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Santa Barbara Museum of Art Announces 2025 Exhibition Schedule

The year rings in solo exhibitions by artists Elliott Hundley and Vian Sora, *The Impressionist Revolution: Monet to Matisse from the Dallas Museum of Art*, and a celebration of SBMA's permanent collection.

1130 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA.
Open Tuesday-Sunday 11 am – 5 pm, 1st Thursday 11 am – 8 pm
805.963.4364 www.sbma.net

Exhibition Openings



James Casebere, *Sea of Ice*, 2014. Pigment print. SBMA, Museum purchase with funds provided by the Erik Skipsey Fund.

***Sea of Ice: Echoes of the European Romantic Era* February 2 – August 24, 2025**

This exhibition centers on the SBMA's James Casebere photograph, *Sea of Ice* (2014). Casebere based his work on German artist Caspar David Friedrich's (1774–1840) painting of the same name from 1823–24, famous since its debut for its riveting vision of an Arctic naval disaster.

Reacting against the 18th century's championing of science and reason, early 19th-century Romantic writers and artists sought to capture the intensity and worth of individual experience, often with grand depictions of awe-inspiring nature. Today, we encounter a similar predicament the Romantics faced: in our age of climate change and technological development, how do we represent nature and our precarious relationship to it?

Sea of Ice includes a variety of paintings, photographs, prints and drawings from the collection from the 19th to the 21st century, and an important video loan by Austrian artist Lukas Marxt (b. 1983), all of which reflect Romanticism's revolutionary and lasting importance.

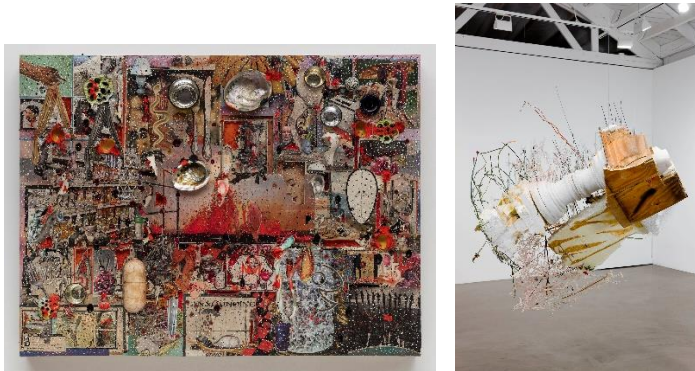


Left: Jónsi, *Tremor*, 2024. Metal steel plate, transducer, electronics 2 channel sound installation, 10:00 min. Loan courtesy of Tanya Bonakdar, Los Angeles. Right: Fred Eversley, *Untitled*, 1975. Cast polyester resin. SBMA, Gift of the Estate of Robert K. Straus.

Math + Art

March 30 – August 24, 2025

Geometry, numbers, and graphs are means to understand nature and help overcome our human inconsistencies and emotions. The artists in this exhibition, however, infuse these same tools with messiness, warmth, and humor, not to mention elegance and wonder. No cold logic here. These artworks also bring us back to the awe and puzzlement that propel mathematicians, scientists, and artists to explore the world around us. Artists such as Herbert Bayer, Jónsi, Xylor Jane, Dorthea Rockburne, Bridget Riley, Jong Oh, Fred Eversley, and Bernar Venet reveal all the varied ways that artists since the 1960s have harnessed, challenged, and flaunted the rigor and precision afforded by mathematics.



Left: Elliott Hundley, *Tiered Sounds*, 2017. Paper, oil, fabric, pins, plastic, glass, shells, lotus pods, metal, foam and linen on panel. Private collection, Santa Barbara, CA. Right: Elliott Hundley, *By Achilles' Tomb*, 2009. Expanded polystyrene, wood, plastic, epoxy putty, pins, paper, photographs, willow, bamboo, string, wire, spray paint, found wax vessel. Hammer Museum.

Proscenium: Elliott Hundley

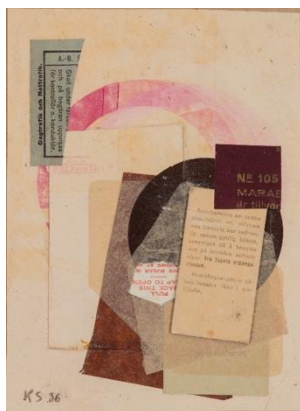
April 20 – August 31, 2025

By Achilles' Tomb: Elliott Hundley and Antiquity @ SBMA

April 20, 2025 — February 22, 2026

The Santa Barbara Museum of Art is organizing a mid-career solo exhibition with Elliott Hundley and has also invited him to rethink the display of Greco-Roman antiquities in SBMA's Ludington Court. Hundley has long engaged with ancient Greece, especially tragedies, such as *Medea* (431 BC) or *The Bacchae* (405 BC). While *Proscenium* will survey Hundley's work through the lens of the stage, backdrops, and actors, *By Achilles' Tomb* juxtaposes the Museum's renowned collection of antique sculpture and glassware with Hundley's sculptures, paintings, and newly made collages. These two presentations reveal his deep connections with ancient history and literature, and an ability to transform humble and castoff materials into bewitching artworks of great delicacy and captivating visual density.

Both exhibitions show Hundley imagining a world that is an alternative to one we exist in, one where the ancient Greek gods are still worshipped, where gravity is defied by floating rocks and columns, or where stickpins, paper, feathers, goat hooves, and spangles have been amassed into an impossibly complex and impractical confection held together by a miracle. While these are shared themes, *Proscenium* sets his sculptures and paintings as stages for the enactment of a drama with a stage, sets, props, actors, though not one with a straightforward script. In a theater, the proscenium is the architectural structure around the stage that separates the stage from the audience and the invisible scrim—the fourth wall—between the fictional play and the real world where the audience is seated. By contrast, *By Achilles' Tomb*, a reinterpretation of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art's Greco-Roman antiquities, reminds us that ancient culture can be remade and repurposed today by anyone, from anywhere, no expertise in ancient Greek required. It seems that Achilles Tomb really did exist—Alexander the Great visited it—but its location has been lost to time. So, Hundley is free to reinvent this now-mythical tomb as a levitating column in a thicket of bamboo, string, wood, and baubles. Moreover, for all of his artworks' delicacy and physical lightness, they often reference tragic dramas about the follies of gods and humans. These stories are replete with irrationality, violence, and the inescapability of fate—a strange concept in our age of individual self-determination and choice.



Kurt Schwitters, *Marae*, 1936. Collage on light cardboard. SBMA Museum Purchase.

Letter Forms

June 15 – September 14, 2025

The written word is usually used to explain or describe a work of art—but what happens when the words themselves become an image? This exhibition of 20th- and 21st-century works from SBMA's permanent collection explores the ways in which artists transform words and characters by incorporating them into collages, prints, drawings, photographs, and sculpture. Employing not only the

Roman alphabet used in English, but also Farsi script and Chinese and Japanese characters, the artists in this exhibition push text beyond its usual denotative or descriptive function to create, alter, and question meaning.



Left: Vian Sora, *Dilmun*, 2022. Oil and mixed media on canvas. SBMA, Museum purchase with funds provided by the General Art Acquisition Fund © Vian Sora, 2022. Right: Artist Vian Sora

Vian Sora: Outerworlds

June 22 – September 7, 2025

The Santa Barbara Museum of Art is pleased to announce *Vian Sora: Outerworlds*, a multi-venue mid-career survey of internationally renowned abstract painter Vian Sora (b. 1976, Baghdad). Organized jointly by the Santa Barbara Museum of Art; Asia Society Texas, Houston; and Speed Art Museum, Louisville, this exhibition will assemble approximately 20 of Sora's major works, charting her growth as an artist over a period of seven years (2016–2023).

Born in Iraq, she survived two American wars and eventually made her way to the United States, then worked to bring her family to safety. She has discussed these paintings as an analog to the experience of history and her life. Indeed, the tectonic metaphor above is apt since she recently titled an exhibition *Subduction*, the process whereby a tectonic plate is absorbed into magna and pulled into the liquid layer of the Earth. *Subduction* suggests cycles, renewal, destruction and long chronologies of events that eclipse individuals and even generations.

Vian Sora's abstractions are without a doubt lacking obvious references to subject matter and explode with riotous, positive colors that convey energy and life. Nonetheless, these abstractions hold within them something tense and brooding, like the gnashing tectonic forces beneath the ground. The desire to read into abstraction a content or some personal relationship to the artist's emotional state or life is strong and generally ill-advised, but Sora's work presents an interesting exception to that idea. Perhaps, with its open-endedness and ability to evoke without precise description, Sora's paintings might be a way to engage with experiences and emotions too big, too charged for works, much less a narrative.

Mario Giacomelli: La Gente e La Terra/The People and the Earth

September 7, 2025 – February 15, 2026

Mario Giacomelli (1925–2000) is one of the most important artists of post-World War II Italy. Raised in poverty and self-educated in the eastern coastal town of Senigallia near Ancona, Giacomelli took his first photographs in 1953. He had served briefly in the Italian army and previously established himself as a

printer in his hometown, which allowed him to focus on his art. In dramatically sharp contrasts of black and white unusual for its time, Giacomelli depicted both people and landscapes with a rare psychological intensity, one that captured a particular European post-war awareness of the anxieties, travails and ultimate brevity of life itself. His landscapes take part in a distinct strain of international post-war abstraction while retaining their origins in the middle and southern landscapes of Italy, the first of which he inextricably tied. Organized by the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, this exhibition features works from two 1981-produced portfolios of the artist's earlier negatives, *La Gente (People)* and *Paessagio (Landscape)*, the first from SBMA's collection, the second on loan from a private collection.

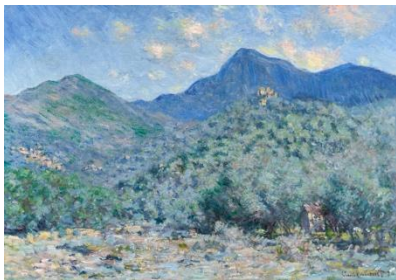


Rose Salane, *Life Cereal Prop*, 2024. C-Print. Courtesy the artist and Carlos/Ishikawa Gallery

Props and Icons: Rose Salane

Opens September 14, 2025

With the exception of films like *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), movie props are designed to disappear into a film's background. *Props and Icons* treats these objects like characters in their own right. Using photographs of props and actual items borrowed and purchased from prop warehouses, Rose Salane shines a light on forgettable or disposable items—a *Life* cereal box, a compact mirror—to reveal their unique, individual histories as players in the entertainment industry. Salane writes: "This project treats prop warehouses as meticulous object libraries holding inventories of popular fiction." This exhibition offers a way to get behind the fiction and magic of films and understand, to use the artist's phrase, what is "required for (re)construction of an image."



Left: Claude Monet, *Valle Buona, Near Bordighera*, 1884. Oil on canvas. Dallas Museum of Art, gift of the Meadows Foundation, Incorporated, 1981.127. Right: Vincent van Gogh, *Sheaves of Wheat*, July 1890. Oil on canvas. Dallas Museum of Art, The Wendy and Emery Reves Collection, 1985.R.80.

The Impressionist Revolution: Monet to Matisse from the Dallas Museum of Art **October 5, 2025 – January 25, 2026**

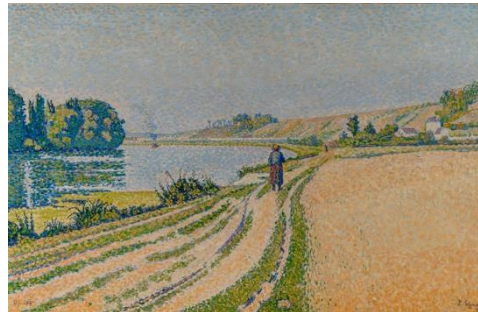
The Impressionist Revolution: Monet to Matisse from the Dallas Museum of Art is told entirely through the Dallas Museum of Art's exceptional holdings. The Impressionists broke with tradition in both how

and what they painted, redefining what then constituted cutting-edge contemporary art. The unique innovations of its core members, such as Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, and Berthe Morisot, set the foundation against which following generations of avant-garde artists reacted, from Paul Gauguin and Vincent van Gogh to Piet Mondrian and Henri Matisse. Celebrating the 150th anniversary of the first Impressionist exhibition, *The Impressionist Revolution* invites visitors to reconsider these now beloved artists as the scandalous renegades they at one time were, as well as the considerable impact they had on 20th-century art.

The presentation in Santa Barbara is coordinated by Charles Wylie, Santa Barbara Museum of Art's Curator of Photography and New Media.



This major exhibition is organized by the Dallas Museum of Art and has been curated by Nicole R. Myers, Ph.D., Chief Curator and Research Officer, The Barbara Thomas Lemmon Senior Curator of European Art, Dallas Museum of Art.



Left: Claude Monet, *Villas in Bordighera*, 1884. Oil on canvas. SBMA, Bequest of Katharine Dexter McCormick in memory of her husband, Stanley McCormick. Right: Paul Signac, *Herblay - The Riverbank*, 1889. Oil on canvas. SBMA, Gift of Lord and Lady Ridley-Tree.

Encore: 19th-Century French Art at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art **October 5, 2025 – January 25, 2026**

Encore: 19th-Century French Art at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art is being curated at SBMA by Charles Wylie. Including paintings, photographs, sculpture and works on paper, this unprecedented exhibition in its own separate gallery will complement *The Impressionist Revolution*, demonstrating how Paris became an international 19th-century phenomenon; how an array of artistic, literary and political figures made Paris their scintillating home; and how the construction of the Paris Opera can be seen as a symbol for the many cultural, social, and political forces that Paris faced within a restless, often volatile France, Europe, and world. *Encore* will also impress visitors with the depth and quality of SBMA's own dazzling collection of 19th-century French art, while immersing them in a superb gathering of French works that will never be seen together again.

Exhibitions on View

[Modern Life: A Global Artworld, 1850-1950](#)

Ongoing

We live with linked economies and global instantaneous communication. Change is constant. People are on the go. Modern life with its incessant movement began in the mid-19th century, as undersea telegraph cables, railroads, steamships, and colonial powers encircled the world. These same changes

created a global art world with centers in cities such as Paris, Mexico City, and New York. Reflecting this internationalization, artists in this gallery come from North America, South America, and Europe. Their networks crossed continents and oceans, and these artworks grapple with and sometimes avoid the epochal changes they were living through. The Santa Barbara Museum of Art has a focused but encyclopedic collection, and *Modern Life* uses its collection, salted with a few loans, to tell a sweeping, global story.

[Dario Robleto: The Signal](#)

Through May 25, 2025

Dario Robleto: The Signal features the artist's feature-length film *Ancient Beacons Long for Notice* (2024) and a selection of artworks that relate to his dazzlingly inventive mining of the history of science and technology. The film will be continuously projected in an enclosed space in the McCormick Gallery and will be shown alongside a selection of artworks. These will show his engagement with the problem of how humans leave traces of themselves, whether as sound recordings of voices, electrocardiograms and electroencephalograms, or as junk, and how these remainders fail to capture all the richness of what it means to be in love, worried, much less the textures of our emotional lives.

[Accretion: Works by Latin American Women](#)

Through April 13, 2025

Like the pearl that forms from the accretion of materials over time, the works in this exhibition contain the aggregated experiences of the artists—women living and working in the States but with roots in Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru. However, unlike a pearl, their layers—comprised of earth, ceramic tiles, paint, photographs, stories, art history, and the artists' own lives as material—neither are smooth nor conceal themselves. Weaving a rich tapestry of diverse perspectives, *Accretion's* expressions of family bonds, immigration, labor and self-discovery draw attention to the intersected cultures, temporalities and histories that constitute the layers of being.

[Stillness](#)

Through March 16, 2025

Simply installed in the Santa Barbara Museum of Art's Photography Gallery, *Stillness* invites contemplation and introspection via a select and small group of beautifully composed and printed images. The exhibition demonstrates how artists have perceptively used the unique capabilities of the photographic medium to create images that resonate with the invisible experiences of stillness, time, and silence.

[In the Making: Contemporary Art at SBMA](#)

Through March 9, 2025

Since first opening its doors in 1941, SBMA has been a platform for contemporary artists. With artworks dating from 1965 to 2023, *In the Making* is an expansive take on an evolving collection and illustrates the impossible task pinning down the contemporary, which is never still. Nearly a century ago, Gertrude Stein is reported to have said that "You can be a museum, or you can be modern, but you can't be both." However, if you admit that a contemporary collection can only ever be "in the making," or always in formation, then there is a way out of Stein's dead end. A museum can be modern, but only if it commits to continuous growth and change. Cutting across seven decades, this exhibition provocatively mixes artists rarely seen together and reveals their shared preoccupations with optical effects, fantastic otherworldly landscapes, allegory and history to unlock national and ethnic identity, abstract painting's expressive power, and aesthetic appeal of mathematical graphs and constructions. Artworks from 50

years ago that can no longer be called contemporary sit alongside those from the 2020s.

[Friends and Lovers](#)

Through March 2, 2025

Often LGBTQ people have forged circles of friendship and alternative families as they navigate their identity, need for authentic self-expression, and frequently hostile environment. Drawing on artworks in the SBMA collection and loans from artists, this exhibition explores art about LGBTQ friendship, companionship, solidarity, and desire. This exhibition includes works by Nell Campbell, Pui Tiffany Chow, Félix González-Torres, Edie Fake, Alex Foxtan, Gerald Incandela, Narsiso Martinez, Paul Mpagi Sepuya, Joey Terrill, Chiffon Thomas, and T.J. Wilcox.