

# Land Park artist wins three honors in last two months

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The last two months have been rather busy for Land Park resident Liv Moe. Since September, Moe – who is currently the executive director of the non-profit Verge Center for the Arts in downtown Sacramento – has been named “Best Gateway Drug for Sacramento’s Art Scene” by *Sacramento News & Review*, listed as one of “Sacramento’s 12 Women to Watch” by *Sacramento Magazine*, and just two weeks ago was named Arts Executive of the Year by the Sacramento Arts and Business Council.

What does Moe have to say about these recent honors? She’s excited, surprised, honored and flattered.

“I went to school to be an artist, but I didn’t go to school to be an arts administrator or curator. I never thought I would have been the executive director of any organization,” she said. “To find myself in this position and then have it going as well as it is ... wow.”

It’s Moe’s road to becoming an artist that put her where she is today. Moe has been creating art for over 10 years and holds a bachelors degree in art from the University of California at Davis and a masters in art from Sacramento State. After being introduced to a love of art at an early age by her mother, Moe originally decided to study traditional painting at UC Davis. That all changed when, after the prodding of friends, she signed up for a sculpture class with instructor Lucy Puls.

“Everybody told me that she was really hard and it was going to be really stressful,” Moe recalled. “And she is really hard. She’s really demanding and she makes you think a lot about what it is you’re trying to do and if it’s successful or not. Through taking her class, I started hearing these names like Eva Hesse and Paul McCarthy – these artists that were doing really unique, interesting uses of different types of media. It also introduced me to installation work.”

Moe became so fascinated with what she learned in the class that she later talked Puls into allowing her to take an advanced class despite not having the prerequisites for it. Moe spent that time listening to everything her classmates were saying, writing down names and soaking up every last bit that she could.

“It was like in young adult fantasy books where the kid knocks three times on his closet wall and some weird other world opens up,” Moe explains. “It was seriously like a parallel dimension of art that I didn’t realize existed.”

This new dimension set Moe on her own artistic path and ended up dictating every college class she took after that, every trip and everything she researched. Most important, she learned how to understand this new form of contemporary art by learning the vocabulary she needed to help decipher these works she was so enamored with.

“I love going and thinking about experimental forms of media, even if they are not necessarily things that I like,” she said. “I just love thinking about how they function and if they’re successful and how they operate. It’s something I could spend the rest of my life doing.”

Moe’s own form of art is what she calls “domestic or mundane,” discovering alchemic relationships through the re-contextualization of materials such as vacuum cleaners, brick-a-brack, furniture and hair. Her recent explorations have focused on hair as a sculptural medium, incorporating it into three-dimensional works that includes found linens and other domestic items.

After graduation from Sacramento State in 2008, Moe was hired as a gallery sitter at the Verge Center for the Arts while she was pondering what her next career move would be.

Sacramento does not have many resources available for working artists. The Verge Center is a non-profit that works to expose the Sacramento art region to internationally recognized contemporary art, while providing vital resources to local career and emerging artists.

Verge’s combination of working artist studio space and exhibit space is what gave Moe the resources she needed, as it has done for other artists in the Sacramento area.

“If you go to San Francisco, you’ve got the Headlands (Center for the Arts in Sausalito), in the East Bay you’ve got the Richmond Art Center. In Sacramento, you don’t have any of that,” Moe said. “We’ve picked up a lot of artists out of grad school in the region because they get out, they look around Sacramento, and it’s like what am I going to do here.



Photo courtesy

ARTIST LIV MOE during the Verge Success Party.

There’s not a lot of resources or community here for working contemporary artists. I think by giving them resources that encourage them to make a home in Sacramento and career here, that will do a lot for the overall arts scene.”

As the executive director of Verge, Moe sees a bright future ahead as the Center’s relocation last year to a new 22,000 square-foot facility is enabling the organization to expand its programming to include educational offerings as well, including a classroom and print-making lab.

“Giving (the studio artists) the opportunity to teach in the classroom and have the public come in and learn from them and continue this dialogue about art and ideas – that interconnection – is what I think will lead to really enhancing and supporting the Sacramento arts community,” Moe said.

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