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Beholders Eye Art, Speak with Artists at Gallery Opening Reception

Written by: [Zack Rounds \(https://laverne.edu/news/author/zrounds/\)](https://laverne.edu/news/author/zrounds/)

With its latest exhibit “Breaking Illusion: Artist as Scientist,” the La Verne Law Art Gallery offers an opportunity to recognize that the arts and sciences – two great engines of culture in society – have much in common. It showcases the work of seven artists selected by exhibition curator Conchi Sanford, all recognized for their aesthetic talents as well as the use of their artistic ability to dissect and layer, remove, include, theorize and hypothesize throughout the entire art process.

The opening night reception on February 24 featured all seven artists in attendance, affording guests a chance to view the art and discuss the creative process with the artists themselves.

Sanford said she chose artists Betsy Lohrer Hall, Jessica Wimbley, Toni Gentilli, Virginia Katz, Dianna Lindquist, Kimiko Miyoishi and Amber Crabbe because their works reflect “the impossibility of understanding the future of the arts without devoting attention to science and technology.”

When asked about the exhibit’s premise of artist as scientist, Hall, a contemporary artist who lives in Long Beach, said she addresses it often.

“Some will see one piece of art out of context and they won’t understand all the steps it took to get there,” Hall said. “It’s the same as when a scientist experiments over and over and may discover something truly esoteric that only fellow scientists will understand. But we can all try to see how that one thing may be advancing a whole area of science.”

Lindquist said that having the exhibit at law school adds to the relevance of the theme.

“I was just having a conversation with a couple of the other artists and they were all talking on how art making is related to legal work – it is built around the endeavors of human experience,” Lindquist said. “They aren’t that different, so combining the two – art with science, and with law – brings new things to light that some people might not have considered before now. The connections are, and always have been, there.”

For Lindquist, who lives in Utah and is on faculty at Weber State University, the opening was her first visit to Ontario and La Verne Law. Not knowing the gallery’s layout, she admitted to being curious to see how the exhibit would be displayed.

“I had delivered my work and (curator Sanford) had said it would be in a hallway. In my mind, I wasn’t sure what to expect,” she said. “But the way this is set up, it actually creates little vignettes. Each person’s work is highlighted in their own portion of the hallways. It works very nicely.”

Though familiar with the art communities in Pomona and Claremont, Hall had not been involved in any Ontario-based shows. She praised the gallery space and the opportunity it affords to enjoy the exhibit.

“I think that the space is amazing and the show is really beautiful. I like the fact this is a space that people inhabit and might come to day after day,” Hall said. “Sometimes when I see a really compelling show, I am disappointed because I want to spend more time with the work. It’s nice that people will get to see it and see it again, maybe seeing something the second time they missed the first, and possibly bringing somebody back with them. It enlivens the whole space.”

Other key attendees included University of La Verne Provost Jonathan Reed and Ontario City Manager Al Boling. Visiting Professor of Law Placido Gomez, who has played a central role with the La Verne Law Gallery and its exhibitions since it was established in 2014, was extremely pleased with both the exhibition and the opening reception.

“Having all the artists here tonight was wonderful,” he said. “It’s been a good turnout and everyone seems to be enjoying the exhibit.”