



Report from the Oakland Art Murmur, Sept. 2012 – Part 1

[Arts & Exhibits Topics](#) September 17, 2012 By: [Greg Flood](#)

The [Oakland Art Murmur](#) sprung up a few years ago as a way for the emerging gallery scene on Telegraph and Grand Avenues to bring people to their venues on the first Friday of each month and grow the arts community in Oakland. It has developed into a large street art fair and gallery trek that not only accomplishes this goal, but it also provides space for artists to sell their works directly to the public, for singers to perform to audiences, and for local food vendors to showcase the best of their cuisine.

The Sept. 2012 Art Murmur event was the largest yet, with a major expansion of the area closed off to vehicle traffic to now include Telegraph Avenue from 27th to 18th Streets, with Grand Avenue left open to traffic. The usual side streets were blocked off and the crowd was much bigger than before, at an estimated 2,000 – 3,000. Among the things to see and do, the number of performing venues increased dramatically along with a minor swelling in sidewalk vendors of art.



Sandra Ono, 'Untitled,' 2011; puffy paint (21 x 28 x 8 inches)
Photo credit: Image Courtesy of Chandra Cerrito Contemporary

The standout performance area of the evening was occupied by The Grow Sessions down at 19th and Telegraph. The Grow Sessions had a number of acts perform small sets of three songs each, once after another. The best of these was by [Aisha Fukushima](#), whose melodic songs and smooth vocals reminded me of India Arie. Ms. Fukushima embodies Raptivism – the idea that ‘global hip hop culture and music can actively contribute to [the] universal efforts for freedom and justice’ according to her tumblr profile. Ms. Fukushima has traveled around the world, from Alaska to Kazakhstan, spreading her message to all who listen.

Heading up Telegraph Ave. to 24th St., I ran into the screen printing champion of the Oakland Occupy Movement. He was so busy pulling his posters and speaking with others I have not been able to learn his name. Since the occupy movement in Oakland took hold, he has been creating new screen printed posters for each Art Murmur event in Oakland. Over the last year, he has created posters not only supporting the occupation of Oakland, but also linking Fox News with the military-industrial complex of the United States, and advocating for the education of individuals instead of incarcerating them.

Popping into [Chandra Cerrito Contemporary](#) on 23rd St., I discovered a small group show of four artists, all of exceptional quality. In the front room of the gallery were works by [Sandra Ono](#) and [Danielle Mysliwiec](#). Mysliwiec’s paintings are made up of woven layers of oil paint arranged in geometric compositions. The color palate in the series varies from subtle shades of white, grey, and green, to bright and bold shades of orange, blue, and purple. She has also varied her color arrangement. Some geometric shapes are a solid color while others have transitions between two colors.

Sandra Ono’s creations are small sculptures made by obsessively layering hundreds, if not thousands, of layers of puffy paints or other synthetic materials, to create various organic forms. These small, discrete works, lure the viewer in towards them with their glistening surfaces, and then hooks the eye with all of the intricate layering that is visible.

In the rear gallery space, are the drawings of [Lisa Espenmiller](#) and the paintings of [Leeza Doreian](#). Walking up to Lisa Espenmiller’s drawings, the viewer might easily dismiss them as easy compositions of vertical or horizontal lines, reminiscent to the work of Agnes Martin. This would be doing them a disservice. These compositions are less rooted in art and are related to the artist’s Zen meditation practice. Viewing them for an extended period of time, I began to look into the color, relax and leave the crowds around me to their chatter. In this sense, the works are closer to those of John Zurier, in terms of the thought process that created them.

Leeza Doreian’s paintings are visual still life’s that fool the eye into thinking they are looking at folded textiles. To create these works, Doreian finds a fabric at a thrift store with a pattern that interests her, folds and gathers it into a shape, and then she paints it with stunning accuracy in oils or gouaches. The illusion is such that as you walk by them, it just looks like fabric.