculturalism is woven into our everyday lives.

Harmon’s subjects comprise a diverse group of men and women, young and forever young with varying degrees of education and socioeconomic stature. What they all seem to share is an abiding love for their place on the globe, a curiosity and wonder about life and a desire to make their time here meaningful.

Among them are Ernestine De Soto, a Chumash elder; Dr. John Johnson, curator of anthropology at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History and adjunct professor at UC Santa Barbara; Professor Shuji Nakamura, an inventor and Nobel laureate; Mike and Mimi deGruy, documentary filmmakers; Reynolds Yater, surfboard pioneer and designer; and Dr. Lyndal Laughrin, longtime director of the Santa Cruz Island Reserve and its field station.

Dr. Laughrin, who has lived on the island for 80 percent of the year since 1970, was the first to be painted and the inspiration for the project. “I was on a painting trip to the island,” recalls Harmon, “and I’d always meet these fascinating people around the kitchen there. And I was thinking the people are as fascinating as the landscape, but the land lasts for millions of years and we’re lucky to last 100, yet one person can make a difference. And then I was looking at Dr. Laughrin, who has been researching this island, and I thought, ‘You are as beautiful as any landscape I could paint.’”

It could be said that from an anthropological and environmental standpoint, what happens on the Central Coast stays on the Central Coast, as our lives are inextricably linked to those who preceded

# TIM DAHL

Luxury Properties Specialist

30 Years Experience



PRICE UPON REQUEST

*Thinking of Buying or  
Selling a Home?*

*Contact...*



[www.TimDahl.com](http://www.TimDahl.com)

Tim@TimDahl.com • 805.886.2211

1170 Coast Village Road

CalBRE#00894534



BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY

California Properties | Home Services



Above – **Genoveva Gonzalez**, a Mexican-American, immigrated to Los Angeles when she was 15. She has lived in Santa Barbara for most of her life and has worked as a longtime housekeeper for just a few Santa Barbara families. She weaves her family traditions into her children’s lives, including trips to visit relatives in her native Mexican village, Xilitla, so they know both cultures.



Left – **Richard and Thekla Sanford**, wine industry pioneers, among the first to produce award-winning wines in the Santa Rita Hills and put Santa Barbara County on the world wine-making map. Their current venture, Alma Rosa Winery & Vineyards, is the benchmark for organic farming and is an example of nature and agriculture working in sustainable harmony.

---



us and those who will succeed us. While *Portraits of the Central Coast* offers a sort of visual revelation of the area's cultural continuum, something more human emerges from beneath the layers of paint: a sense of unity and optimism. And Harmon couldn't be happier about it.

"I think we get so many messages that things [in the world] are going wrong," she says. "And there is a lot that's going wrong, but there are powerful, smart, conscientious, hard-working people doing things that are making things right. So I am actually more hopeful for the human race, our environment and the notion that people are loving and kind—I see it. It's happening."

Including De Soto in the project was a bit of a no-brainer, considering her community involvement and her Chumash ancestry, which reaches back 13,000 years. A Santa Barbara native who was raised in the last household to speak the Barbareño Chumash language, she has spent much of her lifetime preserving the ways of her people and impacting the world around her through compassionate nursing and volunteerism. She is also a museum docent and a member of the California Indian Advisory Council. In the acclaimed documentary film *6 Generations*, which she co-wrote with friend and fellow portrait subject Dr. Johnson, she spoke of her responsibility in keeping the Chumash culture alive: "I feel like I'm speaking for my ancestors. I am their voice. There's no other way they can pass on the knowledge..." De Soto and Johnson met 30 years ago when she took one of his classes at Santa Barbara City College. (See *Montecito Magazine*, Spring 2011.) Through their combined research, they've made numerous discoveries, and De Soto is now regarded as an authority on Chumash history.

For her portrait of De Soto, Harmon used a technique apropos of her subject's unique life and importance to the region. "I painted her in egg tempera, the same medium being used when the New World was being discovered," explains Harmon. Made from ground pigment mixed with egg yolk, which works as a binder, the medium was popular before the advent of oil paint for its ability to impart depth to a painting and a jewel-like quality to color. Harmon learned it in the Russian tradition where vodka is added as a preservative. She muses, "It's part of the romance of the medium for me."

With an intentional nod to Raphael's 16th century painting *Madonna of the Meadow*, De Soto stands in the foreground clothed in white, adorned with native jewelry and gently grasping a scepter made from a tule reed to symbolize the Chumash people's exceptional basketry skills. The scepter points to the bear constellation in the sky. The bear is her spirit animal and represents a Chumash parable. In the background is an early mission scene



**MONTECITO COFFEE SHOP**  
 Casual Breakfast and Lunch • Indoor & Patio  
 Corner East Valley & San Ysidro roads  
 Mon–Sat 7 am–2:30 pm • Sun 8–2 • 969-6250

**BARONCELLI**  
 LINENS AND ACCESSORIES

*Bed, Bath and Table*  
*"Celebrating forty-seven years"*

Montecito Village  
 1485 EAST VALLEY ROAD  
 969-2617



**SANTA BARBARA**  
 CERTIFIED  
**FARMERS MARKET**

7 Markets ■ 6 Days a Week  
 Rain or Shine

[sbfarmersmarket.org](http://sbfarmersmarket.org)  
 805.962.5354



that honors De Soto's complicated relationship with the Catholic Church. Friars, farm animals and native plants complete the scene.

Taking a decidedly different approach for Dr. Johnson's portrait, Harmon chose watercolor as her medium. It allowed her to more easily incorporate Chumash symbols into the painting similar to what he saw in the Central Coast backcountry. It was a discovery that led him to become a leading authority on matching living Chumash descendants to their ancestry through DNA and mission records. Softly hinted at in the sky are figures that also hark back to ancient Chumash cave paintings. Johnson is dressed in khaki pants and a chambray shirt with a condor on it to represent his 30-year tenure as curator of anthropology at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

Johnson says he felt honored to be a part of the portrait project and explains why learning about our predecessors is relevant to life today. "Anthropology teaches us that our way of doing things is not the only way. By studying how peoples of the past coped with environmental crises and social stresses from changes they could not have foreseen, we gain a perspective...we gain the long-term view encompassing many millennia, and realize that much more has happened here than our brief experience has taught us."

Johnson is currently collaborating with molecular anthropologists to study genetic patterns

**Mimi and Mike deGruy,**

documentary filmmakers. Their award-winning films link the declining health of the oceans with the way we live, illuminating our impact on the environment. Mimi is currently working on a film about her late husband to continue to get people interested in the sea before it's too late.

of native Californians and directing a research team at the Arlington Springs site on Santa Rosa Island where, in the early 2000s, he assisted in the excavation of Arlington Man, the oldest known human skeleton in North America.

Of the 16 portraits included in Harmon's project, three feature pairs of subjects: two married couples—Mike and Mimi deGruy and Richard and Thekla Sanford—as well as the Gregersen brothers of Santa Ynez. The painting of the deGruys is especially poignant, as Mike lost his life in a helicopter accident shortly after being painted by Harmon. Recognized for the award-winning films they made for National Geographic, PBS, BBC and other networks, the merging of Mike's and Mimi's individual strengths made them a powerful team—professionally and personally. Increasingly concerned with the declining health of the oceans, Mike didn't want people to see a sanitized or idealized version of the truth, but rather the ocean "and all its warts."

In a TED talk he gave about how an unlikely encounter with an octopus at age 5 planted the seed



for what would become his life's work, he offered a simple mechanism for both environmental and human healing. "The ocean has an amazing ability to recover if we just leave it alone," he told the crowd. "Don't look at the big overwhelming issues of the world. Look in your own back yard. Look in your heart. Create a healing zone in your neighborhood and encourage others to do the same."

Mimi is currently working on a film about her late husband, as she carries forth his determination to get people interested in the sea—before it's too late. "He wanted to see greater resources dedicated toward exploring, researching and ultimately caring for the ocean," she says, "particularly the deep sea. He was distressed over the dearth of funding for basic science. The ocean covers roughly 70 percent of the earth's surface, and we've explored about 5 percent."

Using oil on linen, Harmon portrayed Mike and Mimi engaged in a tender embrace, positioned in front of the ocean indicating their tremendous love for each other and their work as ocean stewards. They are framed by the outline of a nautilus shell, which played a starring role in Mike's earliest work as an underwater filmmaker and ultimately introduced him to Mimi. The spiral pattern of the nautilus also illustrates the Fibonacci sequence or "golden ratio," which Harmon built the exhibition around.

The attention to detail and thoughtful choice of medium and composition evident in all of Harmon's portraits reveal her reverence not only for her subjects and the project, but also for the

**Reynolds "Renny" Yater,**

pioneering surfboard designer. Renny Yater was active in the early days of the California surf industry in the 1950s, starting out shaping and fiberglassing boards in Laguna Beach. In 1959 he opened his own store, Yater Surfboards, on Anacapa Street in Santa Barbara. He continues to create exceptional handcrafted boards.

power of art itself. "I'm trying to travel through history [via the medium], but also anchor some of it in my own journey and exploration as an artist," she explains. "I am the kind of artist who's always pushing myself."

Although the show at the Elverhøj has ended, Harmon looks forward to future exhibitions and education opportunities for area students and has her sights on a handful of potential portrait subjects. "I become each person's biggest fan after I have an interview," gushes Harmon. "I get so proud and I'm so impressed by them, and I want you to fall in love with them the way I fell in love with them and see how beautiful and significant their lives are. And I think that if you do, you might ask yourself what you're doing, and you will see how important and significant your life is, too. That's a privilege I have being an artist—I get to work on what I love and what I think is important and share it." ♦

*Detailed information about Portraits of the Central Coast is available at [portraitsofthecentralcoast.com](http://portraitsofthecentralcoast.com); a book of the exhibition, REVELATIONS: Portraits of the Central Coast Culture and the Human Landscape, is available at Elverhøj Museum of History and Art, [elverhoj.org](http://elverhoj.org).*