

Drawing with feeling

Christa Marquez instructs students in the fine art of 'expressive ink'

By Teresa Dovalpage

Artist Christa Marquez invites art lovers to let intuition and serendipity guide them through the creative process.

Her workshop "Expressive Ink Sketchbook" will take place Saturday (April 26) from noon to 4 p.m. at Fern Hogue Mitchell Education Center in the Harwood Museum of Art, 238 Ledoux St.

Students will work with ink and water washes, brushes, ink pens and



whatever materials they choose to make a mark with. They will be provided with a sketchbook and waterproof black and white inks to take home. "They can bring their favorite waterproof black ink pen or paint brushes if they want to, but there will be plenty of

tools available," Marquez said.

This is a class for all levels and no experience is necessary.

"My workshop relies on a very intuitive process," she said. "This is all about being open to what comes to people's mind at the moment of sketching. Water and ink can be unpredictable so the results are often surprising to myself as well as the students."

There will be a demonstration of refillable technical pen use and care, and a discussion of "green" sketchbook practices.

Marquez specializes in woodcut prints, ink on paper and clayboard. She has been an artist-in-residence with the Venice Printmaking Studio in Italy and was awarded the Romanos Rizk Scholarship from The Provincetown Art Association and Museum. Her work



Courtesy image

An example of artwork by Christa Marquez.

is represented, locally, by The Taos Arts Institute Collective.

"The images that I create evolve in a process that goes from sketchbook to woodcut print," she said. "My sketchbook is where these images are born. They are expressions that come through me from the natural world around me."

She likes to invite spontaneity into her creative process and celebrates the surprises revealed by mixing ink and water.

"My graphic design background and my Mexican-American ancestry play a part in my appreciation of highly stylized, design rich, pre-Columbian art and hieroglyphs," she said. "This imagery has influenced my use of bold lines and strong positive/negative shapes."

Marquez visited Taos for the first time in 2010. She came back last October and is ready to stay for a long time.

The workshop is based on a tech-

nique that Marquez developed based on her own style. "It has its roots in experimentation," she said. "The technique is really easy to learn so it can be used to teach anybody who is interested in exploring his or her own creativity."

Students will work in the sketchbooks through stages across several pages, revisiting images to work in subtleties and design dynamics. They will be able to complete several images by the end of the class. "I like to work on four or five images at once, and go from one to another to keep my eyes fresh," Marquez said.

Inspiration can come from a variety of sources. Marquez plans to take the class to visit the current Ken Price exhibit at the Harwood to see his drawings for inspiration. Being at the Harwood, it will be equally easy to work en-plain-air-style.

"We can step out to the back door and draw inspiration from the out-



Courtesy photo

Artist-instructor Christa Marquez in Venice.

side," Marquez said. "We are not going to reproduce exactly what we see, but will capture some marks that will be used as a reference, and play with them to create a unique, personalized work of art."

Sketching can also cross the line into art therapy, Marquez said. People can use it to heal themselves and to discover their own identities in the process. "I have taught this class to PTSD survivors and they have applied these techniques to help with their healing process," she said.

Subject matter is open, so people can choose the themes and topics they want to explore. "Everyone is welcome to a fun and relaxed class," Marquez said. "You will work at your own pace and learn new skills that you can later practice and enjoy at home."

Marquez will also teach the class this summer at the Provincetown Art Association Museum School in Provincetown, Mass.

Cost of the workshop is \$50, \$40 for Harwood Alliance members. To register, call (575) 758-9826, ext. 108 or email education@harwoodmuseum.org. Payment will hold your spot.

Marquez is also planning to open an exhibition with fellow artist Kak Norton on May 3 from 4-7 p.m. at Taos Artist Collective, 106A Paseo del Pueblo Norte.