



Sullivan Goss

AN AMERICAN GALLERY

11 EAST ANAPAMU STREET
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93101
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE LIFE OF THE PARTY

SCULPTURE & PAINTING BY KEN BORTOLAZZO & MICHAEL DVORTCSAK

FEBRUARY 25 - APRIL, 25, 2022

OPENING RECEPTION:

1ST THURSDAY, MARCH 3RD | FROM 5-8pm

THE GALLERY REMAINS OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK. IN COMPLIANCE WITH NEW STATE GUIDELINES, THE GALLERY WILL NO LONGER REQUIRE A MASK TO VISIT. VISITORS WHO WOULD FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE WITH A MASKED VISIT MAY DO SO AND MAY REQUEST THAT STAFF WEAR A MASK DURING THEIR VISIT.

SANTA BARBARA, CA - How does anyone make serious art in Santa Barbara, California? The sun, the ocean, the beautiful people, the fresh produce... it's a good-time kinda place. In a locally notorious essay from 2000, critic and teacher Dave Hickey called Santa Barbara, "a hellish paradise..." where "one doesn't really need art... if one is comfy there." His essay is both hilarious and galling and not entirely incorrect. But, there are now and always have been very serious artists in this small, seaside hamlet. National and international careers have been born here and many operate under the radar here. There have also been serious collectors, as well two art schools and three university-level art programs—one of which offers an M.F.A. The difficulty has always been for artists to forego the pleasures of the place for the rigors of a committed studio practice. Many have found a way; many more have failed, and some, like **Ken Bortolazzo** and "**Mickey**" **Dvortcsak**, have struggled on their way to success.

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For images or other information requests, contact Nathan Vonk at 805.730.1460 or nathan@sullivangoss.com

In both cases, it was these artists' industry – their love of making – and their exposure to outside artists who brought a seriousness of purpose. In the case of Mickey Dvortcsak, it was Italian artist **Rico Lebrun** and New York artist **Howard Warshaw** who showed Mickey that art was philosophically profound, morally grave, and historically important. In Ken's case, it was exposure to Washington Color School artist **Kenneth Noland** and, especially, the kinetic sculptor then associated with New York, **George Rickey**. Their lived example showed that art was serious business.

So, from the late 70s and through the 90s, these two artists tried to balance their love of music, surfing and running, good conversation, and great company with their desire to make art that could hold up on the big stage. Both liked a party. Both were great fun at a party. But, they worked hard to build their own language of shape and material. They were abstract when people told them that there was no market. They nurtured ambition even when the beach's siren song called. Early on, they got out and showed in other cities, where their art found a receptive audience. This exhibition will celebrate their determination. It will also offer an opportunity to look at serious abstract art that dates from the **late 70s and early 80s by Michael Dvortcsak** and from the **mid 90s to the present day by Ken Bortolazzo**.

AT THE RECEPTION FOR THIS INTEGRATED EXHIBITION OF SERIOUS ABSTRACT ART BY TWO ARTISTS OF SANTA BARBARA, Sullivan Goss will be playing a curated list of late 70s, 80s, and early 90s tunes to set the tone. It'll be as much of a party as the Gallery can muster without wine or food.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS:

KEN BORTOLAZZO (b. 1947)

Born in Santa Barbara, California, Ken was trained at Santa Barbara City College and apprenticed to Kenneth Noland and Julio Agostini. He worked as the West Coast studio assistant to George Rickey for a dozen years and is currently the principal conservator for Rickey's work. Bortolazzo is associated with Kinetic Sculpture, Minimalism, and the Light and Space Movement. His work is held by the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, CA; the Museum of Outdoor Art, Denver, CO; and the Microsoft Corporation Headquarters, Seattle, WA. He currently lives and works in Santa Barbara.

MICHAEL DVORTCSAK (1937-2019)

Born in Buffalo, New York, "Mickey" Dvortcsak moved to Southern California as a child. He earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts from UCSB in 1961 and his MFA from the same institution in 1968. His important teachers were Howard Warshaw and Rico Lebrun in the art department, but he attended when giants like Aldous Huxley and Christopher Isherwood were around in the English Department. Dvortcsak eventually became a teacher at the University, but gave up teaching when he'd found enough success in the gallery world. He showed over decades in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, and his own hometown. Today, his work can be found in the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the Frederick R. Weisman Foundation, Los Angeles; the Santa Barbara Museum of Art; the San Diego Museum of Art; the Fischer Gallery at USC; and the UCSB Art, Design, and Architecture Museum; in addition to other public and corporate collections around the world.

Images above:

[Left] KEN BORTOLAZZO

Untitled Cluster I, 2021

30 x 19 x 19 inches | stainless steel

[Right] MICHAEL DVORTCSAK

S 75 - Fidexistamos, 1981

67 x 84 inches | mixed media on canvas

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