



**PAUL KITAGAKI JR. / Bee file, 2004**

The Barton Gallery, site of this show opening in 2005, is closing after being a longtime showcase for local artists, forced to shut its doors by three burglaries last week.

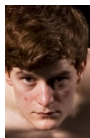
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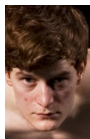
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# Barton Gallery shuts after three burglaries in a week

By Tillie Fong  
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After 18 years, the Barton Gallery has closed its doors – the victim of three burglaries in a week.

Lauren Barton, who along with her daughter Jacqueline had operated the gallery at 1723 I St., said she couldn't protect artists' works.

Her gallery was burglarized last week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. More than \$10,000 in artwork was reported stolen.

"There's no way that I can show an artist's work and know that it's at risk," she said Monday. "I just don't want anyone to lose their work."

The first incident last week occurred a little after 2 a.m. An upstairs neighbor contacted her daughter after hearing glass crash at the gallery, and called the police.

"They just stuck their hand in through the window and stole a handblown glass vase and a metal sculpture," Barton said.

The sculpture was one of her late husband Gregory Barton's works, weighing 20 to 30 pounds. It was valued at \$3,000 and the glass vase at \$950.

"We thought since it was a bronze sculpture, that it was stolen for the reclaim value for bronze," said Barton. "We heard people would take bronze and melt it down, and we figured that was it."

All the bronze sculptures were taken out of the window and put in the back, where they couldn't be seen from the window.

But then on Wednesday, Barton got another call at 2 a.m. "This time they broke another plate-glass window and got into the gallery," she said.

"They broke a big handblown glass plate and ran across the gallery."

The thief apparently stole another bronze sculpture by her husband, worth \$3,500, prompting Lauren Barton to remove all the bronze pieces from the gallery.

On Thursday, Barton installed a show created by two young women who had just graduated from the California Art Institute. Their artwork consisted of multimedia metalwork, sketches and etchings.

Just before midnight Friday, the same side window that had been broken Wednesday was shattered, and the thief made off with two block prints and six metal etchings, and destroyed a paper piece. A painting by Peter Wayne Lewis displayed in Barton's office inside the gallery was also taken.

"They must have recognized it, because (the thief) had to go out of the way to find it," she said. "It was hung in a corner, and it was the most valuable piece."

The artwork taken last week was valued at \$8,000 and \$10,000, not including the Lewis painting.

The rash of break-ins is actively being investigated by the Sacramento Police Department.

"We are processing forensic evidence at this point, and our detectives are working the case," said Michele Gigante, police spokeswoman. "We're looking at whether it's done by the same group of people or individuals."

Gigante said that in the Wednesday break-in, witnesses saw "a subject wearing a hoodie, and carrying a crowbar. There was a vehicle – a black SUV – that was possibly involved."

The gallery was opened for Second Saturday Art Walk this past weekend, but then Barton decided to close for good afterward. "Contrary to popular belief, there is no money in running an art gallery," she said.

Over the years, Barton said hundreds of artists have been featured at the gallery. "It was at least one a month for 18 years," she said.

Anyone with information about these crimes is asked to contact Sacramento Police at (916) 264-5471 or Crime Alert at (916) 443-HELP.

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