

Soka's 'Votive' and '100 Women' exhibits offer art that seeks to illuminate and inspire

By BETH FHANER FEB 01, 2018 | 5:50 PM



A guest looks at the ink illustration of Phoolan Devi, by artist Red, at the "100 Woman and More" exhibit's opening night in Founders Hall Art Gallery at Soka University in Aliso Viejo. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

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Art enthusiasts have an opportunity to view two disparate, yet equally compelling exhibits currently on display at Soka University's Founders Hall Art Gallery.

The "Winter Art Gallery Exhibit," set within the university's Aliso Viejo campus, will run through May 7 and feature the works of artists Frank Galuszka and Tracy Sagalow, known as Red.

'Votive: Art of Frank Galuszka'

The South County gallery's first floor showcases the iridescent colors and compositions of "Votive: Art of Frank Galuszka."

Curated by Arie Galles, Soka University professor emeritus of painting and drawing, the "Votive" exhibit has been described by Galles as a "consecrated, voluntary vow of gratitude and devotion."

Working in acrylic and oil, and covering a range of emotion and expression, Galuszka, a classically trained artist, often incorporates mythological and biblical sources into his works featuring contemporary figures and settings.

The creation of "Votive" began when Galles traveled over the summer to Santa Cruz, where Galuszka has taught painting at UC Santa Cruz since 1995.

Galles selected the show's pieces from hundreds of paintings over a period of two days.

"My favorite thing about this exhibition is the intersection of [Galles'] imagination with my own in assembling this retrospective body of work," said Galuszka during an opening reception held Jan. 25. "His selection created juxtapositions that surprised me, and informed me about my own work so that I saw things in it I would not have seen otherwise."

From plein air paintings at Lake Como and depictions of a young woman in "Advice" (2016) to the figures shown in "Three Philosophers," Galuszka's paintings offer evocative impressions of various locations and individuals. "Inga," the exhibit's centerpiece, vibrates with color, pattern and subject matter.

"I try to give each painting a unique identity," said Galuszka. "I try to give each painting a color identity. 'Inga' is about a place and about a person in this place. The figure comes from an earlier painting of mine in which this same figure is dressed in indigo.

"I like that painting can reach into unknown and unseen places," Galuszka said. "I like that painting defends the unknown — that it makes visible the unseen, that it can align the unseen with the seen."



Artists Red, left, and Frank Galuszka chat during opening night of "100 Women and More" and "Votive" at Founders Hall Art Gallery at Soka University of America. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

The exhibit "100 Women and More" by Red, a Manhattan-based artist, is featured in the gallery's second floor space.

The series features 100 portraits of influential women throughout history, from 1500 B.C.E. to today, who have shaped the world and helped change it.

Using ink on wood, Red illustrates each woman on a 5-by-7-inch wooden oval that's accompanied by an identifying card with a short biography.

Five years in the making, Red's series was inspired after she experienced an incident of gender discrimination in the workplace in 2012.

Feeling helpless and powerless to change her situation, Red began researching the series and created detailed, intricate portraits.

Arranged by year of birth, the exhibit starts with Hatshepsut, a pharaoh of Egypt, and concludes with Malala Yousafzai, education activist and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate.

Along the way, viewers will find portraits of trailblazers such as Queen Elizabeth I (Red's first portrait), Amelia Earhart, Rosa Parks, Georgia O'Keeffe, Julia Child, Janis Joplin, Billie Jean King, Hillary Clinton and Michelle Obama, to name a few.

"The series never features the same 100 women twice, and the show is always growing," said Red, who has completed 168 portraits and hopes to get to 1,000.

Viewers also have an opportunity to add names of women to the collection, which Red hopes will not only deepen the viewer's connection to the exhibit, but allow them to think about inspiring women in their own lives.

Revealing that there was something "mystic" about how her series came about, Red explained that everything unfolded with the timing of the 2017 Women's March and that female empowerment movement.

If You Go

What: The Winter Art Gallery Exhibit

When: Till May 7; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays

Where: Soka University of America, Founders Hall Art Gallery, One University Drive, Aliso Viejo

Cost: Admission is free

Information: (949) 480-4000 or soka.edu.

Beth Fhaner is a contributor to Times Community News.



Guests greet artist Red third from left, during her "100 Woman and More" exhibit's opening night at Soka University in Aliso Viejo. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

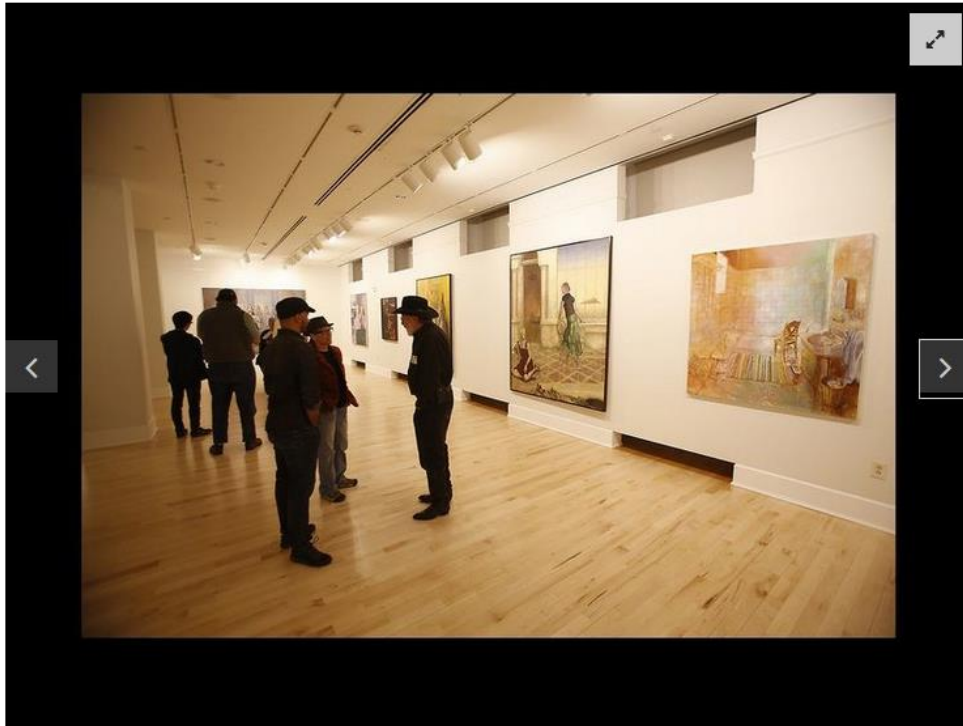
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Artist Frank Galuszka stands in front his panel "Inga" during Votive show on opening night at Founders Hall Art Gallery at Soka University. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

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Guests stand amongst the art panels by artist Frank Galuszka on opening night of the Votive show at Founders Hall Art Gallery at Soka University. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

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Artist Red, center, greets a guest during her "100 Women and More" exhibit's opening night at Soka University. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

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A guest reads about the women depicted in ink illustrations by artist Red in her "100 Women and More" exhibit at Soka University. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

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"Inga," by artist Frank Galuszka, is part of his "Votive" exhibit at Soka University. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

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An ink illustration on wood oval depicting Christine Jorgensen is part of artist Red's "100 Women and More" exhibit at Founders Hall Art Gallery at Soka University. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)



A guest ponders the wooden oval illustrations by artist Red in her "100 Women and More" exhibit at Soka University. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

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Artist Red talks about her work in front of panels by artist Frank Galuszka. Red's "100 Women and More" and Galuszka's "Votive" exhibits are at Founders Hall Art Gallery at Soka University in Aliso Viejo. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

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