

Native guest curators set to shine at ART123

Written by By Dee Velasco For the Sun
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Diné artists ready to wow the crowd with their unique form of art

Gallup is known as the “Indian Capital of the World” in part for the city’s numerous galleries showcasing art in all manner of mediums that depict many aspects of Native American culture.

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One local artisan hub is the ART123 Gallery at 123 W. Coal Ave. Executive Director Rose Eason plays a key role in cultivating the local artist scene, highlighting a mix of Native and non-Native artists and works.

In a Jan. 6 press release, Eason announced that there are two upcoming Social Justice Guest Curators scheduled for the gallery in May and June.

Guest curators submitted their proposals for exhibits that were then selected by a committee. Two creators, Delbert Anderson and Natalya 'Tasha' Nez were chosen.

Both Nez and Anderson are set to create shows of local art that address a locally relevant social justice issue, according to the press release.

THE GALLERY'S WORK

ART123 Gallery aims to showcase the residents of an area by depicting issues and topics through art displays. The work is done with a grant, and proposals for grants are submitted every other year.

Eason said these shows do more than just showcasing artisans, they can also provide enough exposure for local artists that they can be launched into greater opportunities.

"Some [artisans] have even skyrocketed their careers as a result of this, blowing up nationally and beyond," Eason said.

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ART123 Gallery hosts a new exhibit every month to support local artists. Eason stated the different activities that are offered each month offer an important platform for the Native American and local talent the gallery has, such as Nez and Anderson.

Nez, a Diné mixed media artist, will install a portrait series that recognize the achievements and contributions on individual Native artists to Gallup's economy and community in May.

"Natalya will be doing portraits and that will be typical to communicate their own message," Eason said. "Delbert will be doing a show which will be very interesting and a 'not-show.'"

THE POWER OF MUSIC

Anderson, a 37-year-old Diné from Kirtland, New Mexico, is a trumpet artist, educator, and composer. He said he's excited to be given the chance to spread his message among the local youth with his unique display of Native American music that steps out of the traditional native music genre.

"When it comes to Native American music, it's typical to think of the 'traditional drum and flute music' that seems to project Native American music, but we also excel in different genres. Jazz, blues, heavy metal, and others that the world needs to know about and experience," Anderson said.

Anderson will turn ART123 into an authentic record store, which actual music from about 12 local bands during his time at the gallery in June. He said he wants to use music as therapy for a culture that is bombarded by high rises in drug use, suicide, and violence on and off the reservation.

"Music can heal, and by creating the feel of an authentic record store, I hope to do that and step

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away from the schism of ‘traditional native music,’” Anderson said.

Anderson said onlookers will also be treated to live performances from the bands as they walk through the exhibit.

For more information contact Rose Eason at 505-488-2136 or email her at executivedirector@galluparts.org or reach out on Facebook@ART123Gallery.

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