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## Robert, Postbox, Los Angeles | SDCC: The Alley

It is 35 steps from Whitney Pollett's table in Artists Alley at the San Diego Comic-Con to the two-floor homage to a new South Park video game, and slightly farther to the massive displays of sound and light coming from exhibits for Lionsgate, Summit and Showtime.

To flip through her sketchbook, filled with emotionally driven renditions of women in paints and pens, one feels miles away from the corporate face of the country's epicenter of pop culture. Yet Pollett's work now sits in the same hall as that of the biggest names in comics, movies and television.

"It's always been a dream, but I never thought it would happen," she said.

Pollett is one of nearly 200 artists set up in the Alley. Some are less experienced in the ways of the Con, like Pollett, who has been to Comic-Con as a fan twice before but never set up shop. In fact, she was only told that she got a booth at the last minute, after another artist had to withdraw.

"It's been crazy in a good way," she said of the experience. "Everyone's been great. Someone said, 'Your work just makes me really happy,' and that's a great thing to hear."

Others have been coming to San Diego for years, or even decades. At the booth directly to Pollett's right, Paul Guinan stands surrounded by paraphernalia related to Boilerplate, his character best described as a 19th and 20th century robot Forrest Gump. Boilerplate has spawned a book, shown up on the album cover of an EP from the band Stars and has now been optioned for the big screen by producer J.J. Abrams and Paramount Pictures.

"That's one of the great things about Artists Alley," he said. "It's very egalitarian in that way. You'll see people who are established, who have been doing it longer than I have, and others for who this is their first show."

Like Pollett, Guinan seems to enjoy interacting with fans and passers-by. He chats with one visitor about the Abrams project, another about the book and a third about a chance run-in with Guinan's wife, who co-authored the Boilerplate book. It's a level of connection between artist and audience that is in short supply at a convention increasingly about superstar movie and television panels.

"The people behind the table are the people responsible for the work on the table," he said. "You can interact with your favorite artist or discover something new and chat about it with the people who came up with it."

Whitney Pollett's work can be found at [whitneypollett.com](http://whitneypollett.com). "Boilerplate: History's Mechanical Marvel" can be found at [bigredhair.com/boilerplate](http://bigredhair.com/boilerplate).

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