House Works

SJICA shows that it's a place to make art as well as see art

By Heather Zimmerman

The San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art is keeping it close to home with its latest event, which showcases all that the art space has to offer—in the process transforming an annual “marathon” into a hands-on open house.

The ICA’s popular Monotype Marathon fundraiser this year has been folded into a new event, Art House, taking place April 30 and May 1, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day at the ICA, 560 S. First St., San Jose. The community is invited to check out artist talks and demonstrations, exhibition tours, a print fair and sale, as well as a close-up look at the ICA’s printmaking facility and some of the tools of the trade.

The ICA moved to a new space in 2006, which in addition to exhibition areas includes a print center that offers classes open to the community. The existence of the printmaking facility isn't necessarily widely known, which was part of the impetus for the Art House, says the ICA's master printer, Fanny members are "print nerds," but print is a key medium for ICA, in part stemming from the organization's Monotype Marathon, in which community members sponsored an artist's workshop in return for the guarantee of netting a print from an auction of pieces created during the "marathon" of workshops. The benefit was held for 16 years, but now the marathon has become "Printapalooza," two days of print workshops open to the community, which are offered as part of Art House. The workshops, which cost $250 per person, focus on the monotype, in which a design is inked directly onto a printing plate. Its simple concept makes the monotype suitable for participants whose levels of experience with art may vary widely.

"You don't need to know how to draw or paint; you just need to be able to make a mark, and we can make a mark," Reitsew says.

"Print is a technical field, as much as you want it to be, but it's basically an exciting tool for making images in editions or multiples, or you can even just do one-of-a-kind things," says Susan O'Malley, curator and print center director for the ICA. "The exciting thing about the process is that it surprises you every time. It's a process that can help you think about anything because it's a problem-solving process and we are usually working in community here." She notes that it's not uncommon for experienced artists and newcomers to work alongside each other in the print center.

Visitors not participating in the workshops can still drop in to see the print center in action, watch videos that explain different print processes, as well as handle the paper, ink, plates and other tools used in the print center. Docents will be on hand to answer questions. Some of the products of the print center—limited edition prints created by artists in residence—will be on display and for sale. Additionally, two artists who have participated in the residency program will be on hand to discuss their creations and the processes behind them: On May 1, Modesto Covarrubias will talk about prints created during his 2010 residency that were inspired by his sculptural installation that showed in the ICA gallery, and on April 30, Tony May, who had a 40-year retrospective show this winter at the ICA, will discuss his process in creating the ICA print center's first limited edition object: a pinhole lamp.

Other artist talks offered as part of Art House highlight current exhibitions at the art space. Gail Wight, Christina Seely and Terry Berlier, whose works are showing in the "Size Matters" exhibition, will discuss their work, with Wight speaking on April 30 and Seely and Berlier appearing on May 1. Culled "Small Talks," these discussions reflect the ICA's "Talking Art" artist discussion series.

At a lunchtime talk, Lisa Demetrios, granddaughter of husband-and-wife artists and design team Charles and Ray Eames, will discuss their short documentary film Powers of Ten, which is showing in the gallery’s Cardinale Project Room through June 11.

For visitors who find that experiencing art has worked up an appetite, two food trucks, Louisiana Territorial and No Way Jose, will be on site, selling Cajun and Mexican dishes, respectively.

And anyone who's inspired to bring home some art, some shopping at the p the 36 local artists, with 18 artists featured on each floor. I hope that people really excited about art. It's a great way to go. We're looking for people who are interested in making art, see art and really engage with each other and our stay involved."

"We're doing a sampling of all the programs we have. It should be really exciting. It would be nice to come back to our programs. I hope that they keep coming to the program. First that they come back to things and stay active in things, and that we're doing.

Art House admission (print workshops " are required to participate). For information, call 408.281.0826. Visit www.sjica.org.

Lolita Roadtrip
There are few names as loaded with literary baggage as "Lolita." On May 1 at the Stage, 490 S. First St., San Jose. Tickets are $20-$50. 408.281.7142 or www.san...