

# Theater Review: 'The Art of Something' at Elite Theatre in Oxnard

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*Tom Eubanks' background as a detective inspires his latest Elite Theatre play*

By [Rita Moran for the Ventura County Star](#)

Local playwright Tom Eubanks tries his pen this time around on a subject he knows very well. His hero is a private investigator, a career Eubanks has carried out through 40 years. But that profession hasn't lessened the lure of acting, directing and producing, the latter two put to use for his "The Art of Something."

The comedy is being staged at Oxnard's Elite Theatre Company, where Eubanks is artistic director. And, demonstrating he's "all in" for this show, he also designed the set and shares credit with Steve Grumette for lighting and sound.

David Colville stars as Arthur Jones, a detective who's having a midlife crisis. Should he continue working cases, or should he switch careers and become a full-time artist?

To try out his earnest art penchant, he's been working on a nude painting of a young woman, Sedona (Maranda Mobley), who nonchalantly considers it better than some optional jobs. He's working at it in his office, partially because he suffers from agoraphobia and tries to stay away from crowded places. It helps in his work that he has an assistant, Roger (Scott Blanchard), to do the footwork. A special nod should be made to Blanchard, who plays Art's head-in-the-clouds aide with a deft comic touch.

Art's wife of 29 years, Zoe (Vivien Latham), seems to have Art-phobia, preferring to watch TV or almost anything rather than wrestle with her husband's problems. They have a lively daughter, Natalie (Allison Williams), who is interested in psychology and tries to talk some sense into both parents, with little effect.

A steady stream of strange clients stop by Art's office in need of assistance. Among them are two men, "Butch" Torrance (Eric McGowan) and Cassidy James (Robert Sabotka), who are on the receiving end of physical threats. Much is made of the comic combo of a Butch and a Cassidy but, be assured, there's no Sundance Kid.

Other clientele include Mrs. Voll (Christina Colombo), a worrisome mother; her daughter Katrina (Michelle Wagner), who's quite with it and also has Hollywood script ties; Quinton Finley, played by the experienced ex-Brit Terry Fishman; and in a very brief but very funny moment near the end a woman named Sarah Wright, played like a dynamo by Sandra Demogenes. Watching her and Latham's Zoe get into a roll-around-the-floor battle is probably worth the price of admission. The fight choreography is by Andrew James, the troupe's managing director.

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