

Artist of the Month Carmen Sotolongo Kelley



Cuban-born Artist of the Month Carmen Sotolongo Kelley, is an award winning artist, successful business-woman, Monroe County schoolteacher, wife, and proud mother. Her high level of intelligence, and survival skills are likely the keys to her success.

With only the clothes on their backs, Kelley's family fled Cuba when she was a young child. In Cuba, Kelly's father was a doctor, and her mother a teacher with a Ph.D in pedagogy, but both were stripped of their degrees when they arrived in the states.

They had to hunt for work to support their family. It took them seven years to recreate their careers, going to school while working and raising their family.

Growing up money was scarce, but Kelley would entertain herself by drawing and creating her own paper dolls. She took every art class available to her and in college she majored in social science and art. Later, she entered the field of science focusing on oceanography.

"My art depicts a combination of my two cultures, my love for the

environment, the colors of the marine life in the coral reefs, mangroves and places I have visited," explains Kelley. "Happy, vibrant colors, the blue-greens of the waters surrounding us, the royal palms of my past, the guayabera-dressed men, cigars and domino tables all mix together in my art to represent my life."

Vibrant they are! This writer is in awe of Kelley's ability to paint motion as illustrated in her paintings of women dancing (see above). If you look closely at the joyous, beautiful faces you will see they are actually self-portraits

of Kelley. The Coconut Telegraph visits Kelley's Key Largo Art Gallery often and also enjoys bringing out-of-town guests there. What could be a better souvenir for a visitor than a Carmen Sotolongo Kelley original art piece?

The Key Largo Art Gallery located in Central Plaza at mile marker 103.2, bayside is home to many award winning artists including: Dan Lawler, Carmen Sotolongo Kelley, Teresa Kelley, Jackie Campa, and Elena Ortega. Visiting Key Largo? Take home memories in the form of great art!

Support MARC Thrift Store

Due to cut backs, the Monroe Association for ReMARCable Citizens desperately needs donations for their thrift shop located next to Coral Shores High School on Plantation Key. The mission of MARC is to provide clients with dignified, compassionate, professional care in a family environment for the

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Look for the big red chair at Coral Isle Church located next to Coral Shores High School.

duration of their needs. The organization is a non-profit agency that serves adult clients within Monroe

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