

Exhibit at the Merc Gallery in Temecula will feature work of Canyon Lake artist Paul Price

BY SHARON RICE
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Women feeling the oppression of modern society's standards of beauty have an unlikely advocate in the person of Canyon Lake artist Paul Price. However soft-spoken and gentle he is in demeanor, Paul has a warrior's heart when it comes to defending the causes he believes in – but he does so with a painter's brush rather than a sword, and with research, hard work and activism rather than rhetoric.

A free show featuring his work will open at the Merc Gallery in Temecula on August 15 and Canyon Lakers are invited to attend.

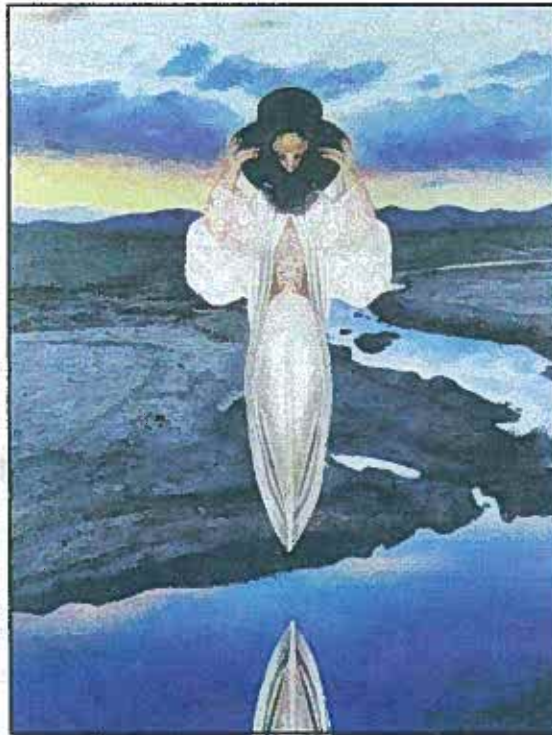
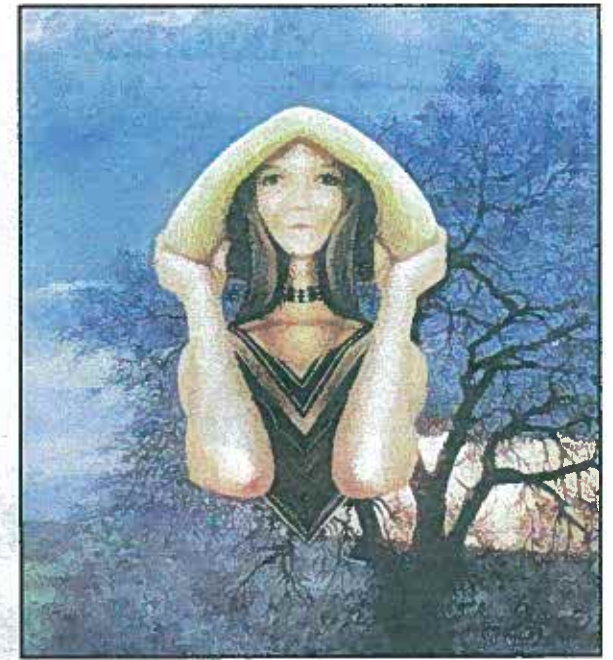
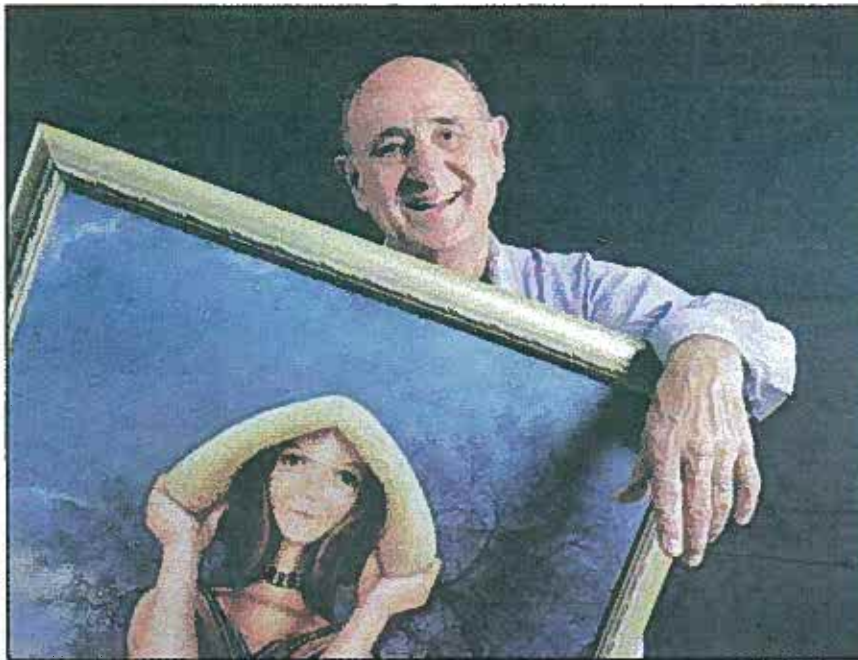
Previously featured in *The Friday Flyer* for his role in researching and representing Luiseño culture through the murals, paintings, sculptures and architectural details found at the Pechanga Resort and Casino, all of which he created, Paul has most recently been on a two-year mission to paint a series of 42 canvases exploring commonly held definitions and perceptions about beauty and femininity in modern culture.

Painted in oil, Paul calls the style of these paintings surrealistic – each one featuring the thought-provoking focal point of female imagery overlaying realistic scenery familiar to those living in Southwest Riverside County.

"By manipulating the female form, I ask viewers to consider their own definitions of 'beautiful' and 'feminine,'" Paul says. "Advertising and other cultural forces have trained entire generations to pigeon-hole definitions of beauty and body image and, in many cases, beauty is defined by a very narrow standard. I believe women are extremely complex and their beauty cannot be defined by perfect white teeth or other perfections. I hope my paintings inspire viewers to explore the social messages and values about beauty and the environment."

Paul will be on hand to answer questions about his work when the exhibit opens on Friday, August 15, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the Merc Gallery, which doubles as the lobby for the Old Town Community Theatre, 42051 Main St. in Temecula. The reception will feature Matthew Fagan's melodic "finger style" acoustic guitar music, as well as refreshments.

The show will run through October 5 and is open during the Merc's regular business hours: Wednesday through



Paul Price's large, surrealistic paintings featuring female figures and familiar scenery have a message. Residents are invited to talk to Paul about his artwork at a free artist's reception at the Merc Gallery in Temecula on August 15.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY PAUL PRICE

Saturday, 2 to 6 p.m., and on Sunday when there is a scheduled theater performance.

The reception and exhibit are sponsored by the Arts Council of Temecula Valley, a nonprofit, community-oriented organization dedicated to promoting and supporting visual and performing arts, as well as arts education in the schools and the community.

Paul is active in local historical groups and boards and recently produced a video

disk on Old Town Temecula's history. His passion for historic preservation has sometimes put him at odds with local Indian and political leaders. He registered several Southwest Riverside County archaeological sites with the state, painstaking work that won him recognition from the San Bernardino County Museum. His site preservation work also garnered recognition from the California State Parks system. Of interest to many Canyon Lakers is his knowledge of Native American

sites in proximity to Goetz Hill, as well as on the Audie Murphy Ranch.

Certainly his artwork has drawn attention to the rich culture of Southwest Riverside County's Native American past. Nevertheless, Paul says he doesn't want to be typed as an "Indian" artist. He anticipates this new series of paintings will reveal his passion for social and environment issues. To learn more about Paul and his artwork, visit www.paulprice.com.