

‘Berlin Wall’ exhibit aims to break down other barriers

Solana Beach residents organized the exhibit

By Kristina Houck. Jan. 9, 2015



‘Borderless’ by Amber Irwin incorporates pieces of the Berlin Wall, as do other art works in ‘Perspectives: The Berlin Wall’ at the Front Porch Gallery. Courtesy photo — *Courtesy*

November marked the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. To commemorate the occasion, two Solana Beach residents spearheaded an exhibit transforming history into art.

“Perspectives: The Berlin Wall” features 18 artworks at Front Porch Gallery in Carlsbad. Whether paintings or photos, mixed media or sculptures, all of the pieces in the exhibit use concrete chunks from the wall that once split Berlin into two cities, governed by what became East and West Germany.

“This project is really close to my heart because it’s all about transformation,” said Amber Irwin, one of the featured artists who organized the exhibit, along with local Jan Wier. “It’s taking something that was bad and turning it into something beautiful.”

Erected in 1961 by the communist government that controlled East Germany, the 12-foot-tall, 4-foot-wide barrier became a symbol of the Cold War. When the restrictions were lifted Nov. 9, 1989, people began to chip away at the Wall. Some of those fragments are included in the works in the show.

Irwin used chunks of the wall to make a map of the world called “Borderless.” Like other pieces in the show, it reflects on the transformation that occurred when the wall came down.

“I had to break up the pieces a little bit further because I put it in a mosaic form,” Irwin explained. “I felt like I was breaking down the wall further, which felt very significant to me.”

The exhibit features 15 artists, including several from Europe, who now live in San Diego and Los Angeles.

Featured artists are Ed Eginton, Janine Free, Brennan Hubbell, Irwin, Dave Johnson, Jessi Matthes, Michelle Moraga, John Moseley, Victor Ochoa, Katrin Queck, Andrew Robinson, Carol Beth Rodriguez, Lia Strell, Irene de Watteville and Julie Weaverling.

Besides Irwin, Eginton, Moraga, Rodriguez and de Watteville also hail from Solana Beach.

The exhibit is intended to be a traveling show. It debuted in August at the Centro Cultural de la Raza in Balboa Park before opening Nov. 9 at Front Porch Gallery in Carlsbad. The exhibit will run through Jan. 11.

Wherever the show goes next, Irwin hopes it gives others hope that the walls that exist today can also come down.

“Things can change,” Irwin said. “Transformation can happen. There is hope.”

Front Porch Gallery is at 2903 Carlsbad Blvd. in Carlsbad. The gallery is open from noon to 6 p.m. Wednesdays through Fridays and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Call 760-795-6120 or visit www.frontporchgallery.org.