

'CITY LIGHTS, VENTURA,' ANN LOFQUIST

Marcia Burt Gallery photos

## ART REVIEW

ANN LOFQUIST,  
MARCIA BURTT

When: through Jan. 15

Where: Marcia Burt Studio,  
517 Laguna St.Gallery hours: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Saturday and SundayInformation: 962-5588,  
ArtLacuna.com

# New Takes on an Old Theme

In her first local show, the impressive realist/landscape painter Ann Lofquist coaxes profundity from views of Southern California considered mundane

BY JOSEF WOODARD

NEWS-PRESS CORRESPONDENT

Given the dense population of landscape and/or plein air painters in our general vicinity, the art-seeking eye always appreciates a new spin on the old genre. We get that, and more, with the disarmingly powerful paintings of Ann Lofquist, who has her first show in town at the Marcia Burt Gallery.

As noted in the background notes on the artist, Lofquist works — and works beautifully — in a realist fashion with historical nods to the French Barbizon School and American painter George Innes. She combines attention to detail with an atmospheric flair and subtlety of palette, in scenes lending understated panoramic drama to others where urbanity and nature intersect.

Such lineage is well and good, but to the sensibilities of those well-familiarized with the topography — and freeway culture matrix — of Southern California, one of the deepest and most immediate responses may be an appreciation for that old business of transfiguration of the commonplace. Lofquist takes visual aim at the Southern Californian condition of suburban creep and the indigenous spread of chaparral and other stubborn natural beauties around and about us.

Two of the larger paintings on view here, "Evening, Conejo Grade" and "The Blue Hour" capture our attentions with painterly strengths before we stop to recognize the subject, the site where the bedroom community blandness of Camarillo melds with the far northern corner of the surprisingly natural sprawl of the Santa Monica Mountains.

"Slope" is a particularly dusky and moody view of a humble house on a hill, and said hill shares the iconographic spotlight. Another slyly inventive painting, "Three Oaks" portrays a dense, all-over mass of green plan matter rather than three discrete trees, with a stowaway man as a footnote in the corner. A cool and measured romanticism mixes in with a painter's light and form observation in a larger painting, "City of Lights, Ventura," a view of the beachtown south of Santa Barbara, envisioned at night fall, with the waning daylight speckled by a sparkling blanket of city lights. Ventura rarely looked so magical.

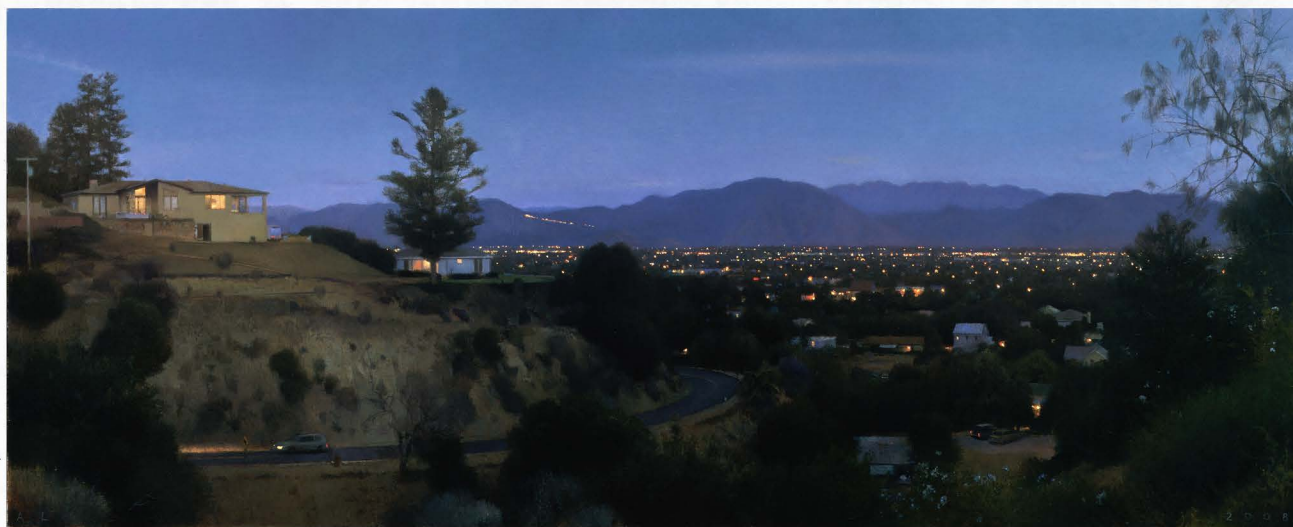
Whereas many regional landscape artists intentionally edit out the city lights and human/civic footprints

in their compositions, Lofquist instead trains her attentions on the overlap. Deftly combining realist concerns and landscape ideals, she celebrates the cohabitation of both elements and awakens our appreciation thereof, as viewers and fellow SoCal inhabitants.

Longtime local landscape painter and gallerist Marcia Burt herself shows a selection of paintings in the back of the gallery, contrasting Lofquist's work with a brighter palette and rigorous, rugged brushwork. The standout pieces in this group include the ambitious "quintych" "Fog, Sun, and Tide," a coastal scape se-

quence of five canvases, with two horizontals flanking three verticals, all about the symbiosis of sea, sky and coast.

In other notable and delightfully unexpected paintings, Burt's "June, Upper Crossing" lends expressive energy to a presumably mundane river crossing scene, while "Two Cows, Santa Rosa Creek" folds the protagonist lolling bovines into a lyrical composition. In these pieces, Burt follows suit with the theme of Lofquist's sensitive dealing with the wonder of the everyday, especially when nature is in the periphery.



'THE BLUE HOUR,' ANN LOFQUIST



'FOG, SUN, AND TIDES,' MARCIA BURTT