

I MADONNARI Celebrates 30 Years!

By **Jeanette Casillas** / Voice

VIBRANT COLORS AND STRIKING IMAGES against dark asphalt will capture imaginations during the 30th Annual *I Madonnari Italian Street Painting Festival* taking place from 10am to 6pm on Saturday, May 28th through Monday the 30th at the Santa Barbara Mission.

"It is hard for me to believe it has been 30 years since I created and produced the first festival with our Children's Creative Project (CCP) Board of Directors," shared Kathy Koury, CCP Executive Director. "Over the years, it has become a street painting family of artists who enjoy each other's company and who enjoy and admire each other's street paintings."

The Festival, presented by CCP, a nonprofit arts education program of the Santa Barbara County Education Office, continues to grow and is being replicated in more than 100 cities throughout the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.

"I am grateful for the support of the Santa Barbara Mission for allowing us to present the festival at their beautiful historic landmark and I am beyond grateful for Superintendent William Cironé's support. Due to his support, both our arts education programs and the festival have been able to grow," Koury explained.

During Memorial Day weekend and with the public watching, 300 local artists will transform 150 street-painting squares into elaborate compositions using chalk pastels in an array of colors. The spaces range in size from 4-by-6 feet to 12-by-12 feet, each one bearing the name of its sponsor — a business, organization, family, or individual.

In addition to this year's featured artist, Cecelia Linayao, seven long-time *I Madonnari* artists, including Tracy Lee Stum, Sharyn Chan, Ann Hefferman, Lisa Jones, Jennifer LeMay, Jay Schwartz, and Laura Wilkinson, will collaborate to create a 24-by-30 foot street painting. Tracy Lee Stum will debut her book *The Art of Chalk* with daily book signings from 2 to 3pm. Rod Tryon will create a special mirror anamorphosis, with a cylindrical mirror placed in the center of the street painting to transform a flat distorted drawing into a reflected three-dimensional image with normal proportions.

Children can also get their hands dirty and create a street painting of their own in the children's area located at the west side of the Mission inside a private parking area. Some 600 Kids' Squares are available. When completed,



Photo by Vito-Bella Photography

they will form a 40-by-60-foot patchwork of colorful paintings. Throughout the three-day event, the 2-by-2-foot Kids' Squares can be purchased for \$12, which includes a box of chalk.

During the festival, participants can enjoy live music and an Italian Market on the Mission

lawn. The Italian Market will offer authentic Italian cuisine produced by the CCP Board of Directors and managed by Board member Bryan Kerner.

"The CCP Board of Directors and I have continued to work to improve the festival year after year," Koury related. "I am grateful for all of the wonderful and talented artists who share their street paintings with us and I enjoy seeing how their work has evolved."

Festival proceeds enable the CCP to sponsor fine-arts programs conducted by professional artists during school hours for

50,000 children in county public schools as well as support annual performance events and other activities.

A ceremony at noon on Monday, May 30th, on the Mission steps will introduce and thank the major festival sponsors and Linayao as her street painting is completed.

This year's festival is sponsored in part by The Berry Man, Loreto Plaza Shopping Center, Yardi, Daniel and Mandy Hochman, and Bella Vista Designs.

For more info visit www.imadonnarifestival.com



I Madonnari Featured Artist: **Cecelia Linayao**

SOON TO BE SURROUNDED BY HER SECOND FAMILY, Cecelia Linayao will also be in the spotlight as Memorial Day weekend reveals the creativity of Madonnari (street painters). Linayao is the year's featured artist and will work on a large swath at the base of the mission steps.

An award-winning mixed media painter, Linayao is from San Diego and has been participating in the Santa Barbara festival for the last ten years.

"It is an incredible honor to be chosen as this year's featured artist, especially on its 30th Anniversary," shared Linayao. "What I enjoy most about taking part in the festival is the satisfaction that I am contributing to and continuing this wonderful tradition of bringing art to people."

This year, Linayao plans to celebrate the Festival's Anniversary with a classic image of the Madonna, for which Madonnari (street painters) are named, and the Santa Barbara Mission.

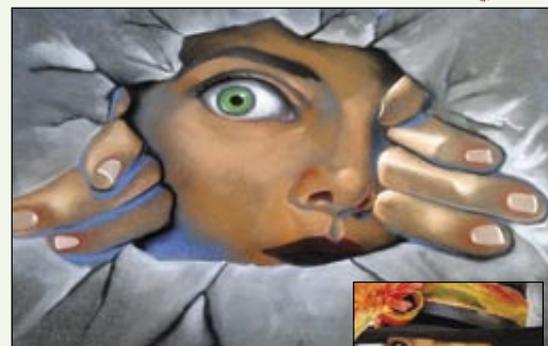
"Street painting is an incredible art form. I fell in love with it immediately!" she exclaimed.

Linayao, on her own and in teams, has participated in many festivals across the U.S. and around the world from China to Italy. She was part of a team that created the World's Largest Chalk Drawing (the size of an airfield) and is in the *Guinness Book of World Records*.

Despite the physical challenges that come along with the art form, Linayao enjoys "everything about it — the large size, the time constraint, the audience watching. It is also temporary art — it will be washed away. Staying in the moment, working hard, enjoying the experience, learning from it and then... letting go," she explained.

From creating art in her studio to teaching art, Linayao enjoys the many aspects of her life as a full time artist. She is a muralist with The Art Miles Mural Project®, a teaching artist with ArtReach®, and an Artist-in-Residence with STEAM Magnet Valencia Park Elementary in San Diego. Recently, one of her murals on canvas featuring the Pope and Vista Catholic School students won a MY HERO® Award.

"From the beginning, marks on paper struck me as magic," she recalled. "That magical process has led me from crayons to oils, acrylics, pastels (chalk), and mixed media. Being an artist fills me with accomplishment and integrity; it has become my language for translating inner vision to outer reality."



Street painting by **Cecelia Linayao**



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