

Tres chic: Seimandi & Leprieur Gallery Celebrates YEAR ONE

By Isaac Hernández de Lipa / VOICE

WITH A BEAUTIFUL RHYTHM, the first anniversary exhibition at Seimandi & Leprieur, *YEAR ONE*, features highlights from the year old gallery's journey, as well as new work with an international connection by local artists Mary Heebner and UCSB professor George Legrady.

Six artists are represented in the exhibit, all very different from each other, though their work presents well together.

Legrady, whose work is in the collections of Centre Pompidou, the Whitney, SFMOMA, LACMA, and the Smithsonian, offers a mesmerizing lenticular photographic print *Fire & Smoke* and features pictures from France and Canada.

"He has been shaping the future of photography for decades," explained Julien. "A pioneer in digital media, he transforms historical imagery into immersive visual experiences."

Heebner's large acrylic pieces *Conjuring Rain Nos. 5 and 6*, which just returned from hanging at the U.S. Ambassador's residence in Helsinki for three years, have a commanding presence. They started as watercolors created in the field, when she was surprised by a storm while walking through manzanita brush in Hollister Ranch.

"When I got into the studio, I poured different colors of acrylic ink and moved it around as if it were water, working on the floor," Heebner shared. "Then added other pigment to feel like cloudscape."

The art of Hunt Slonem, a leading figure of American Neo-Expressionism, bookends Heebner's pieces. "He's very famous for his bunnies and butterflies, the motif he painted for fifty years," Fanny shared. "But, the more the years pass, the more he works on the texture. For example, that one incorporates diamond dust. He has a big fan base. We had people from Los Angeles coming just to meet him and have him sign books."

For Parisian-born artist Dora Vital, who resides in Martinique and had a solo show here, *Jardin Nocturne (Nocturnal Garden)*, returns with hypnotizing daytime garden paintings.

The black-and-white art by Martinique artist Ricardo Ogier-Lafontaine, who explores themes of identity, memory, and ancestral presence, offers great contrast from the others but also provides continuity. The gallery held its first show with a monographic of his work titled *Fertilum*.

"It's very powerful because he's been painting in black and white for twelve years," Fanny explained. "It's an act of resistance against stereotypes of Caribbean artists, because we imagine that they only paint with bright colors and very naive subjects. He's deeply influenced by pre-Columbian archaeological forms and is a very established artist in France."

In the very back, *False Flag Washed Up*, an abstract by Pierre Roy-Camille attracts attention. "He describes himself like a magician, like a creator of images and memories,"



Conjuring Rain 6 by Mary Heebner

Julien noted, as he admitted this is his favorite piece.

"He was at first a street artist based in Paris," added Fanny, "but as a child he spent all summer in the Caribbean and all his work is about colonialism."

The Gallery & Team:

Fanny Seimandi and Julien Leprieur landed in Santa Barbara in the spring of 2025, children in tow, with the idea of opening a contemporary art gallery with a French perspective. Three months later, Seimandi & Leprieur opened its doors at 33 W. Anapamu Street, in the heart of Santa Barbara's art district.

Fanny is from Lyon. Julien is from Brittany. They met in Paris, and lived in Martinique for ten years. The gallery was a dream come true, especially for Fanny, who had been a judge (primarily in criminal law) in France, before transitioning to the art world and earning a Master's in Art Market Studies from the Sorbonne, Paris. Julien brings his experience as an engineer to enhance the gallery experience.

"Fanny is very dynamic and positive," says Julien.

"Julien wants everything to be perfect. He's very meticulous," adds Fanny. "We are very complementary."

They work together to make the best use of the 1,150 square feet space with 13-foot ceilings.

Looking Ahead:

Fanny and Julien don't rest. They just returned from the Seattle Art Fair and they're already preparing their next two shows, beginning with Michael EB Detto (September 3rd to 27th), a German photographer whose work transforms familiar architecture into spaces of ambiguity and narrative possibility.

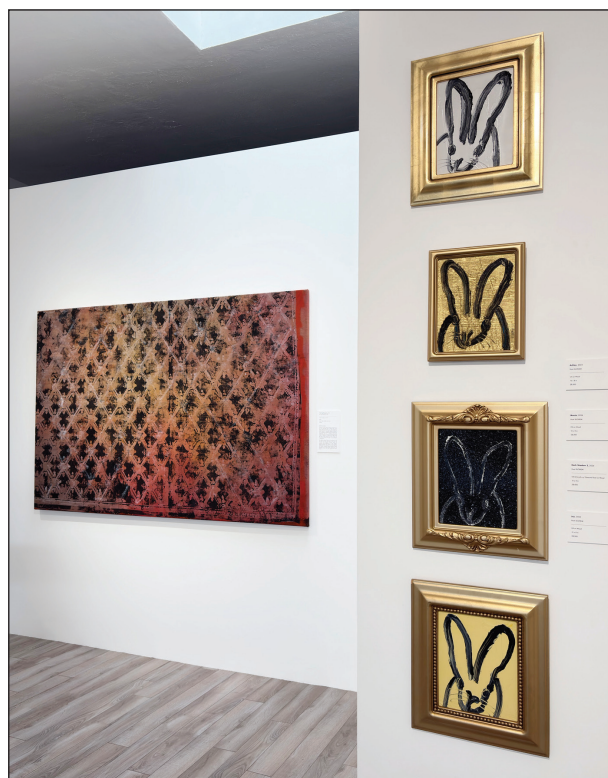
"And then we'll have Julie Anderson Mathias, from Chicago," said Fanny. "She makes huge pieces, very abstract. She was an architect before. We're very excited about these two shows."

11am-6pm Mo-Sa, 12-6pm Su •
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Gallery owners **Fanny Seimandi** and **Julien Leprieur**

Photo by Isaac Hernández de Lipa



False Flag Washed Up by **Pierre Roy-Camille** (left) and works by **Hunt Slonem** (right) are featured in the show

Photo courtesy of Seimandi & Leprieur



Bliss 2 by Dora Vital



Flowers Island by Ricardo Ogier-Lafontaine