

Creative Spirits Soar!

LAST MONTH, Guma' Mami Inc. hosted their 14th annual art exhibit, entitled Creative Spirits. The primary objective of the June 7 event, held in the Nissan showroom in Upper Tumon, was to raise public awareness of Guma' Mami's mission and the creative capacity of their clients.

The evening's silent auction was a success thanks to guests who snapped up the artwork produced by the nonprofit's clients and donated by local artists.

Guma' Mami executive director Berni Grajek, was proud to announce that the organization raised \$3,300 from the event. "Of that amount," Grajek said, "more than \$815 will go directly to the with disabilities whose pieces were sold that evening. The remaining proceeds," explained the executive director, "will go towards supporting the various activities within Guma' Mami."

Trisha Atoigue



Guma' Mami client Trisha Atoigue produced Guamblog's favorite pieces. Two remarkably contemporary impressionist works that demonstrate a furious command of the brushstroke. In "Cherubs 2," left, the stark reality of Atoigue's world subconsciously rises against the barren mainstream in a flock of interpretative angelic hosts - at the same time, an uncanny semblance of sledgehammers and blackened comic speech bubbles.



In "Oceans Beyond," the artist's forceful expression is not muted, in the restrained palette. Rather, a world of complexity is found in Atoigue's inferential simulacra of Sumi-e brushstrokes. Above the serpentine crimson and pale foam wave, the brush at once recalls birds on the wing, but echoes the somber fate of fallen dreams below. Both of these pieces show that the soul of the artist is not bound by mainstream standards or normative behavior; rather, they scream for equality and inclusion in a world

ruled by conformity, and would fit well within any bourgeois modern art collection for the home or office.

Grajek told Guamblog that, “Creative Spirits is the culmination of a series of art workshops for individuals with disabilities. The show was a wonderful success. We had well over 100 people join us for the exhibit.”

Approximately 25 individuals who participated in the workshops facilitated by Mar-Vic Cagurangan and Gina Arca.

The program provided an opportunity for special needs clients to exhibit their art alongside many of the island’s most accomplished local artists. While, 100% of artwork purchase price goes to the respective Guma’ Mami artist, works donated by island artist support the organization.



GUMA' MAMI INC.
Bernie Grajek
Executive Director

“Creative Spirits promotes the values of inclusive communities.”

“Flower”
by Antoinette de la Cruz

“Guam Vases”
by Marvin Mendiola

“Kaiju Otaku”
by Clinton Mesa

For 32 years, the respected nonprofit organization has been dedicated to providing services and support to the island’s disabled individuals and their families. Creative Spirits is Guma’ Mami’s signature event. It is more than a fundraising event, as it also creates awareness and promotes inclusiveness within the broader mainstream communities on Guam.

On behalf of the Guma’ Mami Board of Directors and staff, “and most especially those individuals whom we support” Grajek said she is grateful to those who stepped out and out for the event this year, including, the Guam Council on the Arts and Humanities Agency, National Endowment for the Arts, Chamorro Affairs and the Governor’s office for providing the primary funding.

"Of course, all of the wonderful people who came out to Creative Spirits and purchased the wonderful artwork are truly appreciated," Grajek beamed. "It's people like this that make a difference in our community. We are tremendously grateful for their attendance and commitment, as well."



About 100 wellwishers, family and supporters showed up at the Upper Tumon Infiniti-Nissan showroom for the Guma' Mami annual silent art auction and exhibit. Guamblog couldn't help but notice the dearth of elected and appointed government officials - particularly the ones always blabbering endlessly about helping the most vulnerable in our community, but do little to back those words with action.

The notable exceptions were Democrats vice speaker Benjamin Cruz, who jaunted into the busy exhibit accompanied by senator Tina Muña Barnes, who showed up doing her best channeling of Bettie Paige in a ravishing black & white ensemble and killer shoes that nearly stole the show.

Strolling in at the same time was former speaker, senator ben pangelinan who was in a wonderfully jovial mood, despite what had been a contentious week battling political shenanigans. The sole Republican official in attendance was Tommy Morrison who had arrived earlier and spent much of the evening discussing the event with executive director Berni Grajek and mingling with guests.





Left, Angela Santos (familian Belok), browses the gallery as Berni Grajek, center, watches with joy as a guest congratulates her on a successful turnout. The exhibit included works of art and photography donated by established island artists, like photographer Vic Consaga, below left, being shot by Variety photog Matt Weiss, being shot by me. It's called recursion folks!





Showing up for the fun - *and good works* - were Clifford and Sarah Nededog, above left. The Dededo couple were admiring a piece by Tina Flores entitled “Survivor,” (bottom painting) that was created in collaboration with an outreach project of the American Cancer Society. PFC hot honcho Mike Camacho, above right, made his rounds admiring the explosion of talent, oblivious to the gaggle of young ladies admiring him. And the always lovely, and eminently charming Jackie Marati, below, from the Bank of Guam, one of the evening’s principal sponsors was likewise in attendance.

(You know Guamblog couldn't help but watch Marati's charm offensive light up the room with sparkling laughter and wonder why this perfectly wonderful creature doesn't run for senator in 2014!)



Nonetheless....

Keeping it real, and putting HER money where her mouth is, Ms. Marati floated through the Nissan showroom like a tropical goddess in a vermillion tone-on-tone sleeveless kaftan. Doing her part to make, and keep, Guam good, with hummingbird zeal the diminutive banking diva moved from table to table, dropping her signature (and bids) on auction sheets like she were signing off on antigambling or "Recall Calvo" petitions.

In addition, the nonprofit was able to count on the solid commitment from major sponsors, Bank of Guam, Infiniti-Nissan, Pagansinanses Association, Guam PDN, Xerox, National Office Supply, Delta, Freedom Airlines and the Sinajana Mayor's Office.

"We also want to thank the many volunteers," Grajek said, "for setting up the exhibit and special thanks to the wonderful businesses who provided the refreshments.



Sinjana Mayor's Office