

### Dance



Photo by Rose Eichenbaum

State Street Ballet to present *Modern Masters* **22**

### Volunteers



Courtesy Image

Santa Barbara Public Library will host a Volunteer Fair on May 11th. Discover how you can help! **6**

### Performance Art



Photo by Carly Ann Foye

Santa Barbara Museum of Art will host Chris Kallmyer: Ensemble **8**

### In This Issue

- Destination ART. . . . . 2, 11-13, 20, 23
- The Ticket: SB Calendar. . . . . 6-8
- Beverly Jackson: Mixing Yesterday & Today. . 15
- Community News. . . . . 15, 21, 22
- Sigrid Toye: HarborVoice. . . . . 16
- Harlan Green: Economic Voice. . . . . 17
- Classifieds. . . . . 17-18
- Local Interest Rates. . . . . 18
- Open House Invitations. . . . . 19, 20

### Movies & Theatre...5

### Art



Explore the ZONE!  
**May 17th 11-13**

### Music



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CAMA's 100th Birthday Bash is May 19th at the Sunken Gardens **7**



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**21**



*Super Rebel - AOC, 2019*  
by Inga Guzyte  
Assemblage from Skateboard Decks

**Sullivan Goss**  
AN AMERICAN GALLERY

**Inga Guzyte's**  
**#REBELWOMEN**

**Opening Reception**  
Thursday, June 6th

Exhibition Runs  
June 1st - July 23rd, 2019

www.sullivangoss.com

Sullivan Goss - An American Gallery:

# Brave Women are the Creative Nexus for Inga Guzyte

By Kerry Methner, PhD / VOICE

**C**ONTEMPORARY PORTRAITS INFUSED WITH COURAGE... FRESH, EDGY, UNUSUAL. That's contemporary art when Inga Guzyte is on the creating end. Born in Lithuania, raised in Germany, passionate about skateboarding and creating, and recently returned from time in New York and Europe, she will be opening her first solo exhibition with Sullivan Goss An American Gallery in June. It will feature new work titled *#RebelWomen*.

"Every female portrait that I have chosen to make is because I have found something in their personal story to either look up to or admire. It is almost like, the more I think about their stories the more resilience I build myself, their courage and strength seems to transfer onto me and I feel strong with a lot of hope for the future," Guzyte wrote in an email interview with VOICE.

While Guzyte hails from afar, she has roots here in Santa Barbara as a student at SBCC, where she developed her chops on the band saws, scroll saws, and nail guns in the sculpture department, along with a sense of materials and continuing to hone her artistic sensibilities.

"Making art has kept me on my feet in this world and continues to do so," she related.... "lol, I understand that good work requires hard work....I just like working with my hands and I know I am good at what I do."

While still in Germany as a teen, she became enamored with skateboarding.

According to Nathan Vonk of Sullivan Goss, at age 17, she started skating. Skateboarding represented freedom, and coming from where she did, freedom was transgressive.

At 21, she made her way to the United States

to be closer to the birthplace of skate culture. In 2006, she made her way to California, where she began to focus her passion for art.

"With my new series *#RebelWomen* I am acknowledging all the women that were constantly reminded/treated to be different but decided to do something about it. I think that courage has to be celebrated," she explained.

While at City College, Guzyte began using old skateboards as materials for making

sculpture. As she has developed her technique over the last ten years, that cross fertilization has born fruit.

"The most exciting part about the work I do is that I get to blend together two passions of mine in one: Art and Skateboarding. In doing so I get to create something unique and 'out of the box,'" she enthused.

That eagerness carries over into her attitude about getting to work. "I am always eager to realize the ideas I have in my head and can't wait to go through all the piles of color-coordinated decks I have in order to find the right colors for my next piece. While I do that, I feel like I am flipping through pages covered with cool graphics, fun colors, and unique marks and scratches. I can only imagine the stories behind those broken decks."

Skateboarding and its culture were formative for Guzyte.

"When I first came to the U.S. I was skateboarding all day, every day.... I also learned English by hanging out at the skate park, lol... but

at some point my priorities shifted into making art. So it has been a while since I stepped on a skateboard deck; but it doesn't feel like it because I am surrounded by skateboards every day and I still have my skateboarding friends," she added. "I think skateboarding helped me find my own interpretation of art.... There are many other sports that could have the same effect as Skateboarding. My guide to go explore the world just happened to be skateboarding and I

wouldn't change it for the world."

That brings us back to the present. In addition to her solo exhibition at Sullivan Goss in June, some of Guzyte's previous work will be on view at the Arts Fund Gallery during the Funk Zone Art Walk on May 17th.

"Everyone who takes a minute to appreciate my work, should realize that it isn't just about skateboarding.... In fact, my sculptures don't look anything like a skateboard once I am done with them. I am using the skateboard graphics to tell a story, and with the new series, I am only scratching the surface of an ongoing issue in our society. I like to remind people of the things happening outside their everyday lives. I hope the viewer will not only appreciate the craft of my work, but also dig deeper into the story of each piece."

Gallery owner Nathan Vonk confirms this, noting, "While her pieces are made from brutal, broken materials, the finished products are both sophisticated and delicate. With her *#RebelWomen* series, she has added to that appeal by including a message that is powerful, important, and uplifting. As soon as I heard about this new work, I asked her if we could



Super Rebel - Frida, 2018 by Inga Guzyte. 24.5 x 22.75 x 1.5" | Assemblage from Skateboard Decks

debut it at Sullivan Goss. ...I think the sky's the limit for her career."

Some of the heroic lineup of women who broke out that she features include: Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Frida Kahlo, Sonita Alizadeh, Malala Yousafzai, Josephine Kulea, and Amy Winehouse.

"The young Lithuanian girl in me is very pleased that she chose to follow her inner voice and took the steps she took to get to this point," Guzyte said looking back over her life. "I have a husband who is one of the most talented woodworkers I know. He is very supportive of my work."

Looking back again, this artist and maker related, "The most important mentor in my life has been Skateboarding; it pushed me to leave behind my shyness and go explore the world. It provided me with a whole new family of friends; it made me discover art in ways I could not have imagined without it; and most importantly, it kept me on the right path."



Inga Guzyte with her larger than life self portrait: Super Rebel - Me, 2018.



Super Rebel - AOC, 2019 by Inga Guzyte. Assemblage from Skateboard Decks

## #RebelWomen

Exhibition: June 1 – July 23

Opening Reception:

Thurs, June 6th | 5 - 8pm



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