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Spotlight



Riggs serves up a gallery show

By Patricia Morris Buckley

She may have a famous father in tennis player Bobby Riggs, but it's Dorothy Riggs' paintings of the maternal image that will make her mark in the art world.

The only girl among her father's six children, Riggs has learned to tap into the core of her being, for that's where her paintings begin. She calls her style "abstract symbology."

"My paintings are affirmations of life for me," she says. "There's a lot of negativity in the world. I choose to affirm the joy, the creativity and the life force that's in everything."

Riggs' oil paintings heavily emphasize form. And in that form she finds the life source. For instance, "Yin and Yang Pepper" is a study of two peppers obviously representing male and female, *a la* Georgia O'Keeffe. The female pepper is open so you can see its seeds. One characteristic seen in all her work is the blended, softened corners that gives her paintings a sensuality.

"When someone sees my paintings, I want them to feel nurtured and excited about the color," she says. "I want them to be able to feel something deeper than what immediately meets the eye - to use something deeper to understand it - their soul, their intuition."

"It's not about painting a pretty

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picture. It's spiritual energy I want people to tap into and be uplifted by."

Riggs has spent many years learning to tap into that part of herself. She grew up with a mother who loved art. She married at 20, "pretty young," and had a child at 22. Today her daughter is 16 and an artist as well.

"I've always loved art," explains the La Costa resident. "My paintings are a reflection of my core. It was difficult growing up in a male-dominated household where the emphasis was on sports."

Yes, Riggs can play tennis like the rest of her family, still her feminist views are different than those of her 74-year-old father, a former Wimbledon champion who became famous for playing Billie Jean King.

But painting is where she becomes her own person. She's studied at MiraCosta and Palomar College and with artist Lora Lee Crystal for seven years.

"I think my work stands on its own merit," she says. "This is only the tip of the iceberg for me."

Riggs' work will be on display through August at the Offtrack Gallery, 510 N. Hwy. 101, in Encinitas. There will be an artist reception Sunday from 2 to 5 p.m. Call 942-3636 for more information.