

In 2016, writer Gene Paleno wrote in his Record-Bee “Witter Springs” column: The few that are determined to devote their lives to a particular form of artistic expression pay a heavy price. Yet, it is one they are willing to pay. Leszek Forzcek, a celebrated [local painter](#), told me this story.

”After the Spanish Civil war Pablo Picasso was in his early 40s. He was asked a question by a Spanish soldier, who was studying Picasso’s painting of the tragedy and the turmoil of war, Pablo Picasso’s painting of Guernica. The ignorant soldier found it difficult to understand why anyone would spend his time daubing paint on a canvas in this way.

“Did you paint this?” the soldier asked at last.

“Yes,” Picasso admitted.

Continuing to study the painting, with open disdain, the soldier asked, “[How long](#) did it take to paint this?”

Thinking long and hard, Picasso finally replied, “It me took me 42 years, three months, four days and seven hours.”

When I asked Leszek what inspired his painting he said, “Color, light and darkness inspires me. Painting balances, purifies and strengthens the soul. Color holds mysteries and to learn its mysteries is a privilege.”