



From left, Ray Galligan, Molly Barbee, art committee head for CCA, and Miguel of Sanibel photos by Kathy Kurtz Ferrari

Captiva Groups Collaborate For Artistic Opener

by Kathy Kurtz Ferrari

The snowbirds are returning, and members of the Captiva flock gathered on November 16 to kick off the season for two island organizations.

The Captiva Island Historical Society (CIHS) and the Captiva Civic Association

(CCA) welcomed islanders back with the opening reception of *An Artful Look at Captiva History*, an exhibition of artwork from historically significant artists from the island.

Nearly 60 major art pieces were gathered from personal collections, businesses and organizations for the show, which features work by notable artists Robert Rauschenberg, JN "Ding" Darling, Maybelle Stamper, Myra Roberts and 12 others. It will run through December 1 at the CCA building, located at 11550 Chapin Lane on Captiva. According to CIHS President Tom



Emily Hess Ankersen, director of the Captiva Civic Association and Nancy Riley, board member of the Captiva Island Historical Society

Libonate, the idea of bringing the two organizations together through historical artwork was the brainchild of Molly Barbee, art committee head for the CCA and a founding director of CIHS.

Artists have been drawn to the islands for decades, and the current show is a great example of the inspiration creative people have found here. In his welcoming remarks, Libonate noted how many people feel they turn into artists once they cross the causeway.

"Immediately, you start taking pictures of sunsets and herons and things like that," Libonate said.

"When you look back at art history, we've been an enclave for artists, some of whom became famous," he explained in an interview after the event.

The evening also featured comments from Matt Hall, facilities manager of the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation. Some of Rauschenberg's works for this show were from Hall's private collection. Hall worked with Rauschenberg for 15 years and explained how the artist found Captiva after searching for a place that reminded him of his childhood home on the water in Texas.

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Matt Hall shares memories of Robert Rauschenberg's time on Captiva

he had to stop to let a turtle cross the road, and he knew he had found a special place," Hall told the audience, adding that a flock of butterflies that later surrounded the artist on his scouting trip helped seal the deal.

Rauschenberg's legacy on Captiva can still be felt as the late artist left a lasting presence with his foundation which brings multi-media artists to the island for residency programs. Other notables who have impacted the island include the late pop artist Roy Lichtenstein, whose wife has supported CIHS financially for many



John and Cindy Mason

years, according to the historical society.

"We were not able to find any of his works or anybody who had any of his works for the show, unfortunately, but I guess this was a place where artists like that came," Libonate added.

The historical society's season includes several artistically themed events, including a December 5 panel discussion with Kristina Lindbergh, granddaughter of Anne Murrow Lindbergh, who will discuss her grandmother's book, *Gift from the Sea*, which was written from memories of visits to Captiva.

Two days later, Sentimental Journey, a



From left, David Ferrari, Pam Rosen and Lisa Riordan

stage production salute to World War II's impact on the island, will be presented. That event will be held on the 80th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7.

Documentaries and an outdoor drive-in movie are also planned in 2022, with sponsoring support from The Sanibel Captiva Trust Company.

"History should not only be educational, it should be entertaining and fun," Libonate added.

The CCA also plans a full schedule. The next event will be the opening

reception on Thursday, December 9 for Captiva Inspirations, a juried art show of work by members of the Sanibel-Captiva Art League. Evenings of wine and food pairings will be among other highlights of the season.

Visit www.captivahistoricalsociety.org and www.ccacaptiva.org for more information on both organizations.

Kathy Kurtz Ferrari is a journalist who splits her time between Captiva and the Boston area. If you have any comments, email Kathy.islandsunnews@gmail.com. ✨

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