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May 31, 2008

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**Pop Artist Sonya Paz Stays Busy**

By Cynthia Cheng

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With her paintbrush, local pop artist Sonya Paz breathes new life into common objects, such as wine glasses, flowers and guitars. Paying a tribute to Picasso, she also paints cats and dogs from a cubist perspective. Her bright and cheery paintings exude a whimsical energy with their fun, vibrant shapes and bold colors.

For Paz, the road to becoming an established artist required perseverance. Although Paz had always painted as a child, she didn't decide to pursue art professionally until the mid-1990s.

"When I started painting again in '96 I was still working in high tech. I was just getting my work out to local coffee houses. I picked up the phone and contacted restaurants that may or may not do artist rotations every month," Paz says. "I started selling art on eBay and that got the inventory flowing. When I decided to go full-time in 2002, it was an easy transition because I already built a customer base. Then I started to do more exhibits and wine festivals."

Today Paz manages two venues- a gallery in Santa Clara and her Pop Art Shop based in Campbell. She has also been busy with some exciting projects. In February, Paz participated in the Academy Awards' gifting area to present watches and mugs displaying her art to members of the entertainment industry, some of which included names like William Shatner and Cheech Marin. According to Paz, Cheech Marin took one of her watches and wore it out when he was with his Hollywood friends, George and Ann Lopez. Ann Lopez admired the art on the watch so much that she invited Paz to be the featured artist for the National Kidney Foundation of Southern California's annual gala on May 18<sup>th</sup>, a fundraising event hosted by the Lopezes and Samuel L. Jackson.

They wanted to support the camp for the Children's Kidney Foundation-it's a place where kids can go have all the fun a child should have at a camp but with resources where the children could also go do their dialysis," says Paz of the gala's fundraising efforts. "The painting I donated for the auction was called Mariposa-Optimistic Flight. It was auctioned off for \$3750. I'm glad we were able to add to their fundraising." Right now, Paz is preparing for another gala. At the end of the month, she will attend the Gentry Magazine Gala in Palo Alto as the event's featured artist. "We're going to have a lounge with just my art work," Paz says.

In spite of all her engagements, Paz admits that painting still gives her the most comfort. "When I do get to paint, it's quite nice," Paz says. "It's usually later in the evening when things have calmed down. When the whole day is behind



**Samuel L. Jackson with Sonya Paz**



**Mariposa - Optimistic Flight by Sonya Paz 36" x 36" (1 3/8" core) Gallery Wrapped Canvas Original Painting on Canvas**

**Painting description: An inspiring artwork that conveys life, passion, survival and optimism. The Mariposa (Butterfly) in flight travelling toward the sun, source of light and life. There is a journey of optimism and hope,**

me, I can focus on creating. Recently, I started doing work with high-heeled shoes. They're from a series called is-shoes. You keep your issues, and I'd take my red shoes."

Paz's shoes would certainly be a good place to be in now.

**ascending over the children's camp, mountains and camphouse in the background. The wings of the mariposa are wide and bold, almost hugging the bottom two hindwings are a subtle kidney shape, fluttering.**

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