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Editor's Note: October offers a feast for the eyes with hundreds of artists opening doors and welcoming crowds. In our Art Issue, we spotlight the head-turning, downright creative works featured all around the county, beginning with Cabrillo Gallery's new, month-long exhibit dubbed "Visually Invisible." Beyond that, take note of two Open Studios artists that captured our attention, too. But there are so many others. Get out there. Look around. Embrace the creativity. Onward ...

... Art: Out & Proud

For Santa Cruz, the thought of an art show focused on the idea of gender identity is not something that would cause most of us to bat an eyelid at, as would be the case in more conservative communities. But even for tolerant Santa Cruz, the topics of transgenderism and gender identity are still mainly shrouded in mystery and, sometimes, confusion. The new exhibit, "Visibly Invisible: Art and Transgender Subjectivity," which is on display the entire month at the Cabrillo Gallery, strives to look at this unique minority group and unveil some of the truths behind the journey of a transgender person.

Jana Marcus, who wears myriad hats including working in marketing and communications at Cabrillo College and as a photographer whose award-winning photo documentary, "Transfigurations" is an integral contribution to



the show, explains that Cabrillo is striving to create more of a presence within the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) community. In fact, Marcus' work, "Transfigurations," may have helped set the ball rolling for this exhibit.

What the "Visibly Invisible: Art and Transgender Subjectivity" show is, exactly, is an exhibit that explores the themes of transgenderism and sexual politics through mediums including photography, film and video installations, paintings, drawings and sculpture.

Tobin Keller, longtime director and curator of the Cabrillo Gallery as well as an instructor at Cabrillo College, is pleased with the strong variety of artists that the show represents—five in all. "The exhibit crosses all boundaries," he says.

In addition to the photography by Marcus, there are drawings and paintings by Cobi Moules that, Keller notes, are "very beautiful with a traditional focus. However the content and subject matter is not traditional."

Then there are Maxx Sizeler's shoe sculpture and installation work, which includes printmaking; Sheila Malone who does color photography and digital video installation; and a film by Shani Heckman called Wrong Bathroom.



Despite a growth in public awareness of the GLBT community in recent years, puzzlement still surrounds the topic of transgenderism and what it really means.

"Many people don't understand who transgender people are," says Marcus. "They are just considered a bunch of freaks. But awareness is about tolerance and breaking down stereotypes." Marcus shares the story of how her interest in photographing this minority group began.

When she was in graduate school at San Jose State University in 2004, Marcus faced the daunting challenge of coming up with a senior thesis. "I'm a documentary photographer," she says, "and, as with most of the things I end up photographing, I like to photograph things that I don't understand." While striving to attain her master's degree, Marcus rented a room to a student attending UC Santa Cruz who was studying feminist theory.



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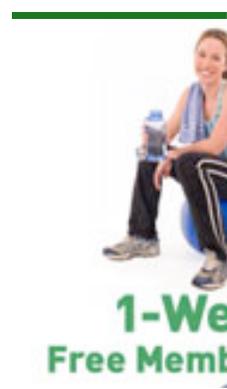


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"One night over cocktails he said that he had something he needed to tell me. He said, 'I was a woman five years ago.'"

Confused, Marcus began to laugh because she says that the idea at the time was completely outside her realm of consciousness. "He shared his story with me and I was blown away," she confides. "Transgenderism was a secret world that I had never heard of before and it inspired me to do my documentary, 'Transfigurations.'"

Marcus hoped that by capturing the feelings of these people through pictures and words, she could discover what it means to be a man or a woman by people who are changing their genders. "Transfigurations," as well as the "Visibly Invisible: Art and Transgender Subjectivity" exhibit, hopes to answer questions about transgenderism and what influenced the person's decision to switch genders, what was guiding the person's choice in terms of the role model of the kind of man or woman they wanted to become, and discovering the concepts of masculinity and femininity that are held by people who have chosen to change genders. Marcus' photo documentary show "Transfigurations" has been touring universities across the country for five years and has been very successful, accumulating myriad accolades, but this is the first time it has returned to Santa Cruz since 2006.



Marcus is proud to share the limelight with other artists whose work focuses on transgender identity. "I think that with this particular subject matter the most hopeful thing that we can have is for people to walk away with a knowledge of a minority group that they did not have before," she adds. "I hope people will learn something that they didn't know about before seeing the exhibit."

"To appreciate [the exhibit], it doesn't really matter what your gender is," Keller says. "These people are a significant part of our community who happen to be underappreciated and under exhibited. There are a lot of artists of all kinds, which is important for me as a curator to have represented. I want to provide students and our community with an educational and broadening experience."

October is national GLBT history month, and Oct. 11 specifically is National Coming Out Day. To celebrate, Cabrillo plans to host a surprise event that day in addition to the month-long "Visibly Invisible: Art and Transgender Subjectivity" gallery exhibit. | Leslie Patrick

"Visibly Invisible: Art and Transgender Subjectivity" will be on display at the Cabrillo Gallery through Oct. 29 at Cabrillo College, 6500 Soquel Drive, Aptos. The Cabrillo Gallery is located in the Library Building of Cabrillo College. Admission is free. Parking is located close by in most campus lots for the cost of \$2, with metered parking in lot B.



When Painting Becomes Art

Open Studios artist David Fleming embraces the 'work'

Much like the old woman who lived in a shoe, Santa Cruz artist David Fleming and his wife Jeanne share their average-sized home in Aptos with their 800 children—at least that's what they call David's vast collection of paintings.

A retired San Jose State University teacher who spent the majority of his youth designing cars for Ford, Porsche in Germany and General Motors—his most notable success being the rear-end of the '69 Mustang—Fleming discovered his passion for painting 30 years ago and will open up his home to Open Studios for the 15th time in his career Oct. 16-17 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Organized by the Cultural Council of Santa Cruz County, Open Studios is a self-guided art tour that gives art