

Camarillo

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Artist shares show with her mentor

■ Camarillo woman began painting early

By Mark Storer
Special to The Star

Andrea Yomtob seems to have known her career path since she was an adolescent, maybe even before. The Camarillo resident started drawing, painting and illustrating at an early age.

"I had three things I wanted to accomplish," said Yomtob, 31, of Camarillo. "I wanted to be a book illustrator, a computer graphics artist and a fine artist."

With the help of her mentor and teacher, Omar d'Leon, and a bit of hard work, Yomtob has done just that.

Her fine art paintings

hang alongside d'Leon's at the Camarillo Art Center on Ponderosa Drive through Sunday. Along with artist Rick McGrath, the artists are presenting a spring exhibit featuring paintings by Yomtob and d'Leon, and photography and mixed-media pieces by McGrath.

Yomtob said d'Leon's use and sense of color and reflection of light appealed to her.

"But I told her that she must find her own voice," d'Leon said. "I never brush or touch her paintings, and I always tell her she must find her own beauty."

D'Leon should know. In his native Nicaragua, he is well-known for his artwork and poetry, which have been fea-

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tured in museums and galleries there and all over the world. He has won a number of awards for his work, including Nicaragua's gold medal for a painting called "Hombre Sentado" or "Sitting Man."

"I have been painting since I was in my mother's womb," said d'Leon, who spends time between Nicaragua and Camarillo and paints and writes in both places. "I can't not paint or write. I believe in capturing beauty. It calls to me."

Yomtob said she enjoys the more commercial work she does for Nickelodeon and her book illustrations, but fine art is her calling.

"I do love those things, but fine art is where my heart is," she said.

"Omar has been a real influence on me. It's not just his painting, but his words give more than advice. They offer glimpses into life."

Earth tones and bright pastels highlight all three artists' work. In some cases, looking at Yomtob's and d'Leon's paintings side by side, it is as though they are continuations of each other.



"How you look at something evolves, and you want to apply what you

see now to the painting. That's the nature of influence," Yomtob said.

"It's life influence I've gotten from Omar, but it's also about simplifying

The works of Omar d'Leon (from left), Andrea Yomtob and Rick McGrath will be on display this weekend at the Camarillo Art Center.

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compositions. We can apply those to how we look at the world and how we paint."

Said d'Leon: "It's about liberty. You must create what is in your heart, and you must listen. The painting is alive, and the painter must produce that life."

Yomtob's work can also be seen in the children's book "Dr. Duncan, Dog on Duty" by Lisa Dern.

"I love my job," Yomtob said. "My heart just sings more when I'm painting." The Camarillo Art Center, 3150 Ponderosa Drive, is open from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays.