

# CREATIVITY

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Starting August 1 and running through August 30, in the venue's Main Gallery, selected works by internationally recognized Latin American artist Ramon Chirinos will be on display. Featured in the Foulds Theatre Gallery, multimedia pieces by Southwest Florida resident Andrea Gornik will be showcased. The third exhibition on display in the Members Gallery is "Snap! A Members-Only Photography Exhibition," featuring original framed works by Alliance member artists.



CHIRINOS



GORNIK

The featured artist Chirinos is no stranger to Southwest Florida and his art has been featured at the Alliance previously.

"Ramon Chirinos has been a member of the Alliance for the Arts since 2022. In July of 2024, he exhibited in the Foulds Theater Gallery," said Alliance for the Arts Gallery Manager Julio González Batista. "This past April, Ramon approached me with interest in exhibiting in the Main Gallery. I got to learn about his professional artistic history, which paired with the artworks themselves, completely solidified my interest in securing him space in the Main Gallery."

The collection that will be exhibited at the Alliance in August is called "Fragment of Nature."

"It is featuring a collection of completely abstract expressionist works, inspired by the simplification of the landscape, taking advantage of its most selective aspects," Chirinos said. "My way of expressing art is through the abstract expressionist landscape, where I use new codes of modern art, where the figures are painted from my own imagination."

Batista believes viewers will be captivated by the dynamics of Chirinos' artwork first and foremost.

"But once they begin to sit with each piece, they'll be able to pick up on the patterns he so delicately focuses on," Batista said. "In his work, viewers will find fragmented aspects of the real world hidden in expressive strokes, eliciting the viewer to search for something solid to recognize."

With the varying pieces in Chirinos exhibit, Fragment of Nature Part 043 stands out the most to Batista.

"There's so much energy radiating from what seems to be one single source," he said. "The painting itself is 3 foot by 3 foot, but its composition makes it feel bigger than itself, as if the energy escapes from the confines of the canvas."

Like every visual artist, Chirinos said he feels the need to bring his work to spaces where art-loving audiences can connect with it.

"It is an honor for me that the Alliance for the Arts in Fort Myers has given me this opportunity," he added.

The August trio includes art by Andrea Gornik in the Foulds Theater Gallery titled "Curious by Nature." Gornik is a multimedia artist whose evolving body of work explores the fluid nature of creative expression. Her current exhibition features a range of subjects—from abstract forms to botanical studies and wildlife—reflecting her ongoing artistic



Rise Up, by Andrea Gornik.

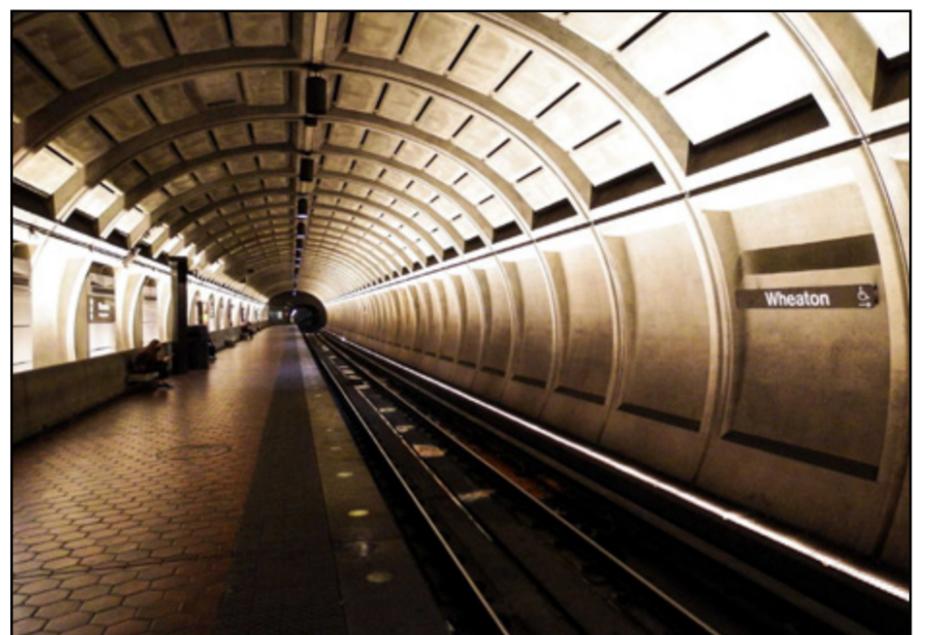
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transformation.

"Here in Southwest Florida, we see tropical, botanical artworks often, but rarely do they have the gently playful qualities found in Andrea Gornik's work," Batista said. "She explores texture in her medium in a way that invites the viewer not just to observe the work but to explore how it was made. Through 3-dimensionality, the light also interacts with each piece in a different way than it would if the artworks were entirely flat."

Primarily working in acrylic and mixed media, Gornik emphasizes texture as both a visual and tactile element. "Living in the contrast between full color and monochrome, this collection illustrates lush, blended gradients and stark textures, adorned by shadow," said Gornik. "These juxtaposing styles both explore the same undercurrent: the illusion of depth, and the quiet persistence of growth."

At its core, the work featured in this exhibition is about resilience; not the kind that demands attention, but the kind that happens quietly, inwardly, Gornik



Subway by Shell Redfern.

said. "Sometimes the boldest victories are quiet. I've been thinking about the way plants grow, always reaching toward

the light, adapting, healing, expanding without permission," she said. "What if we saw ourselves the same way? That po-



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### Transcendental.

tential—to stretch, to transform, to root deeply while still reaching upward—feels endlessly inspiring to me.”

Gornik pieces invite viewers to explore not only what is seen but what is felt, connecting to the essence of nature and imagination.

“For this exhibition, I chose to focus on Andrea’s botanical works as they would create the most cohesive display of work,” Batista said. “This collection will showcase how similar narratives play out differently simply because of the different subjects. In other words, while the artworks all play around with a similar visual narrative, the actual plants in each piece set them apart from one another.”

Batista expresses a desire for Alliance viewers to connect with Gornik’s textures and varying themes in her work.

“I hope viewers feel invited to explore the peaks and valleys as parts of the composition of each piece. In Andrea’s works, viewers are not only able to analyze the subjects being depicted but also the space that the textures occupy both within and around them,” he explained. “The overhead gallery lighting interacts with the grooves of the artworks in a way a completely flat piece wouldn’t, adding an extra aspect for the viewers to experience. This extra layer highlights both the artwork itself and the technical practices of the gallery space.”

Batista’s personal favorite piece presented in this collection is “Rise Up.” “I find that this piece exudes a sense of humility in asking the viewer to look. The leaves nearly transition into the white background that, through texture, radiates the shape of the leaves outward and beyond the edges of the artwork.”

Gornik said having her collection featured at the Alliance is deeply meaningful. “The Alliance has long been a cultural anchor in Southwest Florida, fostering creativity and community across disciplines,” she said. “To be able to show work in a space that supports experimentation, and conversation feels both validating and energizing. I’m especially grateful to contribute to a place that has been instrumental in shaping the region’s artistic landscape.”

Not a stranger to Lee County, Gornik has been involved with the North Fort Myers Arts Association (NFMAA) as well. “I’ve been fortunate to contribute to local creative momentum, including efforts with NFMAA. At the heart of my work is a desire to connect through shared experiences, the stories that images can tell, and through the communities that art helps foster,” she said. “I’m always looking to build authentic relationships with fellow artists, creatives, and anyone who feels my work resonates with them. I believe deeply in the importance of supporting and uplifting local artisans and makers, and I’m constantly inspired by the talent and generosity of the Southwest Florida arts community. This exhibit

is not just a presentation of my work—it’s an invitation to dialogue, to exchange, and to grow together.”

The third art element featured in this exhibition is on display in the Members Gallery and is titled “Snap! A Members-Only Photography Exhibition.” There is no set theme for the photographers selected to exhibit; however, one subject collection has a strong presence in the curation.

“What strikes me the most about the photographs is how wildlife is the most popular subject,” Batista said. “It doesn’t surprise me though as in my personal experience with cameras, wildlife has always been the most fascinating subject to encapsulate since you can blink and you’ll miss that moment forever and likely never see the same animal again. Capturing wildlife through photography preserves a fleeting moment forever.”

With photography, the main aspect Batista considers when selecting which pieces to place in the exhibit is the overall quality of the image. “I analyze exposure, values, resolution, and most importantly, composition,” he explained. “For an image to be chosen, it must showcase that the angle, cropping, and direction of the composition feel intentional (even if it’s not).”

For this curation, Batista said, “When making a call for a specific type of medium, it’s always fun to see what will be sent in, as I essentially expect anything. This makes the hanging process more fun, as I get to play around with the drastically different narratives and make them work together in a way they wouldn’t otherwise.”

The Alliance has a proven commitment to promoting its members’ work in general, not only photography. “You’ll find that the Members Gallery will often have the widest range of mediums, narratives, and experience levels. This gallery is often, but not exclusively, used to display artwork by students in our classes at the Alliance,” he added.

The Alliance for the Arts invites the public to an opening reception on Friday, August 1, from 5 to 7 p.m., celebrating the launch of three exciting new exhibitions on view through August 30. The reception is free and open to the public, featuring light refreshments provided by Jayne Baker. ■

### In the **KNOW**

#### Alliance for the Arts

- **Where:** 10091 McGregor Boulevard, Fort Myers
- **Exhibit Hours:** The Alliance campus and galleries are open to the public from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays.
- **More info:** 239-939-2787 or [artinlee.org](http://artinlee.org)

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