

TIMESOC

Artists are nurtured at Unveil Gallery's exhibition, 'A Clover and One Bee'



Unveil Gallery's group exhibition, "A Clover and One Bee" opens on Jan. 11. (Courtesy of Unveil Gallery)

By Sarah Mosqueda
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Emily Dickinson's succinct poem "To make a prairie" begins with the line "To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee."

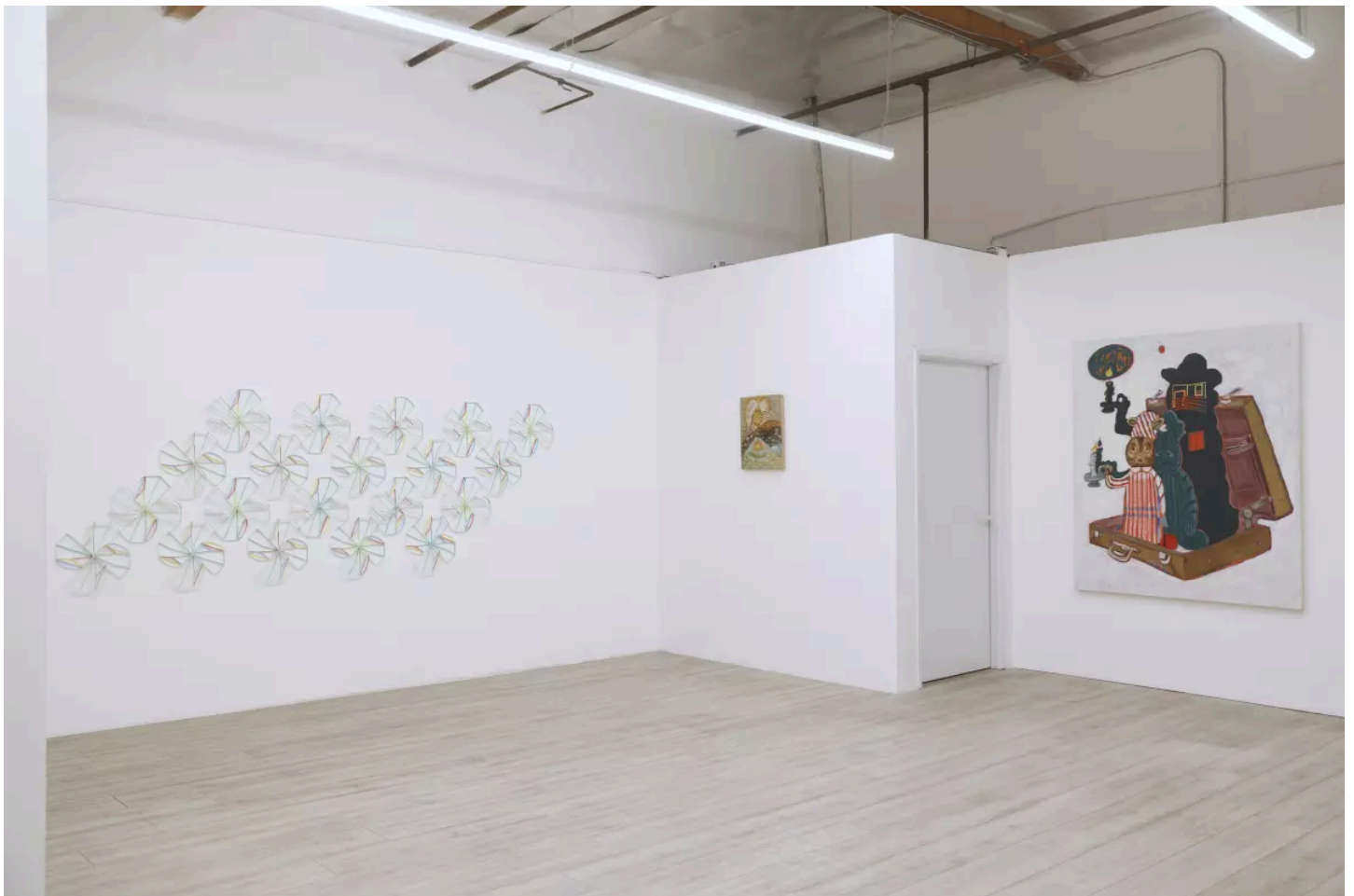
In a few words, the 19th-century poet pinpoints the multifaceted relationship between the creator and what they create, said Lorraine Han, the director at Unveil Gallery in Irvine.

“I was really touched by this phrase,” she said. “Bees, they pollinate clovers, and our artists really nurture their creations.”

Han borrowed the phrase for the Gallery’s latest group exhibition, “A Clover and One Bee” opening on Jan. 11. The dynamic showcase includes the work of six artists: Alex Paik, Lauren Goldenberg Longoria, Mimi Ding, Greg Eberhardt, Jiang Xiaohan and Sebastian Loo, all of whom have spent time attending to their craft.

Chicago-based painter and poet Xiaohan, for example, draws on recollections of her childhood in Northern China, and her oil painting on burlap (“Untitled,” 2024) is an interpretation of nature that glows like a warm memory.

At the center of the exhibition, artist, community builder, curator and writer Alex Paik presents a site-responsive installation that at first glance appears to be a stained-glass floral design but it is, in fact, gouache and paper.



“A Clover and One Bee” at Unveil Gallery showcases six artists in Irvine. (Courtesy of Unveil Gallery)

“Alex is really fascinated with the adaptability and the interdependence of form, color and structure,” said Han.

Each time his piece, “Partial Octagon (Emerald Green),” 2024, is installed, the dimensions vary in consideration of the gallery space.

“It is different each time depending on the space that has been curated,” said Han. “Alex was here the other day, doing the installation, and he spent about two hours by himself, navigating through the space and thinking about what kind of shapes, what kind of narrative he wanted to focus on here.”

The geometrically structured paper forms call back to the exhibition’s title, positioned as four-leaf clovers. Each piece is hand-painted with water-medium paint known as gouache and reflects light to cast a faint glow of green against the white wall where it is hung. Depending on the way the light enters the room, the installation becomes more saturated and vibrant in its color.

Greg Eberhardt’s two works in the show use color too, and also humor.

“For Greg, his work is about reflecting the shifting state of being,” said Han.

“Sleepy Guy, Traveler,” 2023, features a cartoonish character in a nightgown and nightcap, holding a candle aloft, layered in different states of consciousness. For “Raging Funny Bunny, (That’s Entertainment),” 2024, a cute but emotional animal is juxtaposed against symbols of inexpensive entertainment.



"Raging Funny Bunny, (That's Entertainment)" by Greg Eberhardt on display at Unveil Gallery. (Courtesy of Unveil Gallery)

Since [opening in 2023](#), Unveil Gallery has worked to showcase not only international artists but local ones. Lauren Goldenberg Longoria, a recent graduate of UC Irvine's master of fine arts program is featured in the exhibition with two powerful pieces made using handmade paper. Longoria sifts through ephemera and, working with the recycled material during her paper-making process, creates space for deep mediation on the previous life of the objects.

"Paper, to Lauren, is a very important material because it has a long history," said Han.

A vast yellow sculpture ("Untitled," 2024) on a gallery wall fashioned from handmade paper is very light but appears to be as heavy as concrete. In spite of using material considered disposable, Longoria has found a way to give paper some significant weight.

Han emphasizes she hasn't seen anything like Longoria's work before, and she feels honored to support her.

"As a gallery in Irvine, we want to support more artists that are closely related to the community and to our local art scene," said Han.

The show's title not only underscores the relationship between the bee and the clover, between the artists and the art, but it points out the how the work of a creature thought to be small and insignificant can lead to something as vast as a prairie. In some respects, Han said she sees Unveil Gallery as the bee.

"Our artists are the clovers, and we are probably the bee, hopefully the queen bee," Han laughs. "But our mission at Unveil is to be able to spread the word of these artists, to pollinate the clovers."

Essentially, Han hopes Unveil Galley can make a prairie.

"A Clover and One Bee" opens at [Unveil Gallery](#) on Jan. 11 at 200 Technology Drive, Suite F in Irvine and will remain on view until Feb. 1.



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Sarah Mosqueda covers Orange County food, art and culture for TimesOC. She most recently worked as a staff writer in Food for the Los Angeles Times. She also has several years of experience in the restaurant industry, including as a proprietor. Mosqueda earned a bachelor's degree in communications from Cal State Fullerton.