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Bi-Monthly

ART • MUSIC • FASHION

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THE ARTISANTM

MAGAZINE

May/June
2025



THE CHAD

LRMA

Leepa-Rattner Museum *of Art*
at St. Petersburg College

Museum Hours

Tuesday-Saturday:
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday: 1-5 p.m.

Monday: Closed

Admission by suggested
\$10 donation

Visit our website for
up-to-date information
including summer hours,
events and more!

LeepaRattner.org



Thomas Murray, *Brush Knee*, 1996, oil on canvas, 48 x 70 in., Leepa-Rattner Museum of Art,
St. Petersburg College, Gulf Coast Museum of Art Collection, GC1996.013

Leepa-Rattner Museum of Art presents Summer 2025 Exhibitions May 17 - July 20, 2025

Rachel Fein-Smolinski: *Patient Belongings*

Saumitra Chandratreya: *Tender Urge*

Rarely Seen: *The Gulf Coast Legacy Part I*



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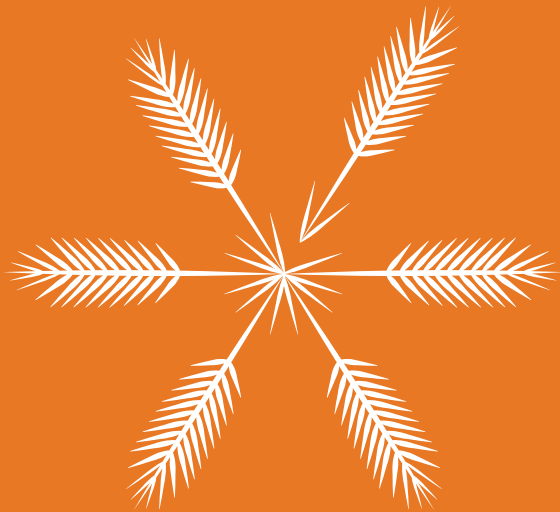
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TampaMuseum.org



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*Under the Spell of the Palm Tree: The Rice Collection of Cuban Art exhibition reception
at the Tampa Museum of Art. Photography by Paige Boscia.*

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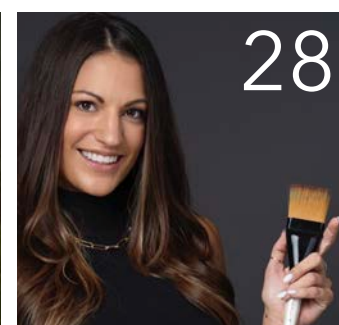
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PAVA PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF VISUAL ARTISTS
A 501C3 Non-profit organization: www.pava-artists.org

**Saturday July 19
10AM to 5PM
Sunday July 20
10AM to 4PM**

36th Annual PAVA Cool Art Show Returns to the St. Petersburg Coliseum this July 19th - 20th

The 36th Annual Cool Art Show by PAVA (Professional Association of Visual Artists) will be held at the historic St. Petersburg Coliseum in St. Petersburg, Florida, on Saturday, July 19, from 10 AM to 5 PM, and on Sunday, July 20th, from 10 AM to 4 PM. This year's show will feature nearly 70 of Florida's most talented and diverse artisans displaying a diverse array of visual and functional art, including paintings, woodwork, ceramics, photography, metal-work, glass art, fiber art, digital art, mixed media, and jewelry.

PAVA artists featured in the show have received awards at prestigious art shows across the nation and are exhibited in galleries and museums worldwide. The show features several artists showcasing their work at the Cool Art Show for the first time alongside others who've displayed at the annual show for several years.

Visitors to this year's show will have the chance to explore and purchase new artwork, interact directly

with the artists, and learn about their innovative methods and techniques. Additionally, there will be a hands-on area where patrons can create their own masterworks to take home.

The St. Petersburg Coliseum, located at 535 4th Avenue North, offers food and beverage concessions, including beer and wine, that will be open to the public. Show admission

and parking are free.

PAVA is a non-profit organization run by volunteer artists dedicated to supporting local artisans and the arts community in the Tampa Bay Area. The organization also offers exhibits and networking with other professional artists.

For more information, please visit pava-artists.org/cool-art-show and follow the group on Facebook @Pava.artists and Instagram @pavaartist.



Open & Shining

GULFPORT

Just Waiting For You!

DRV Gallery Welcomes Award-Winning Artists and Musicians to Gulfport

DRV Gallery continues its tradition of showcasing award-winning artists and offering dynamic live music events this May in Gulfport. The gallery starts the month with Liquid Light, a solo exhibition by multi-award-winning painter Curtis Whitman on Friday, May 2nd, from 5:30-8:30 PM at an opening reception accompanied by live music by Jim Gilmour and special guest Lenny Austin. Whitman's work is mission-driven, aimed at inspiring viewers to see the beauty of the natural spaces that surround us and be moved to protect them. Watercolor is his medium, and natural patterns are his focus.

On Thursday, May 15th, from 6 PM to 9 PM, the gallery will host an evening of live music celebrating

the timeless tunes of James Taylor, performed by the innovative St. Pete Collective. This all-star group features some of the most creative and sought-after musicians in the Tampa Bay area.

Tickets are priced at \$25 and can be purchased at tinyurl.com/stpetecollectivedrv or on the gallery's website for visitors ready to sit back, relax, and enjoy an unforgettable musical experience.

DRV Gallery is located at 5401 Gulfport Boulevard South. For tickets and registration to these events, and to shop DRV Gallery's online gallery, visit drvgallery.com, or visit the gallery's social media at @drvgallery on Facebook and @drvgallery22 on Instagram.

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THE ARTISANTM MAGAZINE

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The Marcia P. Hoffman School Of The Arts At Ruth Eckerd Hall

Announces Summer Creative Arts Camps
And The Highly Anticipated Summer Musical
Clue: The Musical

Summer Camps Are Enrolling Now



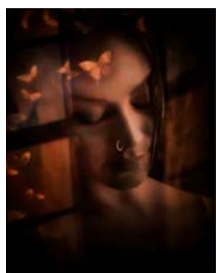
The Marcia P. Hoffman School of the Arts at Ruth Eckerd Hall announces their highly anticipated summer camps and summer musical, *Clue: The Musical*. A wide variety of musical theater, music, and drama camps will be offered to students of all ages. Campers can explore their talents, discover new friends, reunite with old ones, experience the arts with professional instructors and perform in a

professional setting. As with previous summer camps, space is limited, and classes will be expected to fill up quickly. Summer camps are enrolling now.

For more information on camp descriptions, dates/times, and tuition assistance, visit their website or contact the Education Associates at REHEDU@ruth EckerdHall.net.

Four Artists Awarded Arts Impact Grant from Creative Pinellas

Wendy Bruce
Katie Pavone
Beth Belaschky
Lori Vinesett



Beth Belaschky



Lori Vinesett



Wendy Bruce



Katie Pavone

With the funds provided by the grant from Creative Pinellas, the artists will create and present an art exhibition titled:

"VISIBLE: Seen AND Heard"
at Gallery 5663 in Pinellas Park
June 7-28, 2025.

The four artists met as Gallery Hosts at Creative Pinellas.

While working at the gallery, they discovered each had just completed careers and were beginning new careers as artists. They began to inspire and encourage one another. What they didn't anticipate is how they

would be inspired by interactions with gallery guests and how gallery guests would be inspired.

On a daily basis, people visit the gallery and say, "I always wanted to be an artist, but I'm just not good enough". The artists found themselves saying to them "It's never too late to do what you love".

The intention of this exhibition is to communicate "If we can do it, you can do it".

The funds provided by the grant will also sponsor a community art workshop, an artist talk, and events related to children and to residents of an assisted living community.

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See Patti Suzette's Interview on page 28 of this issue
of The Artisan Magazine

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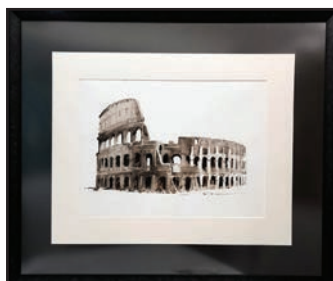
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A man with glasses and a dark shirt is playing an acoustic guitar and singing into a microphone. He is positioned in front of a black grid backdrop. To his left, another acoustic guitar is visible, leaning against a stand. The background features a small shelf with various items, including a framed picture and some small objects.

DRV Gallery

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May 3-17 Saturdays 11-4	LIQUID LIGHT featuring Curtis Whitwam
May 10th 1-2:30PM \$45	WORKSHOP: Watercolor for Relaxation
May 15th 6-9 PM \$25	Concert featuring music of James Taylor
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Saint Petersburg Month of Photography Returns for its Third Edition in May 2025

Saint Petersburg Month of Photography (SPMOP) is back this May for its highly anticipated third edition, offering a month-long celebration of the art of photography across the Tampa Bay area. The festival will feature an exciting lineup of exhibitions, events, and programs, including a special showcase of the five finalists for the prestigious 2025 Photo Laureate award, as well as a solo exhibition by the current Photo Laureate, Ric Savid.

"We believe photography is both an art form and a powerful reflection of our community," says Marieke van der Krabben, Executive Director of SPMOP. "The Photo Laureate program sits at the heart of this mission, giving a photographer the time and space to create a body of work that celebrates the diverse voices, stories, and landscapes of the Tampa Bay region. This exhibition represents the culmination of that journey—an inspiring testament to the power of creative trust."



Brenda McMahon Gallery Celebrates Six Years of Art and Inspiration



In just six years, Brenda McMahon Gallery (BMG) has become a destination for art lovers throughout the state and applauded by artists and residents throughout the St. Petersburg region. The gallery will celebrate its sixth anniversary on Friday, May 2nd, with a party from 6-9 PM at its 2901 Beach Boulevard location, and the public is invited to join the festivities and meet several of the award-winning artists on the gallery's roster.

"Brenda is a pillar of Gulfport's art scene and a well-known artist beyond Tampa Bay. Her exhibits and art inspire new, emerging artists and amplify the voices of better-known creators," said Nanette Wiser, News Director at RadioStPete.com. "When I found out she had an earlier chapter as a successful radio journalist, I

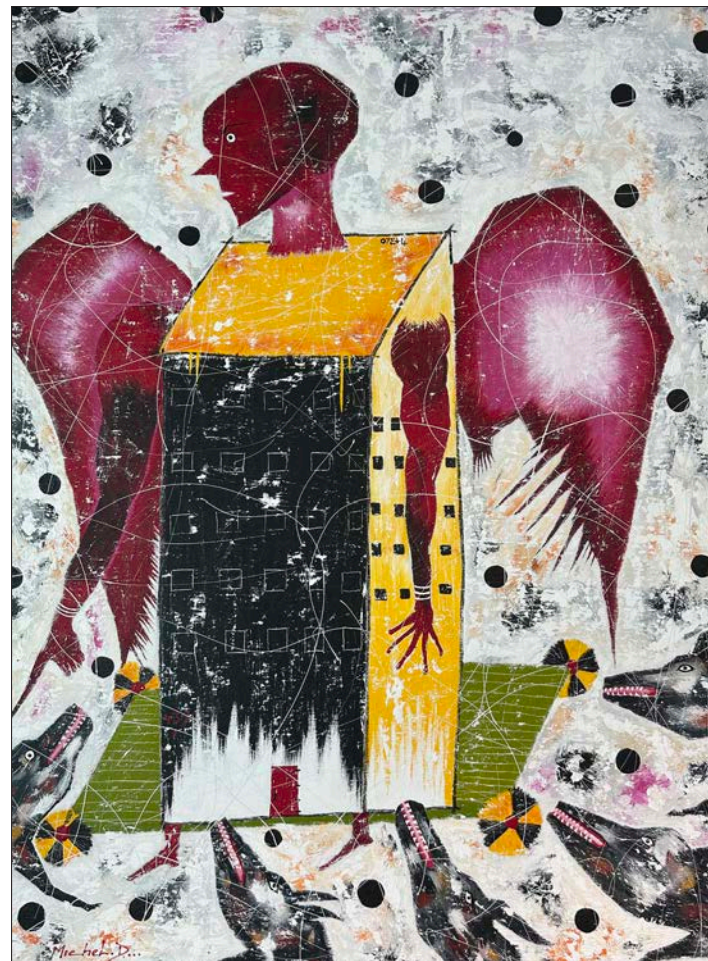
couldn't wait to add her to our roster of podcasters and interviewees. Her new podcast Art & Inspiration is part of our mission to share community stories about artists and makers."

The gallery represents 20 artists across nearly all fields of visual art. In addition to McMahon's own award-winning work, BMG showcases paintings large and small, jewelry, abstract art, glass art, and mixed-media art from decorated artists known throughout the country.

For more information, visit BrendaMcMahonGallery.com or follow the gallery on social media @brendamcmahongallery. The Gallery is located at 2901 Beach Boulevard S. in downtown Gulfport across the street from the Village Courtyard.

ARTICLES

GALLERY & FINE ART SERVICES



Michel Delgado - *Growing With Confidence*, Oil & mixed media on panel 48 x 36 inches

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Charismatic Maestro Seeks to Spread ‘Deep Truths’

Look up *raconteur* in the dictionary, and you just may find a picture of Michael Francis staring at you.

Francis, music director of The Florida Orchestra, is a charming Englishman whose posh accent only serves to highlight a playful public-speaking style when holding forth on an evening's music program or other musical matters.

His enthusiasm for schooling audiences on program highlights comes leavened with humor, and one

phone chat. "And it's very exciting to be building an orchestra and trying to ensure that the orchestra is not only here for years to come but also thriving, even as Tampa Bay has been going through its own remarkable transformation."

As for the current season, he mused that it featured some "milestone concerts" for the orchestra, including the March performances of Janáček's challenging tour de force, "Taras Bulba," and February's epic

good to excellent in all such categories. Even his "stick work" appears crisp and on the mark, with good eye contact with orchestra members.

Francis has had several enviable recording opportunities over the years, and the results have been quite solid. One of the latest – of the Mahler-reorchestrated version of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 – has drawn positive notices, and I'd personally have to call it revelatory.

He's also recorded more than a half-dozen other albums with various ensembles, though none yet with TFO, whose 2012 Delius album predates him. (Notably, the economics of music recording have been in decline in recent years.)

Francis, 49, had an annual salary of \$335,210 in 2022, according to the latest available financial-disclosure document. His predecessor, Stefan Sanderling, was paid \$256,486 before he left mid-contract in 2012, when his relationship with management hit the skids.

Francis came aboard as TFO music director for the 2015-16 season with a three-year contract, which was followed by an initial contract extension through 2025.

Busy, busy...

The TFO music director's other conducting gigs include serving as music director of the Mainly Mozart Festival in San Diego and as chief conductor of Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz in Germany. He's also enjoyed regular guest-conducting performances with the LSO and other top orchestras.

Yet Francis insists his work in Tampa Bay is easily as gratifying as anything else he has done to date.

"This is one of the best-prepared orchestras in the world," he said. "We work hard, we prepare hard, and we have a lot of fun."

A onetime double bassist with the LSO, Francis' first big conducting break came with that same orchestra in 2007, when he was asked, on short notice, to sub for the famous Russian conductor, Valery Gergiev. Soon afterwards, Francis replaced composer/conductor John Adams in a program featuring some Adams pieces, and his podium career was off and running.

At TFO, there hasn't been much not to love about Francis' first decade. I'd confess just one teensy personal



Michael Francis and the TFO are wrapping up the music director's 10th season with the orchestra. Photo courtesy of TFO/JM Lennon

can imagine his boardroom keepers' satisfied smiles at such examples of his personal touch.

Before landing in the Tampa Bay area – with his Lutz-native missus, Cindy – Francis already had established a reputation as a musical comer, with a string of successful conducting gigs in Europe after segueing from a lustrous playing career. Daughter Annabella, now 10, was born shortly after the couple's arrival in the U.S., and in 2019 Francis became a naturalized citizen.

The maestro is currently in the home stretch of his 10th well-received TFO season. Last year, he signed the latest of a pair of contract extensions, committing him to TFO through the 2029-30 season.

"It's great to be able to enjoy such long friendships and long relationships – not just with the orchestra but also with the staff and board members," Francis enthused in a recent

collaboration with the Master Chorale of Tampa Bay on Walton's "Belshazzar's Feast."

"Those kinds of things can be very, very rewarding," Francis said. "But the key thing for the conductor is that we are not the most important person in that gloriously transformative performance experience. It's all about the audience."

Which is why he has such a passion for "communicating the deep truths of the orchestra (so) an intellectual understanding can enable the emotional response," he added.

Over time, a conductor's success is measured by any number of subjective criteria: Do their orchestras play well? Do they get along with players, bosses and the public? Are top principles and other players recruited to improve the orchestra? Does the maestro attract first-rate guest soloists?

Francis would seem to rate very



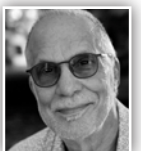
Michael Francis
Photo courtesy of TFO/Andi Tafelski

doubt: I'm ambivalent about the "mystery pieces" the maestro inserts into Masterworks programs – short works not revealed prior to the concert. They are always performed marvelously but sometimes make for a tough fit with the rest of the program, either timewise or otherwise.

One of last season's mystery pieces – preceding intermission ahead of a 70-minute Mahler symphony – was the final chorale scene from Francis Poulenc's 1957 opera, "Dialogues des Carmélites," about the beheading of 16 French nuns. Surprise!

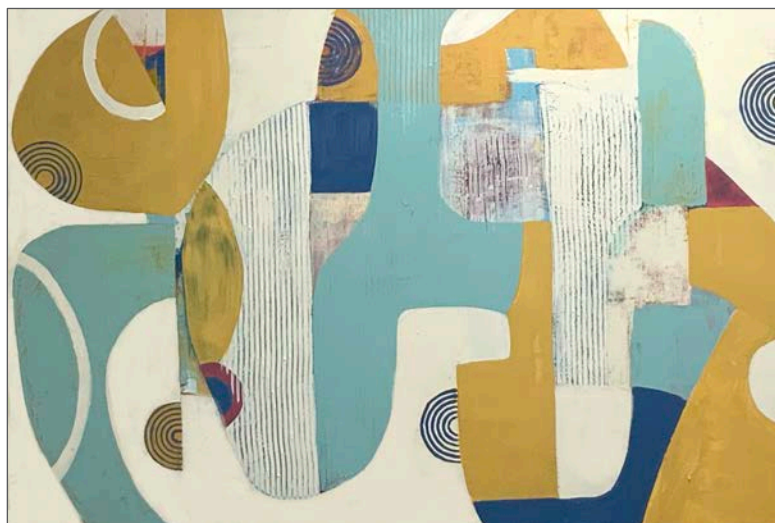
"Well, that was a bummer," one patron was heard to mutter afterwards. It may have boosted business at the lobby bar, however.

Carl DiOrio is a longtime journalist — and music lover. He can be reached at cardiorio@gmail.com



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PLAYBILL PREVIEWS

By Deborah Bostock-Kelley

URBANITE THEATRE
(SARASOTA)



FROM 145TH TO 98TH STREET

May 30 - June 29 -

"From 145th to 98th Street" is a drama about resilience, sacrifice, and balancing personal dreams with family expectations. When Jackie and Cedric move their family from Harlem to 98th Street to pursue better opportunities, they hope for a brighter future. But when their son, Jamal, is falsely accused of a crime and their daughter, Fatima, begins questioning her college dreams, their family is put to the test. As their ambitions collide, they must either stand together or risk being torn apart.



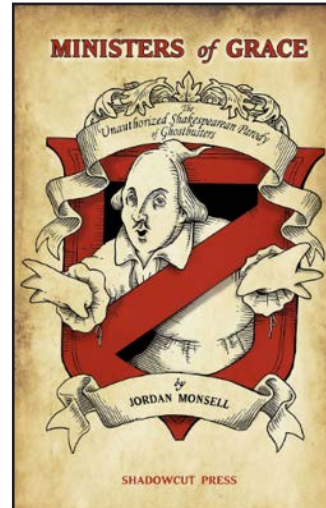
CARROLLWOOD
CULTURAL CENTER
(TAMPA)



MINISTERS OF GRACE: THE UNAUTHORIZED SHAKESPEAREAN PARODY OF GHOSTBUSTERS

May 17 - 18

Imagine "Ghostbusters" as penned by William Shakespeare! In this clever reimagining of the 1984 classic, author Jordan Monsell transforms the supernatural comedy into an Elizabethan masterpiece with iambic pentameter, period prose, and historical engravings. Pray, who wilt thou call in this staged reading?



WESTCOAST BLACK
THEATRE TROUPE
(SARASOTA)



JUNETEENTH ARTS FESTIVAL & COCONUT CAKE

June 16

The free Juneteenth Arts Festival features the documentary "Into The Storm," short films from Ringling College students, an art exhibit, live performances, vendors, and a dance presentation. The day culminates with the play "Coconut Cake," which follows four Chicago retirees whose daily chess games at McDonald's double as a battleground for boasting, gossip, and shared frustrations. But when two new women arrive, carrying family baggage, hidden struggles, and an irresistible coconut cake, their routine is upended in ways they never expected.



SUNDAY, JUNE 16TH, 2024
12:00 PM - 6:30 PM
FREE ADMISSION

JOBSITE THEATER
(TAMPA)

THE BUTTERFLY'S EVIL SPELL

May 7 - June 1



This imaginative adaptation of Lorca's "El Maleficio de la Mariposa" blends live music, visual art, puppetry, and circus arts into a mesmerizing theatrical experience. When a wounded butterfly disrupts a mystical world of beetles and fireflies, love, desire, and danger collide in this poetic tale.



FRANCIS WILSON PLAYHOUSE
(CLEARWATER)

KISS ME, KATE

May 1-18



Cole Porter's Tony Award-winning musical blends Shakespeare, backstage antics, and fiery romance. This Broadway classic follows a feuding ex-couple forced to reunite for a musical production of "The Taming of the Shrew," where their onstage battles spill hilariously into real life. With show-stopping numbers, sharp wit, and unforgettable characters, this musical comedy is pure theatrical magic.

MAD THEATRE OF TAMPA
(TAMPA)

AIDA

June 5- 22



Love defies duty in this Tony-winning musical, as a captive Nubian princess and an Egyptian soldier risk everything for a forbidden romance. With a soaring Elton John and Tim Rice score, "Aida" delivers passion, power, and breathtaking spectacle in this unforgettable production.



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Owner, Susanne Byram and Chef Jermaine Bass
 As seen in Stroll Snell Isle, Photo Credit: Carol Walker

A Year of Milestones

Bill Edwards and the Duke Energy Center For The Arts - Mahaffey Theater



By Lisa Lippincott

St Petersburg's beautiful and beloved waterfront theater known simply as "the Mahaffey" among locals, but more formally as the Duke Energy Center for the Arts -- Mahaffey Theater, celebrates its 60th year in 2025. In January, Bill Edwards, the business juggernaut and noted philanthropist at its helm for nearly a decade and a half, marked his 80th. Both have undergone major reinventions, and both have contributed generously to the fabric of this city over the years. With continued strategic management and some much-needed investment, the theater, if not Edwards, could persist for generations, serving as a treasured asset to the community for decades to come.

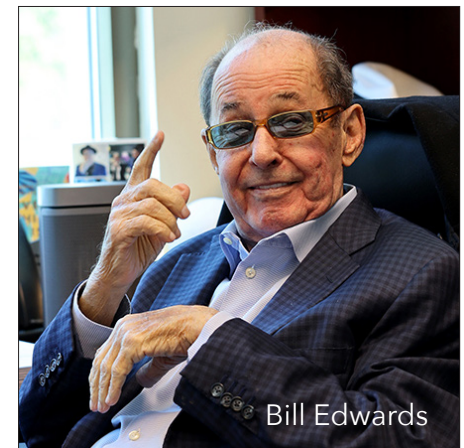
Completed in 1965, the Mahaffey first opened on the shores of Tampa Bay as a component of the Bayfront Center, a sizable, city-owned entertainment complex that included the theater and a conjoined indoor arena. The double venue presented performances as varied as the Barnum & Bailey Circus, leading rock n' roll acts, ice shows, symphonic performances, dance, touring stand up comics, and important local and civic events, among others.

The theater underwent a major, \$23-million renovation in 1987-88, during which a mezzanine level was added, as well as swank box seating and an orchestra pit. It was after this significant remodel that the theater became the Mahaffey Theater for the Performing Arts, in honor of the Mahaffey family's considerable contribution to the capital campaign.

2005 saw another major renovation, with the by then less-needed arena demolished to make way for the signature atrium and plaza. This renovation, finally, capitalized on the venue's spectacular location and breathtaking bay views, which has helped to make it a coveted spot for private events in between scheduled shows.

In 2011, Bill Edwards, through his enterprise Big3 Entertainment, was awarded the contract to manage the Mahaffey. In what can only be termed as an extreme labor of love, Edwards has worked hard in the interceding years to build value for the community, and to improve the visitor experience at the theater for patrons and performers alike.

Believing presentation is vitally important, he freshened and upscaled the lobby, the seats, the boxes, and the green room, added a



Bill Edwards



members lounge, and more, much of it done at his own expense for a building he does not own. In all, Edwards estimates he has spent in the vicinity of \$12-million of his personal fortune on expenses related to the venue.

Class Acts, a curriculum-focused edutainment series begun by the city over three decades ago, brings school children from all walks of life to the theater to learn in a non-traditional environment. Initially serving about 500 students annually, Edwards grew the series to include both indoor and outdoor events, as well as a multi-week theater camp. It now serves tens of thousands of students annually, much of it paid for by the Bill Edwards Foundation for the Arts, which he seeded with his own initial contribution of one million dollars.

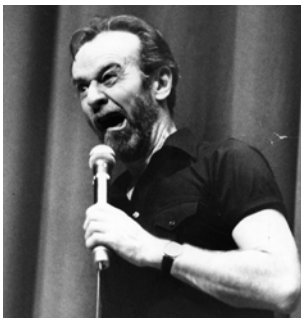
Edwards’
dedication to the
theater and his
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time and money
on it may seem
strange to some,
but in many
ways, it makes
perfect sense.

Other upgrades came at no cost. An arrangement with Imagine Museum founder Trish Duggan brought a strong visual art component to the lobby areas. Most recently, Edwards added culinary arts to the Mahafey’s lineup, opening Sonata Restaurant and Lounge in 2023 with hours corresponding to scheduled shows. The upscale eatery offers a white-tablecloth dining experience focused on coastal cuisine. From the dining area, Brit-



ish artist Luke Jerram’s giant, ethereal moon sculpture, also on loan from Duggan, competes with the bay for diners’ attention. At twenty-three feet in diameter and illuminated from within, it lends and otherworldly air. The massive-but-lightweight fabric artwork, which owes its faithfully-accurate presentation to topographic imagery from NASA, maintains its spherical form by means of an internal fan. And though it may seem an unusual choice of artwork for a performance venue, the pairing of restaurant and sculpture, Edwards pointed out, is a punny nod to Beethoven’s Moonlight Sonata.

Despite the love and care Edwards has lavished on “his” beloved theater, it is once again in need of major investment. The beautiful veneer cannot compensate for deprecating technology and critical infrastructure needs. Hurricane Helene broke windows and filled the orchestra pit with ten feet of water, ruining its mechanical and electrical workings in the process. Other control systems are at the end of their useful lifespan, as is the roof, which threatens to ruin the experience Edwards has taken such pains to create. The lighting and sound systems have served well, but they too are showing their age and



are in need of a major upgrade. Edwards can't attract many of the leading shows, he says, because the equipment is out of date, requiring rentals to fill the gaps. This pushes costs too high, thins out profit margins, and sends acts looking elsewhere. The price tag to do everything needed comes to about \$40-million, and Edwards is hoping that some of the money that was earmarked for the Rays stadium deal might be redirected to making the theater whole and competitive again. He can't invest any more himself, but he is adamant the work that needs doing is well worth the cost.

The building is rock solid, according to Edwards. If it was torn down there's no way anyone could build anything close to it for the cost of bringing it up to date, and its successful continuation is very much a legacy he'd like to leave.

Something of a professional contrarian, Edwards seems to relish in doing what others say can't or shouldn't be done.

Edwards' dedication to the theater and his willingness to lavish so much time and money on it may seem strange to some, but in many ways, it makes perfect sense. Born into an impoverished, abusive, addiction-crippled household, he took his first job at seven years old packing eggs. By the time he was fourteen, he'd left school to work full time as a commercial fisherman. Physically, he says, it was the hardest job he ever had. Like many youngsters, he and some friends formed a band. More than a passing interest, for young Edwards it became a lifeline, and one that would stay with him, to





greater and lesser degrees, throughout his life. At seventeen and a half, he forged his mother's signature to join the marines. Shortly before his tour in Vietnam was scheduled to end, he was grievously injured. The VA spent two years patching him up physically and discharged him. A hard transition back to civilian life and failed marriage followed. The sum of his heartbreaks and troubles weighed heavily, and he was determined to change his life for the better.

Edwards got involved in the mortgage business, and founded what would go on to become the largest veteran lender in the country. He prided himself on hiring people others wouldn't, locating his office on the bus lines so his employees could get to work, often providing a few professional outfits to get them going. As they rose out of poverty, many began buying cars, necessitating

a deal with a nearby church for weekday parking. The onetime mortgage mogul reckons he was the largest employer in St Petersburg for a time.

Other ventures included the founding of Big3 Entertainment in 2000, a now-shuttered record label and full-service recording studio that worked with big names including AC/DC, Cheap Trick, Destiny's Child, Robin Thicke, Usher, and Virgin Records. Other projects include his resuscitation of the Treasure Island Tennis and Yacht Club and the Tampa Bay Rowdies. He subsequently sold both to new owners.

Something of a professional contrarian, Edwards seems to relish in doing what others say can't or shouldn't be done. In one classic example, he produced a Sargeant Pepper live show that ran for three months in Las Vegas because John Lennon once famously said it couldn't be done

- the music was too complex. But a determined Edwards positioned the orchestra on a mezzanine above the band, and it worked.

By all accounts a major philanthropist, Edwards has given generously both locally and outside the area to support initiatives he believes in. For twenty years he put on a holiday event during which he gifted frozen turkeys and bicycles to needy families and their children, only ceasing when the pandemic interrupted his momentum. In certain circles, Edwards is proud to be known as the "Bicycle Guy." Over the decades, he estimates, he has given over \$100-million to charitable causes.

And though he's reached his limit on personal spending for the Mahaffey, he's committed to seeing that the refurbishment happens. Because music and the arts saved his life. And perhaps nobody enjoys a comeback story more than Bill Edwards. •



THE ART LANDSCAPE IN 2025

This year is dynamic and multifaceted, reflecting technological advancements, environmental consciousness, and evolving cultural narratives.

Here are some key trends shaping the art world this year:

Sustainable and Eco-Conscious Art

Environmental themes are prominent, with artists like Aurora Robson crafting sculptures from discarded plastics to comment on consumer culture and ecological responsibility. This movement emphasizes the use of recycled materials and eco-friendly practices to create art that not only inspires but also advocates for environmental stewardship.

Revival of Traditional Crafts

There's a resurgence in traditional crafts such as weaving, ceramics, and woodcarving. Artists like Grayson Perry are blending these age-old techniques with contemporary themes, offering a tactile counterpoint to the digital saturation of modern life.

Art as a Tool for Mental Health

The therapeutic potential of art is being increasingly recognized. Artists are creating works that explore emotional landscapes and provide calming, introspective experiences. This trend underscores art's role in promoting mental well-being and facilitating emotional expression.

Cultural Heritage Meets Contemporary Art

Artists are merging cultural heritage with modern styles, creating works that honor ancestral legacies while engaging with contemporary themes. This fusion results in a rich tapestry of art that resonates across diverse audiences and fosters cross-cultural dialogues.

Biotech and Living Art

Artists are exploring the intersection of biology and art, creating installations that incorporate living organisms. These works, often referred to as bio-hybrid art, challenge viewers to reconsider the relationship between humanity and nature, blending scientific innovation with philosophical inquiry.

Immersive and Participatory Experiences

Interactive art is gaining momentum, with exhibitions that invite audience participation. These immersive experiences blur the line between creator and viewer, fostering deeper connections and expanding the role of the audience in the creative process.

Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Art

Artists are increasingly collaborating with AI to push creative boundaries.


Surrealism in Home Decor

Surrealism is making a comeback in interior design, with bold colors, unexpected combinations, and dreamlike elements becoming popular. This trend allows individuals to express creativity and imagination within their living spaces.

Elevated Recognition for Women and Indigenous Artists

The art world is witnessing increased visibility for women and Indigenous artists. Heidi Hahn's exhibition "Not Your Woman" challenges traditional portrayals of women, presenting complex and evolving female figures through expressive, layered oil paintings. This trend reflects a broader commitment to inclusivity and diverse narratives in art.

These trends illustrate how art in 2025 is a confluence of innovation, tradition, and social consciousness, offering diverse avenues for expression and engagement.




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Tim Smith (Canadian, b. 1978) Children play tag on a pyramid of straw bales under a rainbow after a light rain shower on a warm August evening, Spring Valley Hutterite Colony, 2010. (c) Tim Smith

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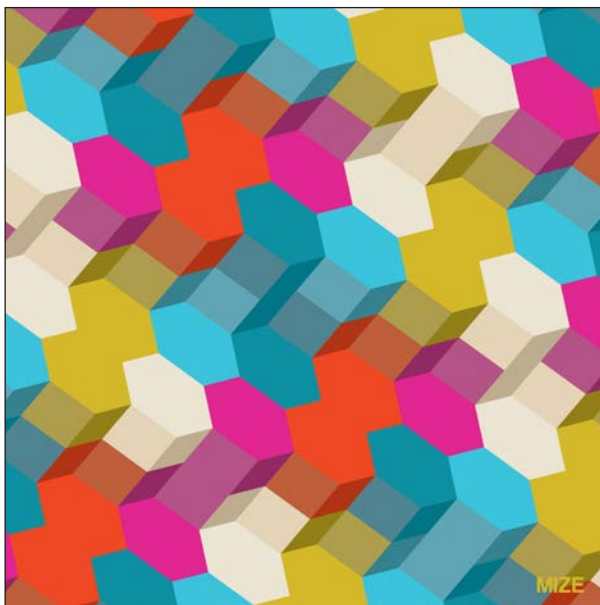
St. Pete's Godfather of Art



By Robin O'Dell

In St. Petersburg where sun-soaked walls double as canvases and creativity spills onto every corner, one figure has persistently left his mark. Chad Mize, with an unmistakable style and determined vision, has become the bandleader of the St. Petersburg art scene. If this city has a patron saint or guiding hand, it would be him: the godfather of St. Pete art.

Born in New Orleans but raised in Bradenton, Mize has Florida roots that run deep. Like many creatives, he ventured elsewhere before returning home. He earned a BFA in Visual Communications from Ole Miss near Oxford, Mississippi, then moved to Boston in his twenties. There, he honed his skills with an unlikely gig, drawing sidewalk character portraits in front of Faneuil Hall. Unpolished though it may have been, the job laid the groundwork for the improvisational style he still embraces.



In 1998, Mize put those skills to work as an illustrator for a digital textbook company, creating Flash animations that brought educational content to life. Laid off just a week before 9/11, he pivoted quickly, co-founding the creative studio Bluelucy with partner Phillip Clark. The change also brought him back to Florida.

He considered settling in Sarasota but ultimately chose St. Petersburg, thanks in large part to the Dali Museum. If a small city could support a world-class institution like that, he reasoned, there had to be more potential. St. Pete was a sleepy town in the early 2000s, with very few galleries or even businesses open in downtown, but it was just at the beginning of the renaissance of the area. A 2000 article in the Tampa Bay Times teased, "Don't Look Now, but St. Pete is Almost Hip." Emphasis on "almost." Still, the high-rises came, the BayWalk complex opened, the Rays baseball franchise launched, and the city slowly blossomed. Mize was there, nudging it forward.

Anyone who lived through the 2000s art scene remembers the warehouse parties with Mize and the Vitale Brothers, which were gritty, electric gatherings pulsing with creativity. A regular cast of artists, dreamers, and young creatives filled the spaces, all hungry for something authentic. Galleries

began popping up along Central Avenue: Craftsman House, Shapiro's, Davidson Fine Art. In 2009, the transformation of the 600 block into a hub for artist-run shops and galleries gave local creators both a gathering space and a venue to sell work. Bluelucy, at 653 Central Avenue, thrived. This was foundational for Chad and his creative work.

Some of the city's first murals were painted by Mize behind Bluelucy. Iconic images like Twiggy and Mr. Sun still remain, albeit partially obscured by "upgrades." Each month, Bluelucy hosted themed exhibitions featuring dozens—sometimes over a hundred—local artists. These shows offered more than exposure; they offered income. As Mize has always understood: artists need to eat, too. That mentor-like generosity only furthered his reputation as the community's

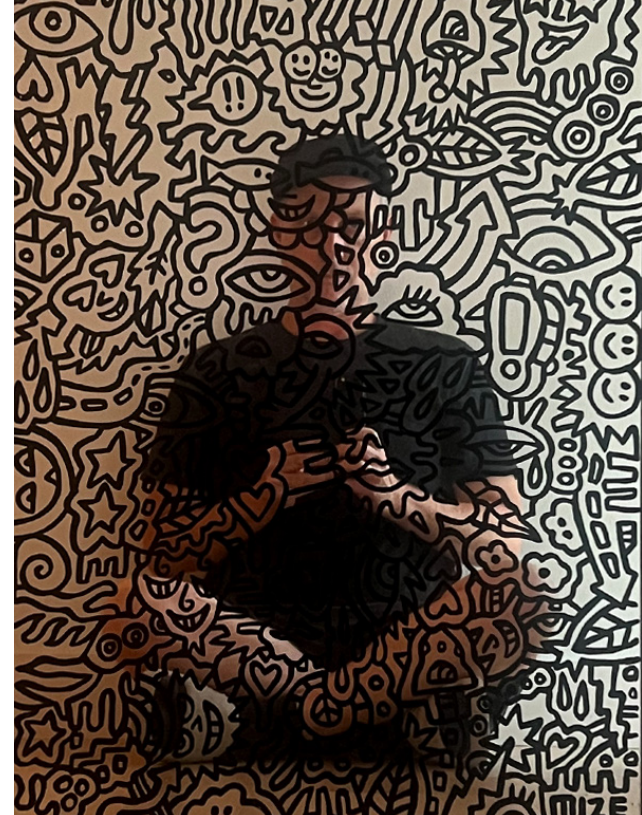
Cont page 22







DISNEY SPRINGS



godfather.

2010 marked a turning point. That year, Mize met his now-husband Dan Schmidt, and while traveling, he spotted a shirt design: Paris/Tokyo/London/Torrance. Inspired, he created his own version: Paris/Tokyo/London/St. Pete, a now-ubiquitous design that can be spotted on sidewalks and in shops all over the city. No, it wasn't an original concept, and yes, others have copied it since. But Mize made it happen and made it iconic.

Chad Mize became pivotal to the art scene. Bluelucy closed in 2014 due to increased rents, but as a door closes, a window opens. In 2015 he was asked to help with the brand new SHINE Mural Festival, and coordinated closely with Jenee Priebe, the director of the festival. He worked tirelessly behind the scenes, assisting in community projects and helping any way needed. He has now personally painted over 120 murals of his own design, mostly in Tampa Bay, but also in Miami and other cities. Whether or not he is in the spotlight, he's always involved in a myriad of projects: painting, mentoring, designing, and building.

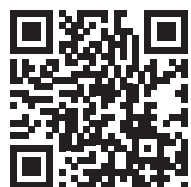
In 2018, he opened MIZE Gallery on MLK Jr. Street. For five years, it became a vital space for monthly exhibitions, featuring a growing roster of Bay Area talent. Even during the pandemic, he adapted with virtual shows and online sales, further helping to support the arts community, and showcasing his own tenacity in the face of difficulties.

Muralist, designer, painter, and entrepreneur, Mize uses bold cartoon-like imagery to comment on politics, religion, contemporary culture and to add just plain fun into the life of his work. His unmistakable style appears everywhere, adorning Coach brand bags and gracing the faces of paddle-ball rackets, on

THE ADDERLY



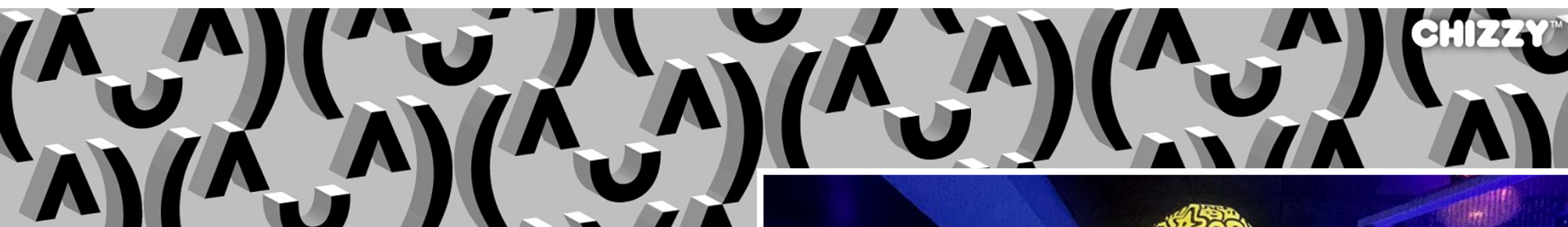




Instagram



<http://chadmize.com>



t-shirts and walls across the city.

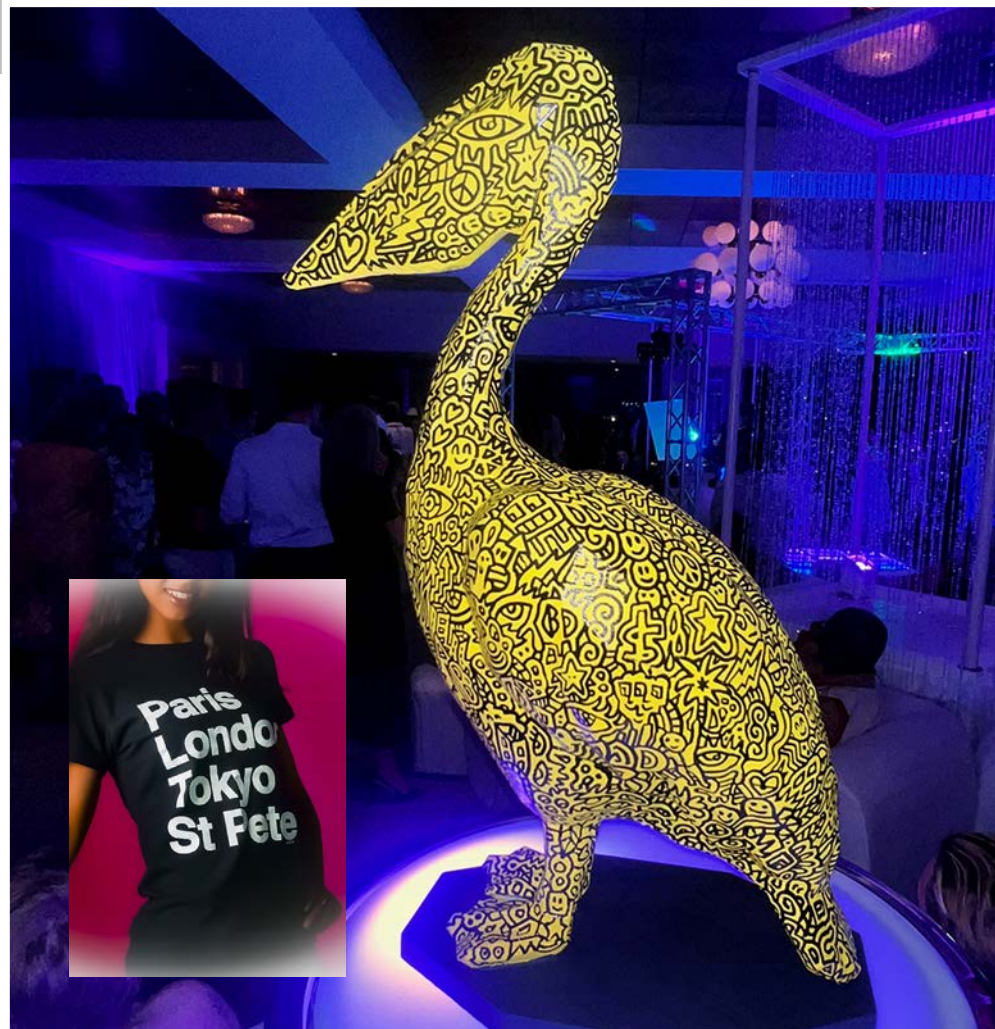
The short-lived opening of the SPACE gallery in an old giant formerly PSTA bus depot on south 28th street in 2023 not only expanded the capacity to show the work of local artists but added performance to the mix. It hearkened back to those early warehouse art parties in the aughts with loud boisterous crowds and cutting-edge art. It was the place everyone wanted to see and be seen. Everyone would talk about it for days. Artists included Bay area stalwarts like Bask, Zulu Painter, Vitale Brothers, IBOMBS, Frank Strunk III, and of course Andrea Pawlisz.

Pawlisz, a key collaborator at both SPACE and MIZE Gallery, worked closely with Mize on every facet of these ventures. Unfortunately, the city wasn't keen on the large gatherings at SPACE, and it shuttered after only a few shows. But its short life only added to Mize's legend. He keeps pushing boundaries, making things happen, elevating others.

2025 brings the year of the museum and new opportunities to experience his work. Mize is currently a featured artist at the James Museum, displaying his work in the

beautiful stone entry canyon. He is curating art pop-ups at Green Bench Brewery. He has opened a new "Side Spot" mini-gallery next to his husband Dan's Uptown Eats restaurant. And in a full circle moment, Mize's work will also soon also be displayed at the Dali Museum. The very venue that he visited as a child and that inspired him to move to St. Petersburg has now asked him to participate in an upcoming exhibition. "Outside in: New Murals Inspired by Dali" is scheduled to open May 24 and will feature the work of twelve former SHINE mural artists painting inside the museum walls. It's a fitting tribute to the city's evolution and to Mize's role in it.

Chad Mize is everywhere. His artwork wraps buildings, pops from t-shirts, and brightens unexpected corners of the city. He curates, paints, designs, and connects. And when his name is mentioned, it's often with reverence. A passionate connector, a supporter of others, and a creator of unmistakable work, his influence spans decades. He's a role model and a mentor. Just don't expect him to ask you to kiss the ring. •





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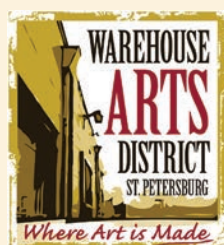
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**SCAN
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A Plethora Of Artsy Bars

From Dive To Divine

By Donna Sorbello

Hidden Gems, Quirky Cocktails, Hotel Havens, and HIGHer profile roosts.

Tampa Bay Drinkery

2756 Central Ave
St. Petersburg, FL 33712

A newcomer, so still a bit of a hidden gem, is uptown on Central, just past the busier fray.



Owned by Wellington Moto, who has artistically decorated the space with eclectic touches, from the upside-down hanging lamps to the elaborate decorative garlands. You could be in a Gentleman's Bar at the Turn of the Century as you listen to soft piano music while lounging on a Victorian settee. The elegant baby grand piano, raised up on a small stage area, is guarded by two large, jet black, ceramic dogs. A backdrop of dramatic red drapery and a vivid, gold Japanese screen frame, as if Lorenzo Medici commissioned its placement for each to have a gold-leaf glow. The place reeks of artsy and interesting, as do the clientele.

The short bar, in one corner of the space, has a row of windows behind it, allowing a cool breeze to waft in, or for you to opt for a stool on the sidewalk. I was at the Drinkery the evening Kaitlyn Lampasso was the bartender. She had me as a loyal regular when I ordered white wine and it arrived in a chilled glass, though she and the other bartenders pride themselves on their kraft cocktails. In fact, I was already won over as soon as I stepped into its calm, quiet ambience since it's of the rare bars these days,

sans the animation, color, and blare of televisions.

Open only a brief time, it's already become a classy hangout for the gay crowd who frequent the neighboring Grumpy Gringo Liquors and attached bar, also owned by Mr. Moto, while also drawing straight couples who want a little romance in a comfortable setting, friends of whatever persuasion who have info to share, and for loners into the music.

HOSTESS, Wine Bar

2635 Central Ave
St. Petersburg, FL 33713

Also on Central Ave, St Pete, the Wine Bar at Hostess falls under quirky. They close at nine, for a starter, and, what appears as once to be a family dwelling, it has a front room shop with



various items from wine to glasses for purchase. Go up the few Hollywoodish inner steps and a cozy parlor awaits you for intimate, even romantic, early drinks. You can also opt for seating in a small garden area, perfect for a party of two or four having a private visit. Back inside, behind the parlor, is a room used for various quirky offerings. Hostess commonly holds bridal showers in this space. The agenda changes monthly, ranging from book signings to Cake decorating classes. Hostess is a unique approach to the usual concept of a bar. The night I was there, it appeared to be a "specialty"

night for a private party, attracting a younger set. Gorgeous young women seem to be a theme for those enjoying Hostess.

HY at the Hyatt

25 2nd St N
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

I confess, I love Hotel bars! I'm not thrilled, however, that so many are taking over gem cities like Tampa and St. Pete, removing revered histori-



cal buildings, changing the special styles, and period architecture of our beloved environs. That said, there is something about the air in a hotel bar, as if it's fragile, holding its breath so as not to disturb you. There's a calm in the best ones, in order, I assume, to counter the frenzy and too-brightly lit lobbies. HY is pure Zen and I'll gladly bask in its dim light, which, frankly, make me look better. It's large, one-color wall art piece, spanning the length of the bar, implies steady seas. It's wide, round-backed, padded bar stools provide a place for a weary traveler, even if just traveling from a few blocks away. Outside, First Avenue North might be teeming with passers-by, but inside, set back a bit, HY's large, tinted windows keep you separate, removed, creating a sense of an evening's private luxury. You can relax and perhaps chat with another solace seeker. If she is serving that night, Paula, one of the two alternating bar-

tenders, is charming, and can mix you up a craft cocktail to soothe any jet lag. For me, it's only flaw is it's not one, but two large-screened TVs above the bar; jarring color amidst this otherwise relaxing, space of simple elegance. IF you don't crane your neck, you can focus on Paula, or your companion, or swivel around and watch the passersby who can only vaguely see you behind the smoky windows.

The Scott at the Cordova Inn

253 2nd Ave N
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

The Scott is a hidden gem, being off the beaten path of the mainstays of Central or Beach Drive in St Pete. This tiny space is rich in feeling, its most recent rehab capturing the spirit of the 1920s, when the Inn was first built. Sitting at the few seats of the bar,



or on the sofas in what is an entrance area to the hotel, it's impossible not to strike up a conversation, or for someone to start talking to you as if you are part of their party. Folks staying at the hotel make for interesting bar mates, carrying tales of why they're in town, where they're from, or discussing their membership in the hotel's loyalty plan in the New Hotel Collection, which gives them entry to other Collection hotels in other locales. If you want a personal moment with your companion, aside from the few separate

seating areas inside, you can hope a couple of the rockers on the beautifully arched front porch are free. Swaying out there is like being at your family's country estate had it been carried, a distance from Oz, as Dorothy's Auntie Em's farmhouse had, but straight to a city's downtown. The Cordova, initially called Hotel Scott –hence the bar's name – is one of the earliest hotels in St. Pete, dating to 1921. Its bar captures, at least in my experience, what we might perceive of earlier eras, before slickness and shiny surfaces were trendy, and when we might have believed the world was made up only of friendly, no-frills folks. Kudos Cordova for retaining the original architecture of this sweet haven, incorporating it into the new additions, rather than altering, or tearing it down.

Berkely Beach Club

109 8th Ave
St Pete Beach, FL 33706

As for a HIGHER profile spot, the Berkely Beach Club, atop the Berkely Beach Club Hotel in Pass-a-Grille, feels close to being on a Greek island. Its white decor, the breeze wafting from



either the ocean on one side, or the inter-coastal waterway on the other, give that vacation vibe. The night sky completes the mood and makes you feel time is irrelevant. I happened to first go there just as the pandemic was starting, and two of us, basically, had the place to ourselves. One drink there felt like a complete-weekend escape. Of course, that sense of ownership changed once more people emerged post-pandemic, and folks recognized this rooftop oasis as the perfect place for catching brilliant sunsets, while sipping some colorful drink to match the sky. Set on one of the small streets of charming Pass-a-Grille, it's a restful

escape from the throngs, of late, roaming St. Pete's nightlife districts,

Cane and Barrel Rooftop Bar

110 2nd St N
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

At the AC Hotel in downtown St Pete, this bar makes one feel a bit like they're in a Monet painting; that is, when Monet started losing his eyesight, and the water lilies were stretched out on huge canvasses. Or you might liken it to a modern take on the French era when all surfaces were wallpapered with busy prints. In this case, splashes of paint, not paper,



cover the ceilings and walls of this eighth-floor hideaway. With its Cuban influence, the white globe sconces are typical of at least one old restaurant I visited in Havana. The white-counter bar has a base of bright blue, with carved leaf decorations. Those simple, ornamental garlands reminded me of Havana's early touches, still lingering in the old town section; touches of great beauty, clinging on amidst great decay. There is nothing decaying on this rooftop, however. It's crisp with an abstract vibe, and if you step outside to its expansive balcony, you suddenly feel as if you have a secret view of the city of St Pete, which only those already seated in well-spaced tables and chairs, know about.

I am gob-smacked by how varied, impressive, sophisticated and, frankly, by just the numbers of night-life settings that seem to have sprung up overnight in Tampa Bay and St Pete specifically. In my journey through just a few of the area bars, I have been impressed with the thought and effort that has gone into the design elements of these establishments. Each one makes a statement and creates an

ambience and mood wholly different from what might be right next door. Each makes you feel welcome in their own way. Hats off to the artists and entrepreneurs that are making each time we journey out to a "watering hole," an adventure in discovery and exploration. It's like being on safari, wondering what new creature might reveal itself to you. I say, slip into those doorways, take those lifts, you might find your own next Cheers, where everyone just might learn your name.

The Bar Fly

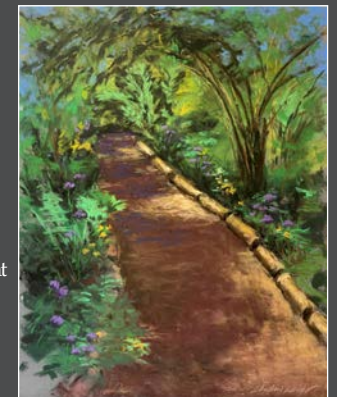
Donna Sorbello

Professional Actress, Writer, Professor. As an actress, Ms. Sorbello's roles have ranged from those in Shakespeare to Contemporary playwrights in theatres primarily in New England, across the U.S. and briefly, in New York. Her film/TV work includes Independent films, and a few higher profile offerings such as *Invention of Lying* and *See Kate Run*, a Disney project. Ms. Sorbello has one book published, *Daughter of Liberty*, as well as poetry, and several articles for *New England Film and Actors Equity Newsletter*. As a playwright, she was the recent recipient of the Honegger Prize for Best Short/ New Works Festival.



Left: *Eternal Woman*
by Cheryl Yellowhawk

Below: *Hudson River Valley*
by Willow Wright



On Display

Pathways, Portals and Journeys by The Gallery
Painting for Hope by Carol Hall
Les Trois Amis by Pat Fenda, Robin Carroll & Willow Wright
Life's Journey by Magdalena Argiry & Judy Hogan
Spiritual Beginnings by Cheryl Yellowhawk
and an exhibit by Babette Arnold

Artist Reception

May 16 • 5:30-7:30 p.m.

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INTERVIEW

By Keith Matter

DESIGNER ART BROKER

Patti Suzette's smile
is lighting up
the local art world.

Patti Suzette, a St Pete-based visual artist and muralist, creates artwork that exudes raw energy and intensity. Her work marries nature with an urban grunge that is representative of the man-made changes to natural habitat. Her work is featured in galleries across major cities such as Tampa, St. Petersburg, Ft. Lauderdale, Miami and Manhattan, NY.

She has been a keynote speaker for the Women in the Arts for Raymond James, is on the Zodiac committee for the Dali Museum, and was honored to be the official artist for the 30th Annual Spring King of the Beach and Mad Beach Boatstock.

Current Artistic Director for ARTSYN. Has worked on the XOXO Art and Music Festival, Art Basel Miami, and many local shows. She represents 30 local artists and muralists, and has a book of at least 70 more in the Tampa Bay and surrounding areas. Her passion for creation as well as her love of helping artists grow their careers has led to her founding the *Patti Suzette Brokerage of Fine Art*.



Photo by the Photo Ninja



Her demeanor is bright and professional. Thoughts, ideas and words flow effervescently from her lips. Then the engine starts. You can tell there has been much contemplation and consideration in what she says. She is an extended algebraic math equation with inherent built-in right-brain emotional charm. You know she's being wiley, but that's OK. She cares, in a calculated way.

Patti is an artist, a curator, a broker, a gallery owner, a manager, a teacher, a friend, etc.

After a few years of a failed attempt to work with an art manager/broker for her own work. She saw that she could do better. Not just for herself, but for other artists. Now there is a focus and an cogent collaboration between mostly young, talented artists, a professionalism has emerged that was missing before. She is the "Art-Mama" for 30 talented artists.

Patti is bringing artworld "domination" to the Tampa Bay area.



IN-HER-VIEW

Where were you born?

I was born in Juneau, Alaska but I have lived in Florida for over 2 decades now. My tan thanks me.

Education, art training?

I have a double bachelors in Business Management and Finance from USF. I graduated, sat through a 4-hour long interview with WellCare for an actuarial position, went to my counselor and burst into tears. The following week I went to IADT and enrolled in an Interior Design program. I don't regret the first 2 degrees, all of them have been extremely useful to my career. Aside from a few art classes in High School (Rolla, MO) and 2 or 3 in Interior Design school (yes, that was all the actual art required), I have no other formal training.

I created a process I refer to as "Fire Art" where I use alcohol inks and isopropyl alcohol to create an almost "reverse watercolor" effect. I would set these pieces on fire (yes, actual fire!) to set the inks and caramelize the colors in crazy intensity. It was very abstract expressionism and I loved being able to be so close to my process. I once burned off all



Continued next page

my eyelashes and a solid tuft of hair in the process but it was exciting to watch! After a while I realized I couldn't get the level of detail that I wanted with this medium and began incorporating acrylic paints and oils.... at some point I made the full switch to explore hyperrealism and my style naturally evolved from there.

How do you and your artists work together to help each other?

Each artist I represent has a distinctly unique style, which naturally removes any sense of competition. I believe this is essential to building a truly exceptional group—one where every artist contributes something remarkable. Without the pressure of competing, they collaborate freely, support one another on murals and creative concepts, and openly share valuable insights into the logistics of running a successful art business. It's deeply rewarding to help fellow artists thrive—and genuinely fun to exchange tips on everything from shipping and framing to creating quality prints.

How do you think pricing of artwork affects the market?

The most common question I hear from new artists is, "How do I price my work?" From the artist's side, pricing should reflect not just material costs, but also their time, experience, and creative intellect. It's important to consider where they are in their career—pricing should evolve as their skills and accomplishments grow. I often encourage artists to view their work through the eyes of their ideal collector: they pay close attention to the artist's reputation, career trajectory, and exhibition history, as well as the uniqueness and quality of the work itself.

Pricing isn't just arbitrary—it shapes how the market perceives the artist's value and potential.

Strategic, consistent pricing supports an artist's growth and market stability, while erratic pricing can damage reputation. When the artist begins to treat themselves as an investment, they become one.

What makes a piece of art valuable to you?

Art is not just for aesthetics. While a great piece of art can pull together a room beautifully (and with a background in Interior Design, I know the impact it could make on our clients), an



Photo by the Photo Ninja

art's value can be much more than the price tag. Artwork can reflect who you are as a person, a company, a brand. Artwork can render people speechless. It can bring others to tears. For some of us, it is an inspiration to get out of bed and live the best life we can. For a business, artwork can help you establish trust with your prospective buyers, showcase your brand or core values, and position yourself as a cultural leader in your industry. Value (as in beauty) is in the eye, and more importantly, the motivation of the beholder.

When I personally am evaluating a piece of artwork to determine value and/or price point for a piece, I also take into consideration the standpoint of the artist as well. I look for the quality of their technical skill, uniqueness, composition, and cultural relevance, but I will always choose those with dedication to honing their craft. Are they making a name for themselves? Do they know how to find their target demographic? Do they invest in themselves through national art shows and continued education? While as the work is an investment for a client, the artist is an investment for the brokerage.

How does digital, NFT's or A.I. affect what you do?

I'm often asked whether I'm con-

cerned about the rise of A.I. in the creative world. While there's definitely been a noticeable surge in computer-generated art, I exclusively work with artists who physically create their work. There's something irreplaceable about true talent—original pieces crafted by the hands of artists from our generation will always hold value and remain worthy investments.

That said, I have no issue with artists using this incredible technology as a source of inspiration. After all, creativity has always been fueled by a wide range of influences—nature, daily life, other artists—so why not include the tools of our modern world?

Some artists believe that using A.I. in any capacity is "cheating," and that's totally valid. Everyone's creative process is personal, and I respect that. But from a practical standpoint, A.I. can be incredibly helpful—especially when it comes to commissions. Developing mock-ups for murals and fine art can take hundreds of hours. And when clients aren't quite sure what they want, that time can easily go to waste. A.I. allows artists to generate visual references that help clients define their vision, saving time and streamlining the creative process.

Let's be real—artists have bills to pay. While the idea of spending endless hours "just doodling" might



sound fun, it's not sustainable. Every hour needs to contribute to the bigger picture of making a living through art. This is 2025- we're living in a technological age. I don't support passing off A.I. creations as original work, and I won't represent artists who do. But I absolutely respect artists who use technology as a smart, modern tool for inspiration and efficiency.

The "starving artist" stereotype? That's so last year. ;)

Do you see any trends in the Tampa Bay area art market?

I am noticing a larger demand for bold abstracts and minimalistic works, which may be motivated by Tampa's growing public art initiatives that are featuring large-scale installations in everyday spaces. Art and community are holding hands these days, and I am loving it.

As our world evolves, I am also noticing a big trend in artists integrating technology into their work. Many are using data, augmented reality and immersive installations to add new depths to their work and adapting to a digital era. Being able to scan a 2-dimensional piece of art and having technology bring it to life in a 3-dimensional way is not only fascinating but it can be educational for the viewer. This is being used a lot in museums to engage with a younger audience. It is remarkable what creatives can come up with - and we intend to use digital mapping to enhance shows in the future to add to the "immersive experience" and stimulate all the senses of our guests.

What's the number one thing artists should do to sell their art?

I feel that the number one thing contemporary artists can do to sell their artwork is build and consistently engage with their audience—online and in person. In today's market, collectors aren't just buying the art—they're investing in the artist. Sharing their story, process, and passion through social media, exhibitions, and events creates connection and trust. When people feel emotionally invested in the artist, they're far more likely to invest in the work. Visibility leads to credibility, and credibility leads to sales. With the new technologies available, building trust with buyers and showcasing authenticity can be a game-changer.

Ten year goals?

If you build it, they will come. True. As long as you also build a marketing platform, hone your target audience, ensure you are offering the best and most unique products on the market....

I believe in setting ambitious goals and always reaching higher. I actively seek out mentors who are at the top of their fields across various industries, and I surround myself with people who challenge me to grow. My vision for this gallery is to create a space that truly elevates my artists—showcasing their work with the level of professionalism and care it deserves. But a gallery alone isn't enough; we take these talents to national art fairs, standing alongside top galleries from around the world.

By building a strong reputation, setting clear, sustainable goals, and upholding high standards, we're laying the foundation for something bigger. My long-term mission is to open 10-15 galleries across the U.S. to amplify the voices and work of the artists defining our generation.

What do you have coming up soon?

Our biggest news is the grand opening of Echelon Fine Art. An exclusive gallery and event space opening up in Clearwater on May 31st, 2025. I have the honor of representing some of the most incredible people I know—artists who are not only insanely talented but also genuinely beautiful souls. They deserve a space that elevates their work, and Echelon is exactly that. Art isn't meant to just be seen. It is to be lived and celebrated in all its glory.

Other Exciting News:

We've been selected as one of 75+ international galleries showing at Red Dot Miami during Art Basel this year. Come visit us at booths 724, 726, and 728 by the Red Dot Lounge from December 3-7, 2025.

Plus, Echelon Fine Art will be featured as the "Signature Collection" at Superfine Art Fair in both Austin (February 2026) and Houston (November 2026). We are curating a custom booth display boasting a large "Art Activation" area with live performances and a ton of surprises.

What's your favorite magazine in the area?

The Artisan Magazine....duh ;)

The Artisan Magazine



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Why You Should Buy Art

Personal Enjoyment

Aesthetic Pleasure: Art enhances your living or working space, adding beauty, color, and texture. It can create a more pleasant and stimulating environment.

Emotional Connection: Art can evoke emotions, memories, and thoughts, providing a source of inspiration and comfort.

Cultural Enrichment: Owning art allows you to engage with different cultures, histories, and perspectives, enriching your understanding of the world.

Social and Intellectual Engagement

Conversation Starter: Art can be a focal point for discussions, allowing you to share your interests and tastes with friends, family, and visitors.

Supporting Artists: Purchasing art directly supports artists and the creative community, contributing to the sustainability of the arts.

Educational Opportunities: Learning about different art forms, artists, and movements can be intellectually stimulating and expand your knowledge.

Financial Investment

Appreciation in Value: Art can appreciate over time, potentially offering financial returns. While not all art increases in value, certain pieces by well-known artists or from specific movements can become valuable investments.

Diversification of Assets: Art can diversify your investment portfolio, providing a non-traditional asset that may perform differently from stocks, bonds, and real estate.

Tangible Asset: Unlike stocks or bonds, art is a tangible asset that you can enjoy daily, even as it potentially appreciates in value.

Psychological Benefits

Stress Relief: Viewing and owning art can be calming and therapeutic, helping to reduce stress and improve mental well-being.

Personal Expression: Your art collection can be a reflection of your personality, tastes, and values, offering a means of self-expression.

Legacy and Philanthropy

Building a Legacy: Collecting art can create a personal legacy that can be passed down through generations, creating a lasting impact on your family and future heirs.

Philanthropic Opportunities: Donating art to museums, galleries, or charitable organizations can offer tax benefits and contribute to the public's cultural enrichment.

Overall, buying art can provide a unique combination of aesthetic pleasure, emotional satisfaction, intellectual stimulation, and financial potential, making it a valuable and multifaceted pursuit.



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COULD IT BE A PICASSO?

Authenticity | Provenance | Value



Mario Gutierrez believes the above painting to be an original Picasso work from 1905. Carbon-14 dating confirms the age of the paint.

The challenge of authenticating artworks, especially those by prolific artists is difficult. Many famous artist foundations have disbanded their Authentication Committees based on an increasingly litigious environment.

(See Keith Haring: <https://itsartlaw.org/2012/09/20/the-keith-haring-foundation-announces-its-decision-to-disband-authentication-committee/> .



The piece above, owned by Mario Gutierrez, may or may not be an authentic work by Picasso as claimed. Proving it poses a challenge. Picasso had a very prolific output over his lifetime, (some estimate over 150,000 including prints, drawings, paintings and ceramics.

How does one go about attempting to prove the authenticity of a piece of art, including the history/provenance, and trace the work back to the artist's hand if possible.

Ashley Burke of Burke & Co, Fine Art Consultants, see ad on page 5, has provided a few initial steps one can take to begin the process.

RESEARCH PROCESS

Step 1: Initial Image Search

- Use Google Lens or similar tools Identify if the work has been published or listed online. Look for stylistically similar works for visual comparison

Step 2: Back of the Painting

- Examine the back of the artwork:
 - Look for stamps, gallery labels, or a handwritten note. These details can provide provenance clues or exhibition history.

- Analyze materials and construction:
 - Type of canvas, wood stretcher, staples or nails, canvas edges. These may help estimate the work's age and geographic origin.

Step 3: Catalogue Raisonné

- Use IFAR (International Foundation for Art Research) to locate the correct catalogue raisonné (https://www.ifar.org/cat_rais.php). The catalog author or foundation is typically the recognized expert. Determine whether the artwork appears in the catalogue or is consistent with documented works from the same period.

Step 4: General Visual Comparison

- Compare the work to others from the same period. Use the catalogue raisonné, museum websites, and online databases. Consider composition, style, color palette, and subject matter.

- Look for verified examples of the artist's signature from the same period (e.g., from askart website).

Step 5: Exhibition & Archival Records

- Search for major exhibitions featuring the artist work during the same period. Look at exhibition catalogs or museum publications. A record of exhibition can support authenticity.

- Archives - The Picasso Museum in Barcelona and Paris holds his archives. There are photographic archives, these could also be useful. Also look at his writing and notes from the same period, is there any mention of experimenting with ideas of Cubism?

Search the online collection for 1905 to see if anything looks relevant: <https://cep.museepicassoparis.fr>

Mario Gutierrez, owner of Art Smart Coffee in Dunedin, FL has expressed a deep-seated belief that three, of the many Picasso artifacts he has collected over 18 years, are authentic pieces of art created by Picasso himself. The main one, pictured left, would be the first example of Cubism in history. And would be worth as much as \$100 million dollars if found to be from the hand of Picasso himself.

FROM MARIO:

"After 18 years of scouring estates, auctions, antique stores and the internet for Picasso vagabond books, posters, etc. I believe I may have been blessed by the discovery of 3 original Picasso paintings. All from the early years. Before the Blue or Rose periods. Before Picasso became famous. When his works of Classicalism, Impressionism and African art clashed and gave way to Cubism.

Picassos' 1905 paintings of an African Fertility statue, the crown jewel of the Picasso Museum, is on display, along with the evidence that she may have been the first example of Cubism" - Mario Gutierrez

The bottom line for proving the authenticity of any piece of art is that without verifiable proof, there is no authentication. Yes, the above piece has the name "Picasso" on it. The paint has been dated to around 1905. The subject, style and colors may suggest a tie to the "African Period" that Picasso may not have wanted to necessarily be associated with, keeping the piece out of the public eye.

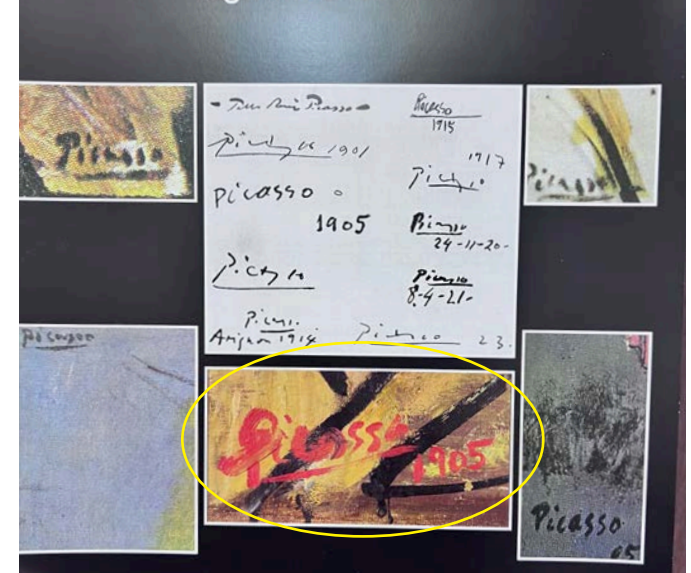
The family of Picasso and two major auction houses have rejected this piece as authentic.

"Believing" that a work of art is authentic has a hard-stop without provenance or some other type of proof. Believing is different than knowing.

Is it possible that this is an authentic Picasso?

Yes, it's possible...

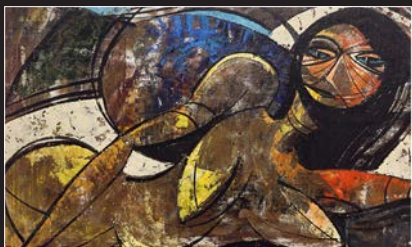
A Study of the Picasso signature in 1905



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The Liar Arts of Mister This World

By Thomas Sayers Ellis

Thomas Sayers Ellis
The author of *Skin, Inc.:*
Identity Repair Poems,
Crank Shaped Notes and Paradise |
Paradise Layered, a book of photo-
graphs. Ellis is a photographer, writer,
bandleader and the recipient of a
Guggenheim fellowship for poetry. In
2023, he was named the first
Photo Laureate of
St. Petersburg.



In a world made of pages, of conformity, of downward clout, Steryl Flexum is refusing to reproduce. Everything is a function of seed, including fame, which can be slid into a series of performances and sold as identity. There's junior, there's senior. One worships trust. The other, surrender. Our protagonist is a believer who adheres to the fearlessness of process, a muscular imagination, the manuscript of Sundays that make up his art-based faith. Steryl believes there were gods and then God killed the gods; angels are local, local aliens; and Noah let the whole world die. He once asked his pastor why all the A.I. in the bible are never mentioned if miracles are advanced technology. No answer. A sharply inquisitive five-tool creator, Steryl's soul resembles a bookmark, flat and hidden until called to service. He was recruited by drawing, trained by poetry, stationed in sculpture, decorated by photography, and discharged with music. Being misspelled can't change the profile of an inner life capable of fielding more philosophical daggers than a pincushion with fibromyalgia, Steryl not sterile, a son of the wind, his father's footsteps resented.

Unteachable, noncompromising, and annoying, all targeted misunderstandings, because Steryl is not real. He is a fictitious statement just like his family, friends, colleagues, neighborhood, the sermons he slept through waiting for the tambourines to break into bangers. College tried to change him, to send him home useful, to remove the native from his mouth like an expensive fine. Blood type, full of contradictions, cells editing cells. I am going to tell you a few things about



him that are going to upset you but don't go looking for him. You won't find him. You can't know him or grow from confronting him. He is vanishing and has nothing to give or sell, not a frame of advice. No body, no mind. Gone are the tools to imaginary kindness, the therapy that once prevented ego from sabotaging an emotional, hanging curve ball. Steryl would rather know Steryl than bald-eye another Florida sunset or be held in front of a microphone and shared with a roomful of nosy trolls. No paragraph found him visible. Because fiction, like Creation, is continuous, Steryl never had a problem with creative enslavement.

When he learned to step away from a reliance on the limbs of formal verse and use his face, the smiles and frowns of every angry washcloth and course of study, art found him.

Behind a façade of conspiratorial orifices, Mister This World no longer recognized him. Taken hostage by the pursuit of wholeness, an entire nation of fragments became his foe. Trapped in a draft like the liar arts of craft, nature buzzed with the odor of vacant cocoons, artificial happiness, and the star forts of an aesthetic practice sanctioned by the state. If something other than his own tension could break him, Steryl would have surrendered to the medical procedure known as Surrealism long before juxtaposing examinations, but the wrong punctuation mark always bled faster than his slow milk count, more ants than infants emerging from organic mound. He loved the before and the after of bedtime brainstorming, but the messy middle never became a countable set of chubby, fingers and toes. All the false alarms made him indifferent

to the way art, "good art expectancy," manipulated mental health. To live in reverse, away from Mister This World's aggressive progress, was Steryl's plan. In those days, the strong branches of art grew from the earth and shared its leaves with a concrete form of consciousness, a pregnancy more desirable than recognizable.

Weakened by the tip of the pencil that sketched him, both tenses of Steryl were impotent, real and imagined, past and present. Nothing happened when Steryl typed, but his work was about everything he encountered, including his thoughts on declining populations. Like most families, poorly gardened between the flower picking of writer's block, the Flexums were alarmists but that was deadlines before Stanley Virile Flexum, in a fit of prolific language laundering, welcomed

Steryl to the forthcoming memory ride of shooting blanks, safe but embarrassing. Steryl was the first boy ever conceived to avoid history and counter the bruises of mankind one mission to the magnetic egg at a time. He and the Big Faced Light Skinned Girl tried (to child) but the moon dodged their wet eclipse, and their togetherness was lost in Mister This World. Steryl picked up a rock, threw it at himself, caught the rock, then spoke to himself, very metaphorically, about the permanence of always being in harm's way. In the genre register of gene pools, he was a very short story with an even shorter life forbidden to lie to invent truth. Weary of the retelling, Steryl was here first. Beads by his deathbed, he got all the feathers.

Horse Bananas

I.

From the beginning, you taught me about dying.
Outside my window, you planted horse bananas
that grew hands thick and hard as yours
in Florida mornings. While light fell after fishing,
your shovel rasped the soil outside my window
and through the thin glass that separated
grown man and boy, I watched you drop
bodies of mullet and snapper,
near the roots of banana plants.

That fruit was sweet and tart
but when the wind blew on dark nights,
banana leaves stretched their thin arms into my darkness,
reached across the night watcher,
through the glass and into my room
where I huddled beneath my blanket
learning to wait for the light.

II.

I tried to teach the boy about dying,
but not so harsh he would feel it badly.
I planted that banana tree outside his window
to shade him from the hard morning sun,
to let him see the fruit growing up and turning gold.
When he'd gone to bed, I buried fish near that tree,
like small gifts out of a child's story
that made trees grow taller and taller,
reaching into a magical world, giving gold
long before he would know what it would be
to fall.

First a Thought

You were first a thought, like God or love
or the immeasurable space between galaxies
or the immeasurable space between protons.
You were first a thought, like the key of G major
before it is played, a place you wish to go
but haven't been. And when you arrived
you were like the first note of the orchestra—
the thought we imagined but somehow different,
as if the number of violins shifted the heft
of the chord and the lone oboe gave a sadness
we did not expect. But the cellos swelled
and lifted one note as a hawk on a sunny thermal.
And then, you became your own thought,
an improvisation of purple notes, lines curved
through space, on paper, your own body
moving through space each day you walk home—
birds wheeling above, your feet measuring out your life,
sightreading the world as it comes to you measure by measure.
And you are still a thought—our thought and yours—
willing dreamer, pilgrim in this ringing quest.



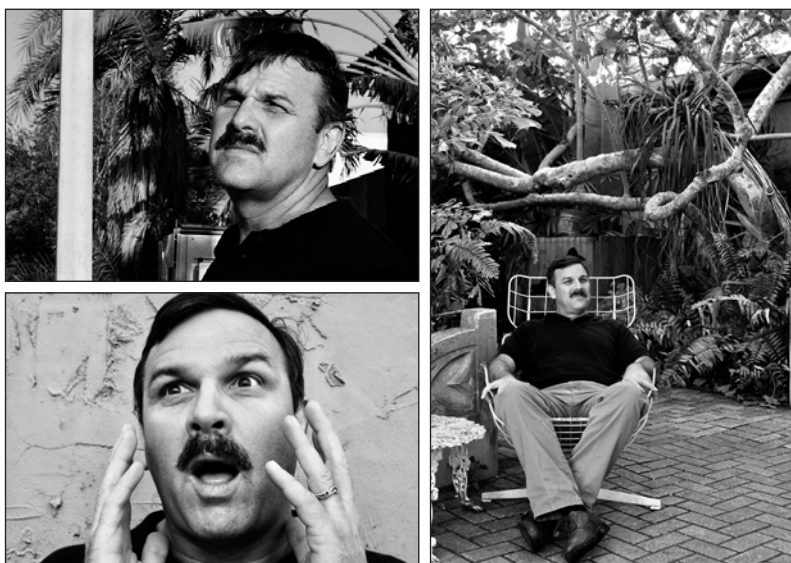
Dunedin Causeway, 2002

We drove out to Dunedin Causeway,
in the pickup you later told me I couldn't sell,
you, strapped into your car seat.
We walked the rocky shoreline
where the whole Gulf of Mexico reached
right up to your sparkling shoes.

In this photograph, you have just flung
a stone the size of your head
towards the horizon.
Your hand is open and pointed.
Your whole body stretches into the arc
you have created in lofting
something into the wider world.

You did not see me take this picture.
This is how I let you range when you were little—
riding ahead of me on your bicycle,
exploring the nuts and bolts in the hardware store,
and, here, out in your own wilderness
while I watched, as always, when you weren't looking.

Today, you live two thousand miles away,
launch phrases and cadenzas into a note-starved world,
your bow arm at right angles to your body,
your left hand pressing the fingerboard into sound.
On any particular day, I won't call, I won't text
as you find sacred places on your own.
But I am watching, child, I am watching—
and I think you've always known.



Greg Byrd is the author of *Salt and Iron* (Snake Nation Press) and *The Name of the God Who Speaks*, winner of the 2018 Robert Phillips Chapbook prize. His poems have appeared in *Louisville Review*, *South Florida Poetry Journal*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Tampa Review* and *Cortland Review*. The recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship, a Pushcart nomination, and an Individual Artist Grant from Creative Pinellas, he teaches writing and literature at St. Petersburg College.

www.gregorybyrd.org

Giclée Printing

By Rosemary Walsh

There's no denying that being a professional artist is hard. Not only are you coming up with creative ideas all the time, but there's the added pressure of supporting yourself, which is increasingly difficult these days. Selling your work involves finding the right art galleries, applying to exhibitions, schmoozing at networking events, writing artist statements, updating your website, posting on social media, emailing collectors and answering DMs... OH, and still finding the time to create new work.

So how can you maximize your earnings without adding more responsibility to your plate? Prints are a fantastic way to let your art work for you.

When it comes to selling prints of your work, quality and ease are non-negotiable, so it's crucial that you find a trusted, experienced print shop to partner with. It will make a huge difference to your collectors - and your stress level!

You can go online to a major company and upload your work, proof it digitally yourself, and hope they arrive as you expected...

OR, you can trust a print shop that specializes in color correcting; that will manage your files; offer physical proofs to make sure they're perfect; and size them to exactly the dimensions you want. You've already got enough to think about, so why fill your brain with CMYK and ICCs?

First things first: What exactly is a Giclée?

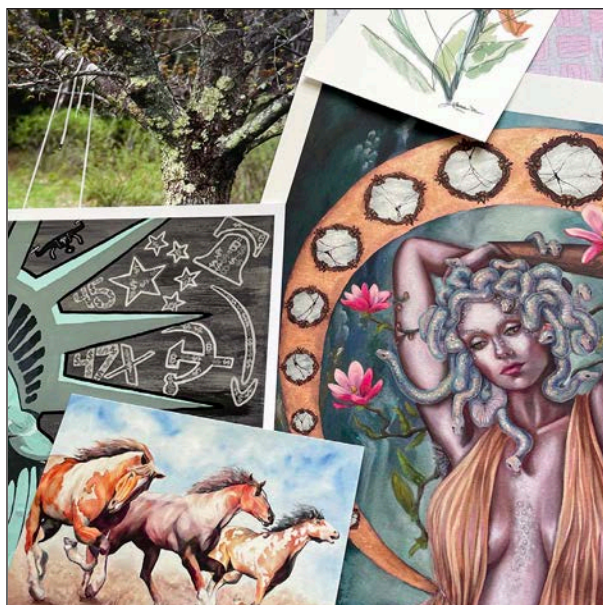
The term 'giclée' comes with tons of misconceptions. So what does it really mean, and how the heck do you pronounce it?

Simply put, a giclée (jhee-clay) is a high quality print made using an 8 to 12-color inkjet printer and archival paper. Giclées offer rich,

long-lasting color and can be customized to fit nearly any size you wish to create, making them the industry choice among professional artists and photographers. When properly cared for, a giclée print can last at least 100 to 200 years without obvious fading.

Sizing, Paper, and Pricing

Choosing the best paper for you is a matter of personal preference. Some papers are better suited for reproducing certain mediums, and your print partner should be able to guide you in selecting the best option for your



artwork. Be sure to opt for acid-free and a luxurious feel - your artwork deserves it.

When it comes to sizing, we recommend sticking to standard frame sizes, as that will make framing much easier (and less expensive) for your collectors. If your original is an atypical size, you can build in margins to account for the odd size when it makes sense, or just advise your collectors accordingly.

Pricing your prints can get tricky. You want to cover your costs, consider the square footage, how many prints of each image you are offering (limited or open edition), and your marketability.

What is it, and what can it do for you as an artist?

Things to Consider When Choosing a Print Partner

If you're ready to set up a print shop or are in the market for a new print partner, be sure to find someone who understands your unique needs. They should be able to:

- Provide a precise color correction Proof of your work until it's perfect.
- Offer archival materials
- Advise you on sizing and offer custom sizing as needed
- Respect your artistic vision and brand

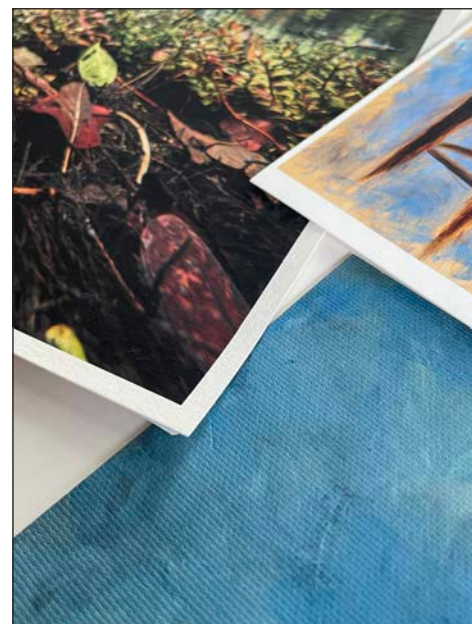
Ask to see samples and don't be afraid to request test prints. After all, your artistic reputation is on the line!

While it's true that art printing is a very technical process, it's also an art form in itself. It bridges the gap between originality and accessibility, giving artists more ways to share their work with the world while preserving its integrity.

At Amazing Art Printing, St. Pete's newest boutique print shop, we take all of the legwork out of the printing process so you don't have to even think about it. Our wide-format printers are capable of producing images up to 44" x 50' large and as small as a

greeting card. We have hand-selected specialty papers for their acid-free quality and exquisite feel, and work with local photographers to capture your artwork into high quality image files. Questions? We're here to help. Simply visit www.easelmanagement.com/amazing-art-printing or contact us at rosemary@easelmanagement.com.

Remember: Uniqueness does not have to mean singular. You can produce one-of-a-kind work, but why shouldn't you sell it as many times as you'd like, without having to recreate it each time by hand? Giclée prints are the answer to your profitability as an artist.



Rosemary Walsh



Art lover and owner of Amazing Art Printing, Rosemary Walsh also owns St. Pete-based Easel Management, an agency uplifting visual artists through marketing and business support.

AMAZING!



rosemary@easelmanagement.com



PAINTER/ EDUCATOR

Angela Warren

angelawarrenart.com
IG: angelawarrenart

340.998.5941

Angela is a full time artist and arts educator with a focus on abstract landscapes



FINE ART PAINTER

Polly

Art is Life Gallery

Find your passion, happiness and freedom

Teacher/Commissions excepted/Classes

941-345-7884



ILLUSTRATOR

Alli Arnold

alli@alliamnold.com

Line drawings, paintings, custom portraits + commissions

917 696 7464



FINE ARTIST

Betsy Ore Glass

Betsy's art captures serene coastal landscapes and nautical themes with soft, luminous colors that evoke tranquility and nostalgia.

Represented by Drew Marc Gallery

813-294-3638



FINE ART/CLASSES

K.R. Porter

Krporter@centralartclasses.com

727-481-6612

Central Art Classes: The Downtown destination for art classes. All ages. Taught by professional artist K.R. Porter at the ArtLofts.



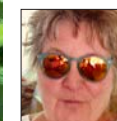
PAINTER

Nancy Cohen

Nancycohenstudio.com

917-921-6821

Classical fine art paintings, studio visits welcome. 515 22nd Street South Studio 113



PAINTER

Carrie Jadus

cjadus@gmail.com

727-318-3223

Jadus is a Tampa Bay Artist, her work is exhibited in galleries and private collections all over the world.



CERAMIST

Brenda McMahon

brendamcmahongallery@gmail.com

518.692.7742

Custom designed sculptural ceramic tile and Japanese inspired vessels.



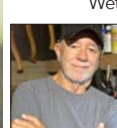
FINE ART/PAINTING

Larry Maynard

larry@larrymaynardartist.com

727-403-1315

"An American Tonalist"
Fine Art Painter of Florida Wetlands



PAINTER

Janie Haskins

janie@janiehaskins.com

614-330-5463

Colorful, impressionist oil paintings of coastal scenes, shorebirds, and Florida life.



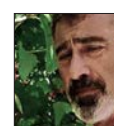
PAINTER

Richard Minster

richardminster@gmail

727-655-8234

I use many different mediums such as enamel, acrylics, and pastels.



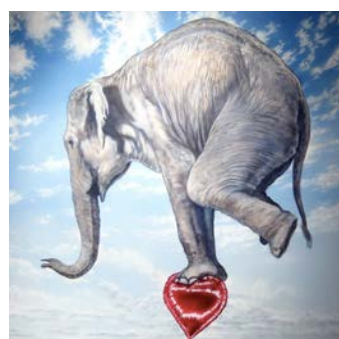
PAINTER

Jim Kammerud

Warehouse Arts District St. Pete

614-353-9556

Contemporary figure paintings and portraits



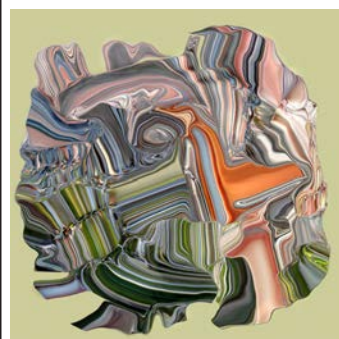
PAINTER

Lance Rodgers

lrodgersart@yahoo.com

727-365-4662

Lance Rodgers' thoughtful narrative paintings have been displayed in numerous galleries and museums.



DIGITAL ARTIST

Dacota Maphis

Full Time Artist creating imaginative art to inspire creative thought

iarddacota@hotmail.com

727-403-9203



CHINESE BRUSH PAINTING

Workshop with Jo-An

Jthomas@cmdigroup.com

(617) 921-6880

Chinese Brush Painting

Workshops

May 17th and 24th

Morean Arts Center



Duke Energy Center

For The Arts



Bill Edwards
FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS

UPCOMING SHOWS

WANDA SYKES
PRESENTS
PLEASE & THANK YOU
TOUR 2025
KEITH ROBINSON
MAY 18
DUKE ENERGY CENTER
FOR THE ARTS - MAHAFFEY THEATER
LIVE NATION

MAY 18 • 5:00 & 8:00PM

Nikki Glaser
ALIVE
AND UNWELL
TOUR

JUNE 12-13 • 7:00 & 9:30PM

MAY
03

Cheap Trick
Live in Concert
60th Anniversary Celebration
CHEAP TRICK

JUNE
18

COMMOTION
A TRIBUTE TO THE MUSIC OF
CREEDENCE CLEARWATER
REVIVAL

COMMOTION

MAY
09

ONE NIGHT
OF QUEEN

ONE NIGHT OF QUEEN

JULY
09

radio soul!
THE EARLY SONGS
OF
ELVIS COSTELLO
PERFORMED BY
ELVIS COSTELLO & THE IMPOSTERS WITH CHARLIE BEXTON

ELVIS COSTELLO

MAY
16

MORRISSEY
FRIDAY, MAY 16
DUKE ENERGY CENTER FOR
THE ARTS - MAHAFFEY THEATER
ST. PETERSBURG, FL

MORRISSEY

JULY
27

RYAN ADAMS
heartbreaker
20 WORLD TOUR

RYAN ADAMS

MAY
24

Don Quixote
May 24, 1:00 pm
IBF

DON QUIXOTE

MAY
30

JIM
JEFFERIES
Son of a Carpenter

JIM JEFFERIES

WANT TO SEE MORE
UPCOMING
SHOWS?
SCAN
HERE:

