

THE RIVERTOWNS Enterprise

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Hastings-on-Hudson

Happenings

All submissions are due by tomorrow (Oct. 4) at 4 p.m. for the **historical society's first photo contest**, open to residents and non-residents of all ages and levels of experience. The theme, "Picturing Hastings," will help the historical society update its photo archive with recent photos of Hastings. For rules and details, visit hastingshistorical.org, call 478-2249 or e-mail hhsccottage@gmail.com.

The Hastings Village Arts Commission hosts an **opening reception** on Sunday, Oct. 5, 4-6 p.m., at village hall, 7 Maple Ave., for "Mountains" by Gordon Fearey of Irvington. His exhibit features paintings, watercolors, drawings, and sculptures in the village hall gallery and two large sculptures outdoors in the public library park. His works will be on display through Nov. 14. Gallery hours: Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

The **architectural review board** meets Monday, Oct. 6, 8 p.m. in village hall.

A colorful **exhibition of paintings** by Constanza Mallol, a village resident with a studio in Dobbs Ferry, opens at the Station Café, 134 Southside Ave., on Oct. 6 and will be on display through Nov. 8. Opening reception on Saturday, Oct. 11, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Mallol

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do this kind of work you really want your skill to take you through your vision, and at some points you say, 'Did it do it or not?' And sometimes it doesn't, and sometimes you're happy with what you get."

The public can draw their own conclusions when a month-long exhibit of Mallol's work opens this Monday, Oct. 6, at the Hastings Station Café.

Mallol credits her affinity for art and bright color to her time growing up in Chile and Mexico. She was born in Chile, and in 1973, at age 7, was exiled to Mexico with her family during a military coup against the government, for which Mallol's father worked. She moved back to Chile after 13



TIM LAMORTE/RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE

Constanza Mallol at her studio in Dobbs Ferry.

Vital signs spark a painter's imagination

By Julian Caldwell

Hastings resident Constanza Mallol's nature-inspired oil paintings focus on the use of lively, bright colors and light, which make her art jump out at you.

"I'm after life, the pursuit of life," said Mallol, 48, who is also teaches art at her studio in the former factory building at 145 Palisade Street in Dobbs Ferry. "I like something that is alive — that it's breathing, that blood is going through the veins or water is going through for nourishment, and I know it's kind of a temporary existence."

To meet Mallol's standards, her subjects have to have some sort of pulse, and

elicit an immediate response from the artist herself.

"I look at a subject and in that moment I get that feeling, I get that emotion," said Mallol, who has lived in Hastings for seven years with her husband, Andy Ratzkin. "It's the color or the way the light is hitting something and it makes me so alive. It takes you totally out of the space of ordinary and everyday things and then it stops you for a

while and you just love it."

For Mallol, experiencing that inspirational surge is exciting, but channeling that impression and translating it through a canvas is challenging.

"The process of painting is kind of an agony," she explained. "It's a little desperate at the same time that it's wonderful. If you

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years, met her husband, then moved with him to the U.S. in 1993.

Mallol fondly recalls smelling the paint in the art studio of a family friend in Chile, and her surroundings in Mexico still influence her art today.

"Of course Mexico, it's incredible all the culture they have," said Mallol, whose paintings are in the collections of the Museo de Arte Moderno Chiloé in Chile and the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies at SUNY Stony Brook. "You go into the market and you see incredible colors and embroidery and pottery."

One of her biggest influences growing up was famed Mexican artist Diego Rivera, whose murals, painted during the early 20th century, bedeck the walls of public buildings throughout Mexico. Rivera often used bright color and laborers as subjects to make political state-

ments. Mallol works from a different impulse, using an apple as an example.

"I think the most important to me about the apple is that vibration of the color, that when you see an incredible apple you can't stand it," she said. "You just have to grab it and take a bite out of it."

She also likes sunflowers, which she first painted after receiving a bouquet of them last year. One corner of Mallol's studio is now sprouting with a collection of several paintings of sunflowers, with a couple of massive ones about three or four times the size of an average bloom.

"There's something so dignifying [about sunflowers]," Mallol said. "They feel like beings, almost like a person. They have the personalities, and the colors are intense. And they follow the sun — they are really moving also. Every time I see one, they do a different thing."

Perched near the studio window in a pot is a slightly wilting sunflower that is the star of yet another canvas, which sits unfinished among the others. Mallol sometimes takes pictures of her subjects to work off of, especially when doing commissioned portraits of people, but she always needs the actual subject in front of her for at least part of the process. She says that compared to the human eye, pictures take away depth and the pop of the exuberant palette she specializes in capturing in her art.

As of last week, Mallol had not finalized the roster of paintings for her Station Café exhibit, but planned to display about a dozen of her larger pieces, including those abundant, effusive sunflowers. Her exhibit will be on view through Nov. 8. An opening reception is next Saturday, Oct. 18, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. To see her work online, visit constanzamallol.com.