

# ARTIST OF THE MONTH: Master Artist Diane Whitney Smith



Schools and 45 artists from the Purple Isles Arts Guild.

Smith also volunteers at the schools and is presently working at PKS doing concrete benches covered with ceramic tiles created by the students and teachers. She is also teaching at Ocean Reef and at Jellyfish Dreams locally and on American Cruise Lines, Pearl Seas and Royal Caribbean. She is an avid traveler and has been to over 80 countries, most recently Sri Lanka.



The variety of mediums and subjects, as well as the mastery of techniques demonstrates why Diane Whitney Smith is a Master Artist.



The Coconut Telegraph is delighted to present Diane Whitney Smith as Artist of the Month. Of all the artists I've met over the last 19 years, Diane is by far the most impressive.

Smith earned her Masters of Science and Art Education in 1986 while working as a full-time art teacher in Havertown, PA. She retired as Director of the Art Department there in 2013.

Here in the Keys she is the Co-Chairman of Education for the Art Guild of the Purple Isles, an advisor on the Florida Keys Council for the Arts, and has been co-chair for the History of Diving Museum' annual "Dive into Art" show in Islamorada for 6 years. Each year celebrates a different theme and next year's will be Fabulous Florida Fish. The goal is educate the children and the public on a different issue involving the sea. The emphasis this year is sustainability. Last years theme was the Coral Reef and involved 9 Monroe County

Some quotes from the art community:

Karen Beal:

"I met Diane through the Art Guild meetings. I was new there and she was on the board and was very welcoming. I could see she was organizing all sorts of shows and programs. Her art work is innovative and colorful. She did an amazing 3D painting of the healthy vs. sick coral reef for a recent show. As you walked past it you could see the coral change. Her creative mind is a little different than that of most people.

"And the retired teacher trait runs strong in her - always educating and helping people learn and succeed.

"I was working with the Friends of the Key Largo Library to bring some adult art programming to the library and Diane suggested we write for a grant from the Florida Keys Council of the Arts. It seems she was an Ambassador for the Arts Council too. (This woman wears many hats!)

She made great suggestions and we did get the grant. Then she attended and helped with the entire series. We had 6 instructors, each with one class and she taught one of the classes as well as assisted each of the other instructors. Again, nurturing students - no ego involved. She made sure every student had fun and every class was a success. I gained a lot of respect for her that season. She had many other things going on in her busy world but made sure the library program was a big success."



Gisela Llorens:

"For the past decade, I have had the pleasure of knowing Diane Whitney Smith, an incredibly talented and creative artist who shares her talents selflessly with the community. As a fellow board member of the Art Guild of the Purple Isles, I have had the opportunity to work closely with Diane and witness firsthand her dedication and passion for the arts.

"Diane's role as Chair of the Education Committee has been pivotal in

fostering a love for art among students in the Monroe County School System. Each year, she brings themed artwork from students and Art Guild artists to the History of Diving Museum "Dive into Art" event, a unique art show that she makes possible through her hard work and dedication.

"In January 2025, we eagerly anticipate the "Dive into Art: FIN-tastic Fish of Florida" Art Show at the History of Diving Museum. This year's focus will be on the Commercial and Recreational Fishing Industry,

aiming to educate students and the public about the importance of regulations and restrictions in restoring and sustaining our food supply. Diane's efforts in organizing and leading this event highlight her commitment to both education and the arts, making a lasting impact on our community.

"Diane Whitney Smith is more than an artist; she is a beacon of creativity and inspiration, continuously enriching our lives through her selfless contributions and unwavering dedication to the arts."

