

# Natural Visions, Gone Downtown

POPULAR SANTA BARBARA PLEIN-AIR PAINTER MARCIA BURTT STRETCHES AND GETS FOCUSED IN A SOLO SHOW IN HER NEW DOWNTOWN SPACE

By Josef Woodard, News-Press Correspondent



## Marcia Burtt

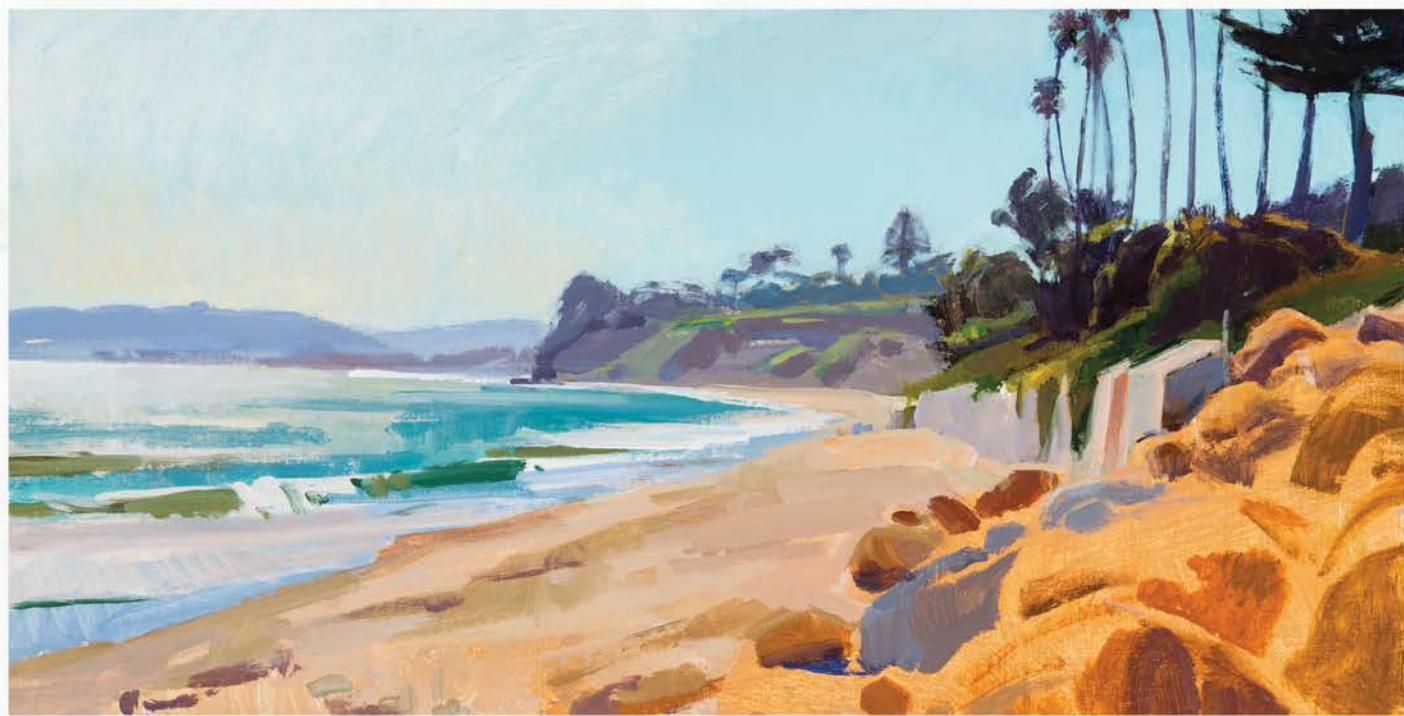
**When:** through November 17

**Where:** Marcia Burtt Studio

at Santa Barbara Frame Shop, 1324 State St., Suite J

**Hours:** 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday

**Information:** 963-2332, artlacuna.com



Bill Dewey photos

'Afternoon Light, Butterfly Beach'



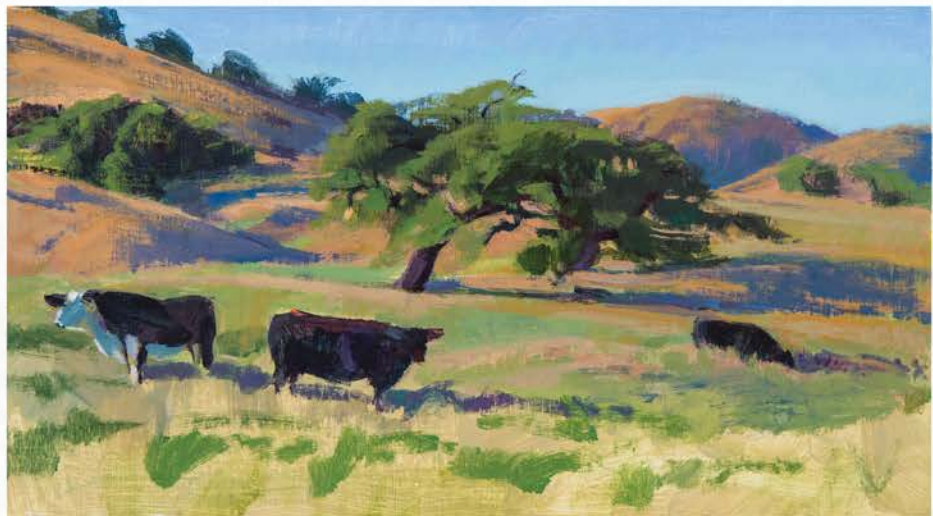
'Sun in the West, Otter Cove'

**F**or many years, Marcia Burtt has been one of the stronger and more consistent painters working in the landscape/plein air field, and her signature sense of style is readily identifiable, just as her work is often publically visible. But Burtt canvas sightings have come in piecemeal through group-show-enshrouded ways with her longtime, landscape artist coalition affiliation, OAK Group, or by discovering the off-the-beaten path to her wonderful, studio-gallery space, the Marcia Burtt Studio, far down on Laguna Street.

All of those typical viewing conditions make her current one-person show, right off State Street and in the shadow of the Arlington marquee, something unusual and insightful. Ms. Burtt is having a rare field day with her work at the moment, showing work both in her Laguna Street haunt and via a new, experimental arrangement with the Santa Barbara Frame Shop and for the moment rebranded as "Marcia Burtt, Uptown."

In the "Uptown" gallery, the chance to take in, compare and contrast handfuls of Ms. Burtt's paintings, versus the natural, incidental sighting of group show situations is a particular pleasure. While she often paints scenes very familiar to art watchers tuned into the prime, regional-painter hot spots, among her identifying traits as a painter is a refined attention to matters of light, atmospheric conditions, and ways in which various conditions affect the all-important sense of place.

Her clear, yet sometimes brusque brushwork, sometimes flecked with Cezanne-ishness, and a non-dogmatic sense of finish versus rough edges, lends her an individual-



'Dry Spring Pasture'

istic stamp as a nature painter. In "Sundown at Goleta Beach," she captures a mood and the reality of this particular beach with its slough inlet and jagged cliff fringes. Across the room, a more colorful palette prevails — along with a teasing hint of wind conditioning — with "Breeze from the Southwest, Botanic Garden," an ode to nature in a controlled, institutional, but also undeniably resplendent setting.

A brittle clarity of luminosity comes through in "Late Sun, East Beach," while a different flavor of bracing midday sunlight and found formality marks "Noon, Presidio." A more muted, moody feeling, meanwhile, is present in "Morning Shadows in the Pond," while "September Sky" takes account of a cloud-mottled autumnal sky overhanging a darkish, earthly patch, grounding the composition.

Shifting from scene-entrenched perspectives to a broader vista, her painting "Santa

Barbara Overlook" depicts the city and the ocean beyond from on high in the foothills. But it is also a slightly cryptic, compact and smartly, tautly, organized image, in the final art's sake analysis.

Meanwhile, back in the land of ranches, Santa Ynez Valley gets its due attention as well, as in the peaceable kingdom-like painting "Dry Spring Pasture." In the painting, a few bovine protagonists are seen lolling about, the only strong animal presence — apart from an occasional, incidental horse or mallard — in a show all about the splendors of earthen nature, and the challenge of bringing that beauty to life with self-expressive "voice" intact.

It's nice to see a healthy, symbiotic pack of Ms. Burtt's paintings, "Uptown," and there for the admiring — as a destination experience — or on the way to a meal at Carlito's or Renaud's, or to a blockbuster at the Arlington Theatre.