

Artist Patrick Gaughan to be featured at HeART of Pinellas Festival

By [Piper Castillo](#), Times Staff Writer

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Patrick Gaughan warned his cat, Groucho, that he might end up in the painting, and he did.

Art in full bloom

At the Largo Community Center on Friday and Saturday, community artists and floral designers bring art and nature together in the Art and Florist Competition.

"Participants pick numbers out of a hat, and they're assigned paintings. They create a floral design to match the painting," said Craig Dolan, coordinator of the event.

There will be two floral demonstrations with Muriel Scribner, at 1 p.m. both Friday and Saturday. Patrick Gaughan will discuss his art at 2 p.m. Saturday.

The show is free, however donations will benefit the Florida Sheriff Youth Ranch.

Patrick Gaughan, a retired Navy man, likes to say he's out of the box. He throws and carves. He molds and paints. When he's finished, he gives it to the children.

"I love the kids, and through my art, I hope I let them know that if I can do this, they can do it," he said.

Gaughan will be the featured artist Saturday during the HeART of Pinellas Festival's Art and Floral Competition in the Largo Community Center. He will attend the event with six students who are part of his volunteer art program through the Florida Youth Ranch in Safety Harbor.

Gaughan, an abstract impressionist, is partially color blind. He's the first to point out that it didn't stop him from serving as a hospital corpsman aboard the USS *Newport News*, raising a family or running the financial planning company he used to own. So why would it stop him from his art?

"I tell people it adds to my work, and, because I don't have formal art training, I can stay out of the box and be free to do different things," he said.

His volunteer work, which includes statewide trips to the four locations of the Youth Ranch as well as providing art materials to the children, is made possible through a family project, the Gen. Robert Gaughan Foundation.

"Years ago, my Uncle Bob asked me to make sure he and my aunt were cared for until the end of their lives," Gaughan said. "When he died, through his will, I received money, and at his request, started the foundation. He wanted me to be able to give my art back to the world."

The foundation is headquartered at Gaughan's house in Seminole. It's a place, albeit a typical Florida block-style home, where two worlds intersect.

At the front door, a tiny gold sign welcomes you to the "Home and Art Studio of Patrick J. Gaughan, Artist."

Once inside, you see sculptures made of marble and dozens of paintings, some created by pouring acrylic and oil, others created with Saran Wrap and sand. But you also see pots, pans and a dishwasher.

In a bedroom, you study an oversized painting dubbed Lady on Madeira Beach. You also peek at a closet filled with shoes and suits.

In the guest room with a queen-size bed, you admire a painting of an ice skater.

"It's Nancy Kerrigan," Gaughan said, naming the former Olympic figure skater who was injured in an attack engineered by the husband of a rival skater, Tonya Harding. "See where her leg is injured?"

The artist points to a blotch of violet.

"I get inspired sometimes by current events, and I did this right after her attack."

Out back, inside a gazebo, Groucho, Gaughan's work in progress rests on a stand.

"It's named for Groucho my cat. He came out and tried to climb on me while I was painting" Gaughan said. "I told him he was going to wind up in the painting if he wasn't careful, and, he did."

Gaughan travels several times a month to visit with the Florida Youth Ranch kids.

By using paints and brushes, he hopes to encourage the children, many from broken homes.

"I don't know anything about the background of the kids," he said. "I just go, meet them and tell them, 'We're here to be artists together.' "

The kids adore him with his swiftness as an artist, according to Don Meek, donor relations officer of the Florida Sheriff Youth Ranches Inc.

"They also love his dry sense of humor," Meek said. "Patrick captures the kids' attention and his patience goes so far.

"He works so hard and in return the kids are just crazy for him. We're all looking forward to coming out to the event in Largo."

Strokes of inspiration and blossoms of design

By LaRita Jacobs, Times Staff Writer
Published February 20, 2008

A group of artists and floral designers will give the phrase "life imitates art" a new twist at the annual Largo Festival of Arts this weekend. Along with the usual paintings and floral arrangements, there will be a third category called PIFD.

"It is unusual. It means Painting Inspired Floral Design," said Warren Ankerberg, the community center's director. "One month before the festival, interested floral designers are randomly assigned a painting from the Largo Art Association display. They take a photo of the painting and then they create a floral design to complement it."

Judges will observe the floral arrangement and painting together to determine winners. Both the winning designer and the artist will receive a cash reward.

"We've done this in the past and it has become popular," Ankerberg said. "We have more entries this year than we expected."

The festival, held Friday and Saturday, will feature an art gallery displaying about 60 paintings using a variety of media. There will also be about 25 floral arrangements representing both classic and Ikebana (Japanese) designs.

The PIFD group is expected to add 15 more displays.

Speakers, demonstrations, art-related vendors and food concessions are also planned for the two-day event.

A local celebrity artist, Patrick Gaughan, will demonstrate different painting techniques at 1 p.m. both days, Ankerberg said. Gaughan does palette painting, sand painting and pour painting.

Gaughan's most famous painting, The Leopard, is owned by a private collector, but it will be on display at the festival.

Gaughan, a Seminole resident, has also donated six of his paintings for a silent auction. Ankerberg said the paintings are valued at \$300 each and the proceeds will be used to support programs at the community center.

The event is free and open to the public.

"We have talent here you would not believe, and too often it is not recognized," Ankerberg said. "We created this show to give back to the creative people in our community."

If you go

What: The 3rd annual Largo Festival of Arts

When: Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Where: Largo Community Center, 65 4th St.

Admission: Free

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