

Santa Barbara Magazine

A woman with dark, curly hair is sitting on a white horse. She is wearing a bright red long-sleeved blouse with a ruffled collar and cuffs, a red and black patterned neckerchief, blue jeans, a brown leather belt, and brown riding boots. Her hands are raised above her head, and she is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting.

Into
the Red
White
& Blue
*All-American
Spring Style*

*Fresh Faces
Flood the
LAGOON
DISTRICT*

+

*The Lowdown
on the New
DOWNTOWN*

PLUS
*Our must do's
for I do's
Weddings
2017*

Petal Pushers



Hooked on
the beauty
of botanicals

WRITTEN BY L.D. PORTER

ERIKA CARTER's *Felix's Magnolias*, acrylic on tin, 36 x 48 in.
Opposite: Carter's *Lola*, acrylic on birch panel, 48 x 72 in.





CARIN GERARD's *Peony Pure*, oil on linen, 36 x 36 in.
Opposite: **AMBER O'NEILL's** *Palm Shadows*, oil on wood panel, 18 x 24 in.



CATHERINE ERB's Untitled flower study 22, mixed media photo encaustic, 40 x 40 in.
Opposite: PENELOPE GOTTLIEB's *Convallaria majalis*, acrylic and ink over John James Audubon print, 38 x 26 in.



ERIKA CARTER

"Working with flowers is in my blood," says Carter, who once worked as a floral designer and whose affinity for plants dates to her childhood spent visiting a grand Montecito estate where her grandparents lived as caretakers. ("There were secret gardens and flowers everywhere," she remembers.) The flower images in her paintings are created from memory. Inspired by Mexican retablos, Carter often paints on tin, and her brilliantly hued work has an endearing folk art quality.

ERIKACARTERART.COM

CATHERINE ERB

Erb's luminous photographs of flowers often appear otherworldly, which seems to mirror her artistic process: "I spend the most time searching for glimpses of a thing's divine essence," she says. "When I am successful, the result is not just an image, but a feeling and a reminder that the magic always happens in the present." Entirely self-taught, the Tennessee native spends her summers in Santa Barbara, viewing its gardens and terrain through her camera lens.

CATHERINEERBPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

"I spend the most time
searching for glimpses
of a thing's divine
essence." —CATHERINE ERB

CARIN GERARD

"What I try to find is something in the flower where you see the inner soul, the inner beauty," says Gerard, a classically trained artist who applies Old World oil-painting techniques to create large-scale, thoroughly modern still-life paintings. Well versed in the complicated science of color theory, Gerard paints from monochrome versions of her own photographs of just-opened gardenias, peonies, and roses, bringing their sensuality to life with her unique color schemes.

CARINGERARD.COM

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PENELOPE GOTTLIEB

In her Invasive Species paintings, Gottlieb alters existing print plates from the John James Audubon archive, binding and adorning the magnificent birds with equally magnificent botanicals. But beauty has its cost: Audubon killed numerous birds in his quest to portray them, and the botanicals overlaid by Gottlieb are invasive species that pose dangerous threats to native ecosystems. "The paintings self-consciously draw attention to both the invasive attitudes of human annexation and to the ecological crisis of invasive species," says Gottlieb.

PENELOPEGOTTLIEB.COM

AMBER O'NEILL

Working with oil paint on wood, O'Neill favors succulents as painting subjects due to their sculptural quality and vivid, pure colors. "I've been a bit obsessed with succulents," she admits, "there's something really strong about them." Indeed, O'Neill's larger-than-life portraits of these botanical beauties have a bold, tactile quality. Their powerfully large scale is purposeful; a means of forcing viewers to "stop and smell the roses," says the artist with a smile.

AMBERONEILL.COM

CARIN GERARD's *Peony Plethora*,
oil on linen, 38 x 28 in.

