

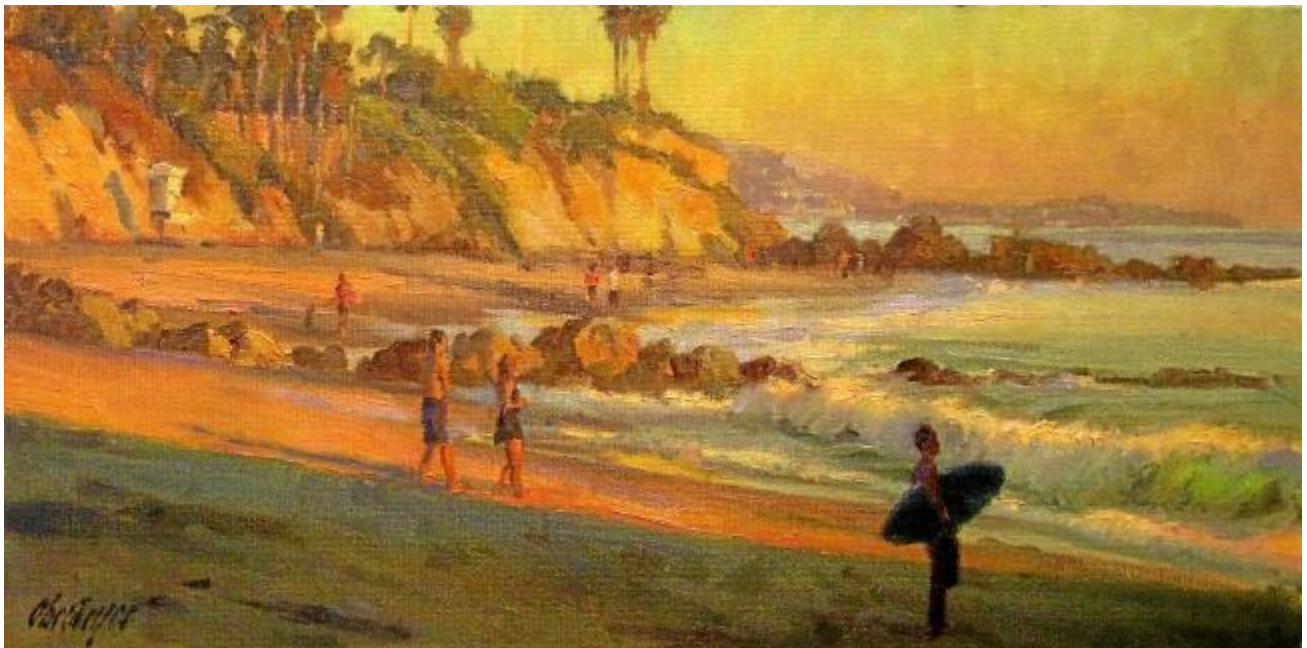
## Pasadena Star-News

# Art show 'On The Water' brings summer to San Marino

[By Michelle Mills, Staff Writer](#)

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"A Serene Cove Catalina" by Michael Obermeyer is in the exhibit, "On The Water" at the Old Mill in San Marino through Sept. 1.



Sunset on Seal Rock by Michael Obermeyer is in the exhibit, On The Water at the Old Mill



Dancing Light by Michael Obermeyer



One More Look by Michael Obermeyer is in the exhibit, On The Water at the Old Mill.



Pearl Street by Michael Obermeyer is in the exhibit, On The Water at the Old Mill

Nothing says summer better than an image capturing a moment along the California coast. And the exhibit, "On The Water," shows more than 50 surfside paintings by California Art Club artists. It is on display at the Old Mill in San Marino through Sept. 1.

"One of the artists said the shoreline is a doorway to the world's greatest wilderness," said Michael Obermeyer, a Laguna Beach artist whose work is featured in the exhibit. "There's so much mystery out there. Underwater is unexplored. For me, it's like standing on the edge of the world. You can look out and see thousands of miles without people and it's constantly changing. It can be serene, or dramatic; it's never the same. It's so fluid with the tides and waves and light. At the same time there is so much reliability."

Obermeyer is in the water every day. Typically, he paints all morning, then takes a swim for his lunch break and returns to painting for the rest of the day.

"When I get outside, creating, I think this is as good as it gets, being outside painting," he said. "I'm from Southern California, I'm kind of a beach guy, I love the coast, so for me I would say standing on a beach painting is the ultimate."

Obermeyer begins his pieces with the composition in mind. He blocks it out, painting big shapes on his canvas and then hones it down to the details. His works are usually

12 by 16 inches or smaller, but if Obermeyer is inspired to do something larger, he will photograph the area so he can work in his studio.

"I think my more successful pieces are plein air, probably because I'm forced to finish them in two hours," Obermeyer said. "I like to get outside and grab the light while I can."

As a child, Obermeyer was always drawing. This got him into trouble during elementary school, but his parents supported him and sent him to afterschool art classes. He attended the illustration program at California State University, Long Beach and went into illustration.

He enjoyed his time with the canvas and brush, as well as hiking, mountain biking and kayaking, so Obermeyer would do plein air paintings wherever he went. He showed his work and was soon winning awards and selling his pieces. When illustration began going digital, Obermeyer didn't want to work in front of a computer so he made the transition to being a full time artist in 1998.

Today, Obermeyer's passion for the outdoors has evolved into from something personal to share into an effort to keep the beauty of nature alive. He has often found a great spot to paint, only to return and see it being developed into houses or offices.

"I'm big on trying to preserve what we have out here," Obermeyer said. "I realized that I wanted to document my surroundings while I'm painting and preserve, at least through my painting, what's left."

"It's important to bring awareness to the disappearing acreage space and coastline," Obermeyer said.

"There's so many coastal treasures here, it's important to depict them and preserve them a bit through our paintings and bring awareness to people out there. It's a very fragile ecosystem. It needs to be protected because it effects everything else in our lives."

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