

Harlingen Art Forum Newsletter - December 2006

There is no meeting of the Harlingen Art Forum in December, however the Executive Board declares that each and every member, regardless of good or bad standing with Santa Claus, shall have a joyous Holiday Season for whatever holiday they may chose to celebrate. Furthermore, beginning January 1st, 2007, the Board further declaims that Arts will be a Highly Satisfying and Financially Rewarding Endeavor and that each member of the Harlingen Art Forum is required to go out and be Artfully Fruitful!

The next HAF Regular Meeting is scheduled for Monday January 22nd at 6pm at D'Arte Centre, 115 E Jackson, Downtown Harlingen. HAF Member **Ben Varela** will provide a program concerning his works – see separate article below

Membership Dues

Dues are past due, so if you haven't yet sent in your Harlingen Art Forum dues, now is an excellent opportunity. Mail your check to the Gallery attention Membership. Hanging fees are on separate schedules, so if you are unsure about your dates for that check with **Linda Shreeve** at the upcoming meeting. Currently there are 101 paid members making the Harlingen Art Forum a definite voice for Art in the Rio Grande Valley, if not the inspiration for a Disney movie.....woof,woof

Ben Varela: A Second Life is the title of the featured artist show in the D'Arte Centre Gallery for the month of January 2007. Ben's dramatic art and innovative displays are as deeply interesting intellectually as they are visually.

Varela was born in Brooklyn, New York and lived and made his art in Wisconsin, Chicago, and currently in South Texas. In 1980s Chicago he was a member of the respected Mexican Printmaking Workshop during which he made large abstract prints (monotypes). Varela's prints are in the collections at the Bronx Museum and The Museum of South Texas in Corpus Christi. He is affiliated with the Narciso Martinez Cultural Center in San Benito and co-curated the exhibit "Graphico Popular En Chicago" in June 2006. In 1999 he received his BFA in Kingsville and his MFA from UTPA Edinburg in 2005. He is also a member of the Harlingen Art Forum and teaches art at UTPA and STC.

Varela is well known regionally for his unmistakable style of painting, using dots and patterns depicting a personal iconography based on his life and memories. Flying turtles, "casitas" with faces, checkered horses, the sun, and moon are all part of Varela's harmonious opera of imagery. The artist states "The mind produces images of our experiences, which gives energy to create the ideas in visual form. This is what I call the power of the image."

An interesting aspect to this exhibit is the artist's connection to Harlingen. Bill De Brooke, local Harlingen community leader and art collector has the largest collection of Varela's work, a total of about 20 pieces. DeBrooke will be lending D'Arte Centre part of his collection for this exhibit

Be sure and come support Ben and the Gallery at the **Open House and Artist Reception Saturday Jan 6th D'Arte Centre 5:30 to 7 pm**

January 2007 Art Walk in Harlingen D'Arte Centre Gallery Director **Celeste De Luna** has organized a significant change for the New Year's first Harlingen Art Walk. The Walk will change from its traditional late month evening hours to a coordinated presentation with the highly successful Jackson Street Market Days. On Saturday January

6th from 4 to 6 pm the merchants and artists will assume possession of the broad promenade of Jackson Street and combined with live music provide Art within the community. In conjunction with the Art Walk D'Arte Centre will host an Exhibition Open House and Artist Reception at 5:30.

Kisti Beckwith will be offering a Drawing Class at the D'Arte Centre on Monday and Wednesday afternoons in January from 1pm to 3pm .. for three weeks. Beginning Jan. 8 to Jan. 25th.

The class will be geared to the drawing level of the participants. This class is a pleasurable way to deepen and sharpen the drawing skills you already have or to develop the drawing skills you wish you had. The books referenced are Betty Edwards' Drawing from the Right Side of the Brain, Nicholades, The Natural Way to Draw and the Zen of Seeing by Frederick Franck.

The fee will be \$50. A 50% deposit reserves your place. The limit will be 10 students. We must have 6 to allow the class to go. Registrations must be in by the 6th of January. Although this is an adult class, students 13 years old or older are welcome.

Oil and Water Media classes continue in January also, register at the Gallery

Member news: Newspaper features in McAllen and in Harlingen featured HAF members in late December! The Monitor in McAllen featured **Ilse Drawe** and The Valley Star in Harlingen featured **Armando Ortiz**. Both articles are attached at the end of this newsletter.

Robin Cate has her poetry featured in the 2007 Texas Poetry Calendar, its available in the Gallery, so support Robin and buy a copy. While you're at it, the Willacy County Art League's 2007 Calendar is available for your purchase also. One in the kitchen, one in the studio, what more could you ask?

Lynda Haman has a lovely painting of a pair of love birds hanging very prominently at the new Moose Country Coffee House in Harlingen. Let me tell you, if you need moose facts check out the coffee house (restrooms especially) and if you want to see moose smoochingly close, check out Lynda's marvelous painting. Oh, the coffee and sweetrolls are worth the trip too!

Duane Beard and **Ben Moran** gave a presentation on creating in glass to the Upper Valley Art League in Mission.

Celeste De Luna has works featured in the UTPA MFA Graduate Review Art Exhibit on campus in Edinburg at the Communication and Arts Building

If you have news about yourself or another artist please email the information to forumcontact@harlingenartforum.com

Upcoming Events:

Harlingen Art Walk Saturday Jan 6th 4 to 6 pm – **Artist Reception and Exhibit Opening**, Ben Varela: A Second Life 5:30 to 7 pm at D'Arte Centre

Creative and Experimental Art Techniques Demonstration Thursday Jan 4th 6 pm Brownsville Museum of Fine Art 956-542-0941 Admittance to the museum will be free to the art demonstration by artist Marilyn Brown. Ms. Brown is a recognized award-winning artist specializing in watercolor, collage and experimental and creative art techniques. In addition to the demonstration of the 4th, she will be teaching a workshop in innovative techniques January 15, 2007. At the demonstration she will discuss the aspects of painting and answer questions.

McAllen First Friday Art Walk Friday Jan 5th 6 to 10 pm, various locations in McAllen, get detailed map and information at <http://www.mcallenartwalk.com>

The Art of Living with Art Friday Jan 19th 7-9pm and Saturday and Sunday 20th and 21st Imagenes Art Studio presents The Art of Living with Art. Meet & mingle with the artists at the wine & cheese reception at the Paseo Plaza Shopping Center; Brownsville 1805 E. Ruben Torres Blvd. from 7-9 pm. All Artists of all Medias are encouraged to register to exhibit for a small fee (\$50 ed.) Deadline to register is **January 8th**, register online at www.imagenestudio.com or call 956-574-0088.
<http://www.imagenestudio.com>

Creating a Portfolio Workshop at McA2 Creative Incubator Wednesday, January 31st, 2007, 7 to 9 pm As any marketing professional will tell you, packaging counts and that is true when it comes to your artist portfolio. Although creating a strong portfolio may seem like an overwhelming process, it does not have to be. With the help of James Dutremaine this workshop will successfully guide you through creating digital and paper portfolios for those who are not prepared. For more information please contact Rita Perera or Erica Medrano at (956) 687-2787 Instructor: James Dutremaine McA2 Creative Incubator, 1001 S. 16th Street, McAllen, TX **Admission: \$25.00**

Location: McAllen Creative Incubator; 1001 S 16th St; McAllen, Tx

Pharr Spring Classic Art Show & Sale Friday Saturday and Sunday Feb 2,3,4 WooHoo, come buy some art! Several HAF members will be set up and the HAF will have a group booth. See you at Pharr International Convention Center; 3000 N Cage; Pharr, TX

World Wide Web Places to check out

[ARTSRGV.COM](http://www.artsrgv.com) Calendar of upcoming arts events throughout the Valley
<http://www.arts.state.tx.us/employment/opps.asp> The Texas Commission On the Arts, the page says EMPLOYMENT, but it has calls for proposals, juried shows, opportunities galore!

<http://www.texasclay.org/news.htm> Texas Clay Artists Association, a real down to earth group

<http://www.texasmesquiteassn.org/> Yeap, there's art in them there logs.....

Local artist channels personal history for inspiration

December 22,2006

[Travis M. Whitehead](#)

Monitor Staff Writer



Ilse Drawe works on a pastel drawing of a flower this past November. The 78-year-old former ballet dancer and language teacher (English, German and French), has spent a lifetime in the arts. It's a lifetime that goes all the way back to northern Germany where she was born and raised, and she remembers vividly the struggles of attending school in the 1940s when the world was at war.

WESLACO — Ilse Drawe meticulously brought another piece of canvas to life, showing her expertise with pastels.

The geraniums — delicate petals of pink and white — seemed to flutter in the window box in her painting, the shutters framing the scene. Drawe was recreating a picture she took at a friend's house in her native Germany; it is the latest of a long list of paintings she has done over the years.

The 78-year-old former ballet dancer and language teacher (English, German and French), has spent a lifetime in the arts. It's a lifetime that goes all the way back to northern Germany where she was born and raised, and she remembers vividly the struggles of attending school in the 1940s when the world was at war.

"I graduated from school in 1944," she said. "I had gone to a girls' school. I was evacuated, we were all evacuated to a part in Germany that was not bombed all the time, to what later became East Germany."

Like all young people in Germany before, and during, World War II, she had to do a year of labor duty, which she served on a farm. After the war, she got a job in an American military PX in Bremen, Germany, having learned English in school.

While working at the PX, she studied ballet at the Fanny Bourgeau Ballet School.

"You have to go and do an exam, do all sorts of dances before they allow you to perform on stage," she said. "I was on the stage in Bremen and I danced with the ballet group there."

Meanwhile, she met William H. Drawe, (who went by the name "Billy"), at the PX. The young man, a Rio Grande Valley native, was a fighter pilot in the U.S. military. This happened in the late 1940s, about the time the U.S. Army Air Corps was disbanded and the U.S. Air Force created. The artist, who was Ilse Braeuer at the time, can't recall the branch in which her then future husband served.

The two married and moved to San Marcos in the early 1950s, where he went to finish his degree in business administration.

"He planned to go back to farming like his father, but they felt they should all have a degree in something," she said. She also studied music in San Marcos, paid for by her father-in-law. She had thought, before arriving in San Marcos, that she would be able to perform in the local ballet.

However, once she arrived, she found there was no local theater. "I did some private performances for the school, at the water pageantry at the college," she said.

After finishing his degree, William Drawe moved with his new wife back to the Valley. She opened a small ballet school, but once her children began public school, she returned to school, this time at the University of Texas Pan-American in Edinburg where she studied languages. She later taught English, German and French in the Weslaco school district from 1972 through 1992.

For the past 15 or 20 years, she has studied art in the studio of BillyLyn Clark, at Clark's home in Weslaco.

"I just love to create something," she said. "What's my favorite? I guess landscapes and still lifes."

She prefers painting from pictures as opposed to painting out in the open because the high temperatures outside make it too uncomfortable.

She used to paint in oils, but these days her medium of choice is pastel.

"BillyLyn talked me into it," she said. "Oils are actually, in my opinion, easy because you can let them dry and paint over them if you make a mistake. Pastel, you just have to have a very light touch, which you might not have in oil. I like the pure colors of the pastel."

Spreading creativity

Man gives painting lessons at D'Arte Centre in Harlingen

By DAISY MARTINEZ

dmartinez@valleystar.com

956-430-6281

To be an artist you simply have to love what you do, and Armando Ortiz loves to paint.

At 73, Ortiz is living out one of his childhood hobbies. He gives painting lessons at D'Arte Centre on Jackson Avenue.

"Since I was a child I liked to draw, sketch and doodle," Ortiz said.

But Ortiz didn't take up painting until he was 36, he said. He started painting after he attended an art exhibit held in Brownsville in 1970.

"I was sucked in," Ortiz said. He then started taking lessons once a week, while keeping his job at JCPenney where he did advertising and the store's displays.

Ortiz joined the Brownsville Art League and took lessons with a Spanish artist, Bartolome Mongrell, for 25 years.

Ortiz started painting with oil colors, which is the best medium for anyone to use, especially beginners, he said.

In 1995, he retired from JCPenney and that's when he started dedicating more time to his painting hobby.

Ortiz has been teaching people to paint for the past four years in Harlingen and he said he loves what he does.

"When you're an artist, you just love it," he said. "You don't do it because you think you're going to make a lot of money or to be famous. Some women spend \$250 on a dress they will wear once, but not on a painting that will last them for life."

The hardest thing about teaching art is not getting carried away and trying to paint on a student's design, Ortiz said.

One of the best tips he gives his students is to have a model or a picture of what they want to paint, he said.

"If you try to remember (off the top of your head), you'll draw a horse with five legs," Ortiz said.

Although he realizes everyone has a different opinion about what art is, Ortiz said he doesn't like the styles of Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dali or Frida Kahlo. He prefers more of the realistic art methods that American painter John Singer Sargent used.

"If I'm going to paint something, I want it to be pleasing to the eye, especially if I'm going to hang it in my home," Ortiz said. "Picasso was laughing all the way to the bank."

Ortiz said he is a tough critic on himself and sometimes looks a painting over a thousand times before he is satisfied with it.

"But I just enjoy it," he said.



Gabe Hernandez/Valley Morning Star
Armando Ortiz, who gives painting lessons, advises that oil colors are the best medium for beginners.