

Ekphrasis exhibit: Improv jazz for artists and authors



Photo courtesy Kathy Molloy

The visual artwork and the author's writings were displayed in pairs in the Ekphrasis Collaborative Exhibit hosted by three arts organizations.

Submitted by
Elana O'Loskey

Curator and Board Member Bill Carmel of the Lamorinda Arts Council (LAC), past president and V.P. Linda Hartmann

of the California Writers Club Mt. Diablo Branch (CWC) and President Donna Arganbright and V.P. of Exhibitions Ruth Stanton of Lamorinda Arts Alliance (LAA) collaborated for two years to bring the

Ekphrasis exhibit to the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library on May 6. The event was standing room only, with approximately 250 people filling the Library auditorium.

LAC President Sue Farmer introduced Mayor Inga Miller who opened the event in the Library Auditorium. Initiator Artists' spoke about their work which was projected on a big screen. Responding Authors then recited their writings. An audience Q&A followed each of the six presenters. LAC curator Bill Carmel said, "Ekphrasis is like improvisational jazz because authors and artists inspire each other to create new works of written and visual art. Fifty artists and 50 authors worked anonymously as names are not revealed until the exhibit opens."

All artwork available for sale can be purchased at <https://lamorindaarts.org/product-category/ekphrasis/>. For more information, visit Lamorinda Arts Council (<http://lamorindaarts.org/ekphrasis/>); California Writers Club Mt. Diablo Branch (<https://cwcmt Diablo.org/ekphrasis/>) and Lamorinda Arts Alliance (<https://laa4art.org/calls-for-artists/>).

Hybrid work is here to stay: How to maximize productivity when working at home



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By Jennifer Raftis,
CPO

The pandemic taught us many things about ourselves, our world, and our priorities. During the lockdown, people slowed down, families were playing with their kids on the street in the middle of the day and big bonus – there were hardly any cars on the road.

We realized that there were options available for us to do many things in a different way. One of those things is how and where we work. We quickly discovered that the need to work from home was essential and doable. I'm still amazed at the speed at which we adapted to the new workplace, aka our homes.

After we figured out how to use Zoom and share our space with all of our family members and bewildered pets, we were up and running. Now, fast forward to 2023, many businesses and their employees have discovered that we don't really need to be in the office full time. Hybrid work is here to stay.

Turns out that a large percentage of both businesses and workers prefer the hybrid model. Sounds great, right? Roll out of bed and you're already at work! Very quickly, we realized that working from home has its own set of challenges. Here are some tips that I give my clients for a better chance of long-term success when working part-time or full-time from home:

1) Follow a daily routine and set a work schedule. Even though you do have a great deal of flexibility when you work from home it is important to set up your work hours for the same time every day. End on time and start on time, every workday.

2) Establish clear boundaries with other family members. I find that for myself, when I am working on projects for my clients, I am very focused and do not want to be interrupted. Put a "Do Not Disturb" sign on your door or desk. Asking others to respect your work time does not mean you are being hurtful or selfish; you are working. Starting and stopping your train of thought with interruptions is not productive or efficient.

3) Create a designated space for work in your



home. Make the space a place that you enjoy going to work. Set it up so all the items you need – computer, notepad, earbuds, pens – are nearby. Buy plants for your home office, because they make us happy! Face a window; I promise, it's a mood changer for the better!

4) Invest in a quality ergonomic chair and headset. It is never ideal to work from an uncomfortable chair (or your bed or couch) for obvious reasons – posture problems leading to back pain. Using earbuds or headphones as a headset will allow you to work handsfree and provide a clearer connection than relying on your computer's microphone.

5) Set up your home office for success. Many of my clients are more efficient when they have two monitors instead of just one. Make sure you have high speed internet with a strong signal in your workspace.

6) Do not eat at your desk. It is important to take breaks from your work space for snacks or lunches.

7) Take Zoom breaks. If possible, do not schedule back-to-back meetings. Take time to regroup between meetings and absorb the information you just heard, take notes, and prepare for the next meeting or project. This is an ideal time to step outside, take a

short walk, and refresh. Zoom fatigue is real.

8) Eliminate distractions. For obvious reasons, this is often more difficult to achieve when working from home. This is where boundary setting becomes critical. Pets, kitchens, and phones can be distracting (TVs too). Turn off your email notifications and check your email at a scheduled time throughout the day instead of reading each one as it comes in. It goes without saying, social media equals rabbit hole, just don't look during work time.

9. Make time to wind down after work. Even though we might have complained about our commute, it gave us time to clearly mark the end of the work day and wind down before we began our evening activities with family. After your workday is finished, take a little time to refresh and shake off the workday before you head into the family room, go to the gym, or start dinner.

Coming soon: Efficiency Matters Q&A. I will be starting a question and answer section at the end of my article. You can describe your organizing challenge or ask a question, and I pick one or two and will respond in my next article. Send your questions to: Jennifer@efficiencymattersllc.com with Lamorinda Weekly in the subject line.

Professional Organizer, Jennifer Raftis, CPO® founded Efficiency Matters, LLC to help you with all of your organizing needs for your home and business. She is a Certified Professional Organizer and an active board member with NAPO, National Association of Productivity and Organizing Professionals. She is also an independent representative for The Container Store and has expertise in designing closets, garages, pantries, playrooms and more. In addition, she is a Corporate Organizing and Productivity Consultant and has worked with Fortune 500 companies across the U.S. Another large part of her business is move management especially working with seniors who are downsizing. She and her husband have lived in Moraga for 30 years, raising 3 kids and working countless volunteer hours with many local non-profit organizations and schools. Jennifer@efficiencymattersllc.com, 925-698-3756 www.efficiencymattersllc.com



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