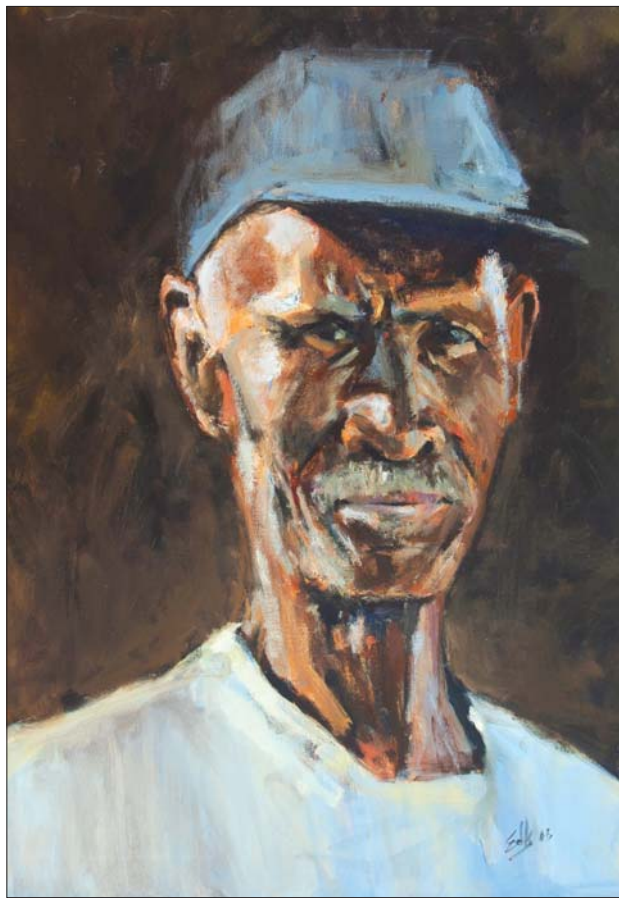
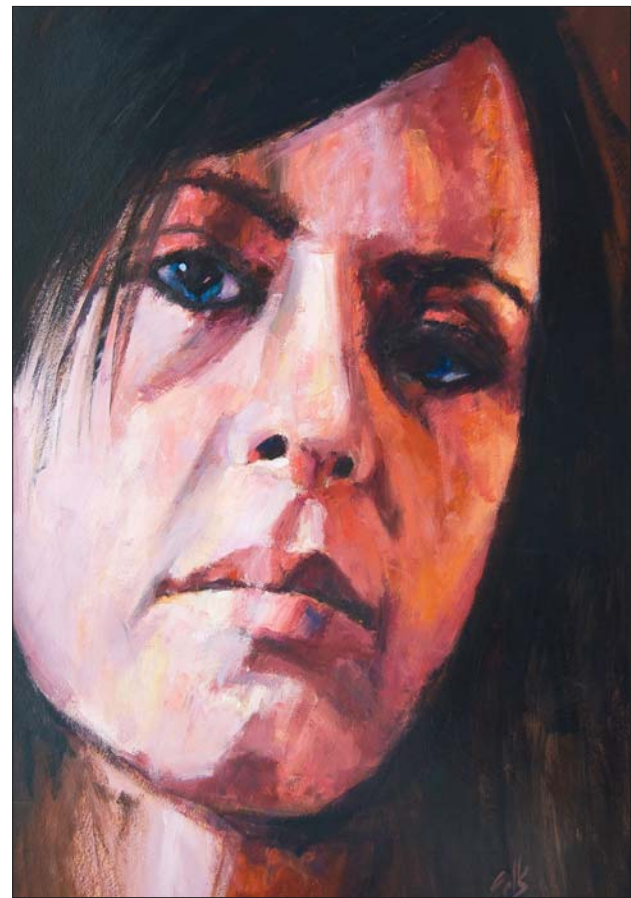




"Purple Coat," by Duane Eells, oil on canvas



"Man in Blue Cap," by Duane Eells, oil on canvas



"Girl with Blue Eyes," by Duane Eells, oil on panel

Painter to unveil latest work at Jester

"Visage," a solo exhibition featuring the works of Ojai artist Duane Eells, is opening at The Village Jester in downtown Ojai Saturday.

An opening reception will be held at 7 p.m. At 7:30 p.m., Eells will unveil his latest work "Il Giullare," a portrait of Nigel Chisholm, The Village Jester owner. The exhibition will run through July.

Eells was born in Los Angeles and has been an Ojai resident since 1988.

A representational artist, Eells focuses on people and portraits in his oil paintings.

His mother, an oil painter herself, exposed him to the fine arts at a young age, and enrolled him in painting and drawing classes at the age of 10. He studied art and design at Cal State Humboldt and Ventura College as well as a number of workshops throughout Southern California.

In the 1980s, Eells exhibited his work at a variety of venues throughout Los Angeles and Ventura counties.

Midway through the '80s, his creative focus was graphic design, which led to him starting a successful design and marketing firm that thrives to this day. This will be Eells' first exhibition in more than 25 years.

Since 2000, Eells, who considers himself a self-taught artist, has re-devoted himself to painting and drawing. During this time he committed himself to the study of academic drawing and painting in the classical tradition. He applies these principles to his craft, and continues his education while he grows as an artist.

Eells works specifically in oils and focuses on painting people.

"I try to capture a certain moment in time that reveals the soul and emotion of those that I paint. My hope is that I can create an emotional connection between the viewer and the subject of my paintings," Eells said. "I am drawn to paint people; I am not sure why, but that is where I always go. I've painted my share of



"Brett," by Duane Eells, oil on canvas

landscapes, but now I lose interest quickly. That may change one day, but for now I am

content to paint people."

Eells' bold and aggressive brush strokes

are balanced with a careful adherence to traditional drawing principles.

"I begin with a very detailed and accurate underpainting. The final painting, though, is what I would call a 'controlled frenzy.' I mix my colors rapidly and put the paint strokes down quickly because I love the energy that is

created but it is tempered with attention to accuracy.

"This exhibition is a culmination of the past several years of painting and I am grateful to Nigel at The Village Jester to give me this opportunity to share my work," Eells said.

Visit www.eells.com to view more of Eells' work.

Photos submitted



Photo by Dean Zatkowsky

Plotting a dish best served cold

Agamemnon played by Ronald Rezac (left), returns victorious from the 10-year war with Troy. Clytemnestra, played by Natasha Zavala, plotting revenge for the sacrifice of their daughter, has her own victory in mind in "The Curse of the House of Atreus." The production by SENGAClassic Stage Company, adapted and directed from Aeschylus' "Oresteia" by Francisca Beach, plays Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. Performances are at the Ojai Valley Grange, 381 Cruzero St. Tickets are \$17 general admission, \$15 for seniors and students. Visit www.sengaclassicstagecompany.com or call 646-4885 for reservations.

Mold your weekend with the clay experience

Melinda Wittwer
contributor

Did you ever play in the mud or build sand castles or do finger painting? Can you remember the satisfaction of making something, anything, with your own hands? Do you walk into an art gallery and wonder how a ceramic bowl is created or a handle is attached to a mug or patterns are etched on a vase? The Ojai Pottery and Clay School is offering the answers to all these questions and more.

On the last Friday of each month, the Ojai Pottery and Clay School, at 212 Fox St., will open the studio to people who want to investigate the making of pottery. Experienced potters will demonstrate hand building or throwing on the wheel, and then guide students as they experiment with and explore the world of clay. The first event will

be Friday from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. The fee is \$20. Clay will be provided, but no pieces will be glazed or fired. Light refreshments will be served. Pre-registration is recommended to guarantee space.

Working with clay can be challenging, messy, expressive, frustrating, fun, addictive and even therapeutic. If you were ever curious about or wanted to experience the art of ceramics, now is your chance. There is no long-term commitment or large expense. Adults of all ages are welcome. And remember, clay easily washes out of most clothing.

Regular pottery classes at the Ojai Clay School will begin May 20 and will last 10 weeks. To register for The Friday Clay Experience or any of the Ojai Clay School's regular classes, email classes@ojai pottery.com or call 798-3990.