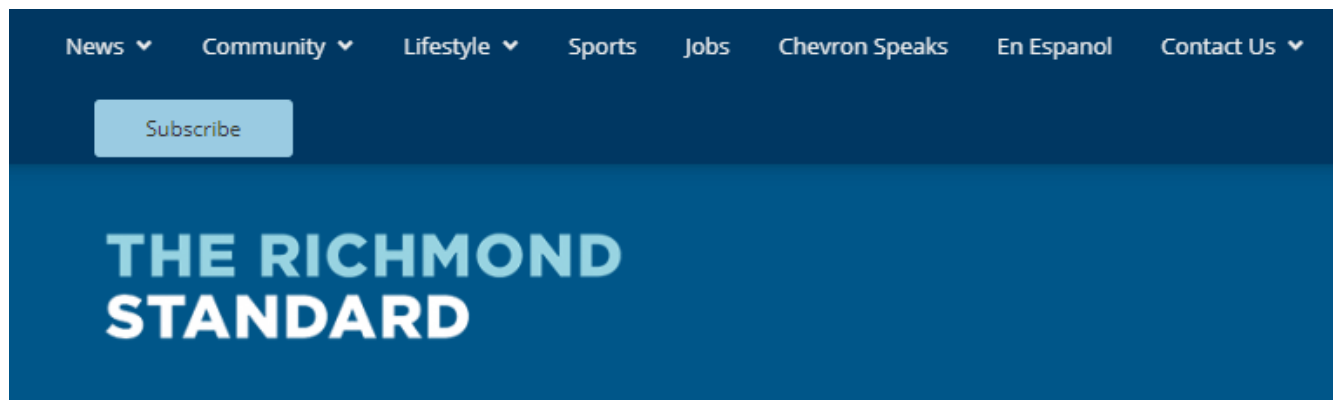


<https://richmondstandard.com/lifestyle/entertainment-and-food/2019/04/03/life-size-whale-artwork-makes-big-splash-at-richmond-art-center/>

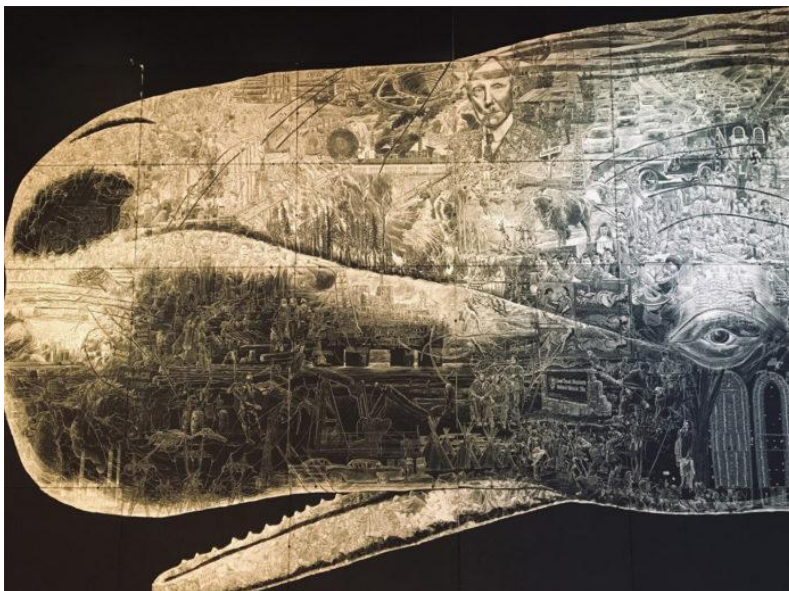


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Life size whale artwork makes big splash at Richmond Art Center

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Jos Sances' "Or, the Whale" is on display at the Richmond Art Center. (All photos by Kathy Chouteau)

By Kathy Chouteau

A current work of art is making a big splash at the Richmond Art Center (RAC) and we recommend you RUN to go see it.

The piece in question, Jos Sances' "Or, the Whale," is a life size scratch-board drawing of a sperm whale that's the largest work ever to be shown at the RAC, according to a press release from the center.

According to the RAC, Sances took eight months throughout 2018-2019 to complete his art piece, which is a whopping 14 ft. tall x 51 ft. long and spans the entire east wall of the center's Main Gallery. In creating his work, the artist was deeply inspired by Herman Melville's classic novel Moby Dick and the history of whaling in America, per the center.

The Rich Life was fortunate enough to view Sances' work firsthand on a recent visit to the RAC, which offers free admission to visitors.



This reporter's jaw literally dropped when first spotting Sances' can't-miss artwork hanging in the Main Gallery. The grand scale of the piece is what first captures your attention, but it's the work's intricate scratchboard etchings that really draw you in as you try to uncover the greater meaning.

Sances' aforementioned etchings within the body of his whale represent a history of capitalism in America, including portraits of some the most famous tycoons and references such as a Flint, MI water tower. From the artist's perspective, the whale represents a metaphor for survival, immortality and omnipresent power, per the press release. Sances wonders, "Do whales even believe in us?"

"Everyone is spellbound by it," said RAC executive director Ric Ambrose in a statement. "The piece encompasses so much detail on such a large scale that visitors to the gallery just seem to become entranced by it."



Without a doubt, the Berkeley-based Sances' work is one of the most magnificent art pieces this reporter has ever seen in Richmond and at the RAC. It's a major art happening in our city and locals shouldn't hesitate to venture over to see it.

"Or, The Whale" is part of a current exhibition at the RAC called "Here is the Sea," a group show that brings together artworks that use the ocean and its coasts as a site for investigating the fraught relationship between humans and nature.

Sances' work and others in the exhibition are on view now through May 17, 2019 at the RAC, 2540 Barrett Ave., Richmond. Want to meet the artist behind the work? A gallery walk-through and artists' talk will be held on Sat., April 6, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. Learn more about the exhibition [here](#) and about Sances [here](#).

