

LOCAL NEWS

# Riverside, Huntington Beach photographer's practical upbringing yields explosion of creativity



Naida Oslin

Courtesy of Naida Oslin

By **PATRICK BRIEN** | Riverside Arts Council

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Naida Oslin wasn't exposed to art when she was young, but that did not prevent her from becoming a successful artist with a number of international credits.

"I grew up in a working class Swedish immigrant family," says Oslin, who splits her time living in Riverside and Huntington Beach. "There was no art in my childhood, and I don't even think that I went to a museum until I was an adult."

Oslin's interest in art was first sparked through an art history class. She ended up graduating from Cal State Fullerton with a bachelor's in art with an emphasis in photography.

“At some point I realized that how you spend your internal and external time is who you become,” she says. “It becomes the framework for your life. I decided that looking at the world as an artist was what I wanted for my life.

Maybe it was an overreaction to my practical upbringing. Art is where a lot of people end up who don't or won't or can't fit in anywhere else.”

Osline, whose work is photo based, has held solo exhibitions at such venues as the Grand Central Art Center in Santa Ana and



“Coffee” by Naida Osline.



“Florescence” by Naida Osline.

the Acuna Hansen Gallery in Los Angeles, as well as group exhibitions ranging from the Inland Empire to Arizona to Canada. She speaks with particular fondness of a series of exhibitions in Columbia.

“I spent a total of eight months over a period of three years between 2012 and 2014 in the

coffee region of Columbia,” she says. “I first lived on a farm followed by an artist residency and exhibitions in three separate spaces and cities.”

Osline says that she collaborated with local farmworkers who served as models, posing in the jungle with machetes.

“The work explores the ambiguities and iconic symbolism of the machete, which is a global symbol of agricultural labor, resistance to oppression and man's efforts at conquering nature,” she explains. “It was very satisfying to show the work in the location where it was conceived and executed and it resonated with the audience both personally and culturally.”

Osline's work is currently being seen in “Florescence,” a solo exhibition at the Riverside Art Museum that runs through Sept. 13. An opening reception will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, June 9.

The exhibition includes selections from three separate bodies of work done over the past 10 years.

“There is a group of hybridized, fictitious flowers that are made by using the scanner as a camera,” she says.

“A second series includes pieces from an ongoing body of work that features plants that have had a deep relationship with humans and our economy, morals, creativity and laws,” Osline said. These are plants such as tobacco, coca, opium poppies, cannabis and others.”

The process behind these pieces is long, she says, and includes growing or finding plants, depending on their legal status. She photographs them over time and reconfigures them along with details and landscape elements to suggest their status, effects and power.

“These images are essentially seamless collages,” she says.

The third series shows multiple photos of birds layered on top of each other to suggest multiple realities.

Osline says that she can be inspired by anything, but adds: “Inspiration is only part of the equation in the creative process. Any initial inspiration will be transformed through the process and the work involved. You have to decide when a piece or project is successful or has fatal flaws or most disturbingly, if it's just so-so.”

For more information on Osline, visit [www.naidaosline.com](http://www.naidaosline.com).

Patrick Brien is executive director of the Riverside Arts Council. Contact the council at 951-680-1345 or [RiversideArtsCouncil.com](http://RiversideArtsCouncil.com).

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