

Painter

Michelle Pier

画家 ミシェル・ピア

A Legacy of Giving

Vibrant colors, bold brush strokes, and images so vivid and alive you find yourself expecting the images on the canvas to begin moving before your eyes. This describes the artwork of Michelle Pier, whose passion for the arts and love of the natural beauty around her has enabled her to capture the vibrancy of the world, especially Guam, in her work. Michelle's love of art and a family history of giving to others led her to create a series of workshops called Creative Sessions, where people of all ages can explore their artistic side with no boundaries or expectations other than joy.

Michelle was already experienced in conducting workshops and organizing artistic events through the work of her parent company, Creative Indeed. "Creative Indeed was born in 2011, a fusion between my two businesses: Aura Art Creations, which is my artwork, and Inspired Living, which was events and workshops," Michelle explained. "Now it all happens under the name Creative Indeed. I paint and sell my original artwork, and I also host events and workshops."

The Creative Sessions workshops are held at Guma' Tasa, a small coffee shop in Mangilao by KFC, an establishment with a reputation for being supportive of local arts. The workshops are designed to give participants the opportunity to express themselves freely, rather than being constrained by a more formally structured type of art class. Michelle said "If there is a schedule

change, I update online via the website, Facebook, and other places"

The adult sessions are held on the first Saturday of each month from 9 to 11 am at Guma' Tasa, support and guidance are included in the \$30 workshop price. "I also would love to do more private Creative Sessions, for groups, organizations, businesses," said Michelle.

As a child, Michelle grew up in the close knit island community of Guam, where helping one another is a way of life so wanting to help others experience her love of art was a natural extension of her upbringing. "Many times, when I'd be painting, I'd think about how it would be fun to paint with more people. Also, I knew that not everyone had supplies, so I could offer that for a fee. At events, people would often ask if I did classes or workshops, and I felt like I could offer a supportive environment for people to try painting," she said.

Michelle was raised with a desire to help others, both parents work in fields that help people. Her mother Libby is well known on Guam as the owner the island's oldest health food store, Nuts & Grains, and a real estate agent. Her father Kenny, an avid surfer, has been a fisherman most of his life and a self employed boat captain. "Growing up here on Guam, I remember being at the beach a lot since we have a bit of a history with ocean-related activities," Michelle said, "I loved when we went



hiking or camping from time to time, too."

Her family history of helping people extends beyond her parents. Michelle's great-grandmother is one of the most celebrated educators in Guam's history. "My personal hero is my great-grandmother Agueda Johnston. I never got to meet her, but we share a birthday, and from stories and history that I hear, we are alike in some ways," said Michelle. "I admire her for her passion to do good things, her strength and conviction in the face of adversity and criticism, her kindness and acceptance of all kinds of people, and her perseverance to raise her seven kids on her own and help rebuild Guam's education system after her husband died during World War II."

Being raised in an atmosphere of independence with a desire to help others and an appreciation of Guam's natural beauty led Michelle to where she is today. "I've always loved art, writing, imagery, storytelling, crafting, anything creative. So, I'd take of opportunities that came along, such as special projects, contests, activities, etc.," she said. "I'd grown up reading stories of kids of all ages from all over the world running their own successful businesses or organizations, doing things they were passionate about, and I knew I could, too, someday. My parents run their own businesses, so I

LOCAL ARTIST



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got to experience some aspects of that process. I liked the idea of being my own boss, and creating a business around what I love."

In addition to Creative Sessions, Michelle continues to hold other events. "I do private functions from time to time, such as speaking at events, offering art demonstrations, or doing private Creative Sessions. My availability is pretty limited in this area though," said Michelle.

One of the most popular is the annual Luna Festival at Jeff's Pirates Cove. "I had the idea for the Luna Festival while I was planning my very first big event, a Mothers' Day retreat in 2009. I loved the thought of a creativity festival, showcasing people's talents throughout the creative arts industries on Guam," she said. "The name is inspired by the moon, of course, and the festival, usually held in October, has a whimsical feel. Participants and guests of all ages are encouraged to come in costume. The Luna Festival has been held for 6 consecutive years so far."

Much like her Creative Sessions, Michelle's art education has also been mostly been through free expression, with a handful of formal university classes. "I went to the University of Guam for about a year and then to the City College of San Francisco for a year. I never declared a major, but along with some general classes, I took a few classes in drawing, design, and art history," she said.

"Then I had my two boys, so I was a stay-at-home mom for a while. When I

got back to Guam in 2006, I started a small business called Fruit of the Womb, selling cloth diapers and hand-painted baby clothes. In 2008, I started painting on canvas more, and began another business, Aura Art Creations to sell my artwork," said Michelle. "I eventually held a workshop on living consciously, then had the idea for a Mothers' Day retreat, so got another business license to do events as Inspired Living. I eventually went back to the University of Guam for a semester to take a couple classes I was interested in, and to prove to myself that I could do it even though I was single with two young kids. It was hard work, I did it, but then decided I'd much rather focus on developing my business."

Michelle continues to paint and express herself through art, which can be seen on display at various places throughout Guam. "I enter exhibits whenever I can. I've exhibited in local fairs, professional events, at local business such as Pika's Café, MoSas, Guam Coffee, and more. My work is also up at the Guam Reef Hotel. I mostly paint with acrylic on stretched canvas. My style is a mix of some abstract, some scenic, a bit of impressionism, high-movement, a lot of texture and bold color contrasts, and quite often you'll see metallic paint in my pieces."

Michelle balances motherhood with painting and running her businesses, including Creative Sessions, which gives her the chance to encourage the artist in others. "People seem to enjoy the space and supplies to create. There is no pressure to create something spectacular,

only encouragement and support to enjoy themselves and grow from the process. Some participants have said it gives them accountability to make the time to create, otherwise they wouldn't do so on their own," said Michelle.

She lives in Talofofo with her two sons, who inspire her to continue marching to her own drum and in doing so, inspire others. "I am continually inspired by my love of art and passion for running my own business to provide abundance for my boys and myself, so that we can do amazing things in and for this world."

Her great-grandmother would be very proud of Michelle.

レストラン、カフェ、フィットネスジム、ホテルのロビーなど、グアムのさまざまな場所で開催されるミシェル・ピアの作品。抽象画や風景画が中心で、大きなキャンバスにアクリル絵の具を使って描かれる作品はどれも色鮮やかで力強く、小柄な彼女から放たれる無限のエネルギーを感じることができる。ここ数年で急激に名前が知られるようになり、「クリエイティブ・セッション (Creative Session)」と呼ばれるワークショップや、アーティストの素晴らしい才能や作品を披露する場として毎年10月に行われる「ルナ・フェスティバル (Luna Festival)」の主催、さらにイベントでのトークショーやデモンストレーションなど活動の幅は年々広がりを見せている。「私の原点は家族。周りにいる人を大切にしたいという、単純でありながら人としてあるべき姿を常に家族が見せてくれた。絵を描きたいと思う人がいれば場を提供し、道具を持っていなければ私の物を貸せばいい。アートに興味を持っている人をサポートし、一緒に楽しむことできればどんなに楽しいことか」。その言葉通り、彼女のワークショップでは手法に捕われず自由に作品を作ることができる。そしてそれらに彼女の経験と知識をほんの少しアドバイスするのだ。「私のワークショップではブレッシャーはまったくない。楽しみながらアート