

Art Analysis of a Different Kind

BY CONNIE SUE WHITE

The Gallery at Mills Park has formed a unique collaboration that offers art-goers insightful interpretations of the exhibited artwork during gallery tours.

What is art? Did the artist mean to convey a certain message? Does the way they painted the landscape, the way it meets the sky mean something? Was it intended by the artist or from their subconscious? If you have ever pondered these (or similar) questions as you've observed a piece of artwork, you can guess the answers are infinite. The Gallery at Mills Park's Boris Garbe and friend and psychologist Dr. Carmen McGuinness have come together in an innovative partnership to offer their insights to such questions through thoughtful analysis of artwork on exhibition at the gallery. Garbe later shares the duo's insights during the gallery tours he gives. The two met some three years ago through mutual artist friend Marla E. Smith and an instant friendship began to form.

McGuinness, who owns and operates Chrysalis Center for Children & Change in Altamonte Springs, has always had a passion for art.

"My dream as a young girl was to become an artist, and I eventually studied in Florence. My life took a different course, but here I am back in the arms of art."

McGuinness goes on to explain that the idea to analyze art came about one Sunday morning while she was visiting Garbe at the gallery.

"We were hanging out with two artists whose works were on exhibition there, and Boris was going to go live on Facebook," recalls McGuinness. "I suggested we should talk about their artwork. They both were very nervous about it at first ... the idea was at an untamed stage then."

It has since evolved. After Garbe outlines the process to an exhibiting artist, he then requests their permission for him and McGuinness to analyze the body of work and, ultimately, to include the "findings" in the art tours. At the



SANDY HOLMES (2)

Dr. Carmen McGuinness (right) and The Gallery at Mills Park's Boris Douglas Garbe interpret *Ventana Taina* by local artists Maria Ramos and Jose Sanchez, as gallery intern Amanda Jones takes notes. Through one observation that the female Taino was standing in front of the male, it was discovered that Taino women were powerful in the culture.

time of this writing, they have "read" 313 paintings on exhibition as part of 15 shows at the gallery.

Not only does their mutual passion for art serve as inspiration for this unique collaboration, but their passion for education is also key.

"For many years, I taught language and sign language to pre-K through fifth graders at Kenworthy School," Garbe explains. "Now I'm teaching the meaning of paintings to a generation of gallery-goers who are accustomed to talking about the art in this way and how they relate to the painting and the feelings it evokes."

Look for Garbe's tours to share the duo's insights for the *Trepidation* exhibition curated by Amanda Jones and featuring Peterson Guerrier, Jason Littlefield, PJ Svejda (Jan. 11-Feb. 15), as well as for the *Works of Jennifer Payne and Thiang UK* (Feb. 15-March 22).

For more information on The Gallery at Mills Park tours, visit thegalleryat-millspark.com/artgallery or you may call 407.730.6935. **OAM**

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