

**TO:** Newport Beach City Arts Commission

**FROM:** Library Services Department  
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**PREPARED BY:** Tim Hetheron

**TITLE:** Exhibition of Art in the Central Library – Eva Malhotra

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Under the recommendation of the Fine Arts Ad Hoc Sub Committee, staff requests that the Arts Commission approve the work of artist Eva Malhotra for display in the Central Library.

**FUNDING REQUIREMENTS:**

No funding requirement.

**DISCUSSION:**

The City of Newport Beach maintains two exhibit spaces at the Central Library. The Lobby Gallery in the Central Library has approximately 38 feet of linear wall space designed for two-dimensional pieces of art. Additionally, artists may apply to exhibit three-dimensional works in the two display cabinets added to the lobby of Central Library in 2010. The display cases are approximately 24" high x 24" deep x 24" wide.

Artists who want their work considered for display submit a completed *Application for Review and Consideration of Art*.

The Library Services Director manages the gallery space. The City Arts Commission's Fine Arts Ad Hoc Subcommittee meets periodically to review artist's submissions; and notifies artists by mail of acceptance. Staff arranges the hanging of the art.

At their October meeting, the Fine Arts Committee recommended that the work of artist Eva Malhotra be exhibited, subject to City Arts Commission approval.

According to art critic Mat Gleason, "The paintings of Eva Malhotra are more abstract than representational on first glance. On occasion there appears to be a swirl of definable form or something that looks like perhaps a star or a sun. Upon examination, though, nothing quite defines itself with any verifiable certainty.

This ambiguity in form mirrors the state of mind of any immigrant. There is no border in the heart. This manifests first as a confusion of where one IS in relation to where one is from. As time goes on, the

bifurcation of identity melds into a tapestry with porous borders and meanings that change with each encounter.

This artist dissolves the forms of her past and solidifies a unique compositional approach to picture-making. Most advanced painting has an element of seeking in it. When the thing that is sought is found, culture evolves. Amidst the cacophony of artspeak, the artist here has introduced a simple, yet dramatically fascinating formal device – gouging.

Malhotra is not satisfied with the illusory poetry of the picture plane. She gouges away at the surface. At first glance what appears to be anarchy actually harmonizes with the composition of the painting. Her stab wounds are not anarchic. They are like the life-saving cuts of a surgeon. They swim along with the whole thing, apart yet united.

This gouging is, ultimately, an intuitive meditation on the act of emigrating. Gouging pierces a border – not a two-dimension pictorial border but a three-dimensional sculptural border. Like the life of the immigrant – once that border has been crossed one can never truly go back.

With Malhotra she has transformed her paintings into sculpted surfaces; there is no going back and so her gouging dances along with what has been painted, altering yet reinforcing the world around her. The end result produces a fresh, all-over energy that is rare in today's paint-by-the-conceptual numbers art scene."

**ATTACHMENT A:** Examples of Eva Malhotra's work.

**NOTICING:**

This agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the Board of Library Trustees considers the item).