

Cuero opens Day of the Dead exhibit

Four Texas artists showcase their various techniques

BY PAMELA BOND
VICTORIA ADVOCATE

CUERO – Skeletons smiled at guests through brightly colored paintings on Saturday at Courtyard Gallery, located at 210 N. Esplanade St. in Cuero.

The Day of the Dead art exhibit, showcasing the works of four Texas artists, opened on Monday. The gallery hosted a reception for the artists Saturday from 2 to 4 p.m., followed by a monthly acoustic jam by local musicians.

"It's not a morbid holiday," said Kerry Rhotenberry, owner of the gallery. "It's about celebrating those you know who have died. The people who really love Day of the Dead, you'll see stuff in their homes all year."

Artist Collin Welsch of Austin, a lawyer and mother of two, is one of those people. Welsch's bright paintings of skeletons doing daily activities, such as golfing or getting a haircut, were the first works guests saw when they entered the gallery.

"I started with the trees of life, which were abstract paintings," Welsch said. "I started painting in October last year, so I did a few Day of the Dead paintings because it was that time of the year, and I sold them all at the next show. Now I do Day of the Dead paintings all year long. It's fun."



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Collin Welsch looks at her paintings during the Day of the Dead artist reception at Courtyard Gallery in Cuero on Saturday.

Janine Stubbs of Cuero, a teacher at Coastal Bend College, had three paintings in the exhibit, all inspired by the Mexican painter Frida Kahlo. One painting is of Kahlo's skull and another

is a still life of a Day of the Dead altar. The third is a depiction of when Kahlo's body was about to be cremated and the heat caused her body to sit up and her hair to catch fire, Stubbs

said.

"I took one of the most famous artists of Mexico," Stubbs said. "And Day of the Dead is one of my favorite holidays for art."

Lisa Donelson Kurtz of Concrete, who works at the White Leghorn Café in Westhoff, paints on gourds that she grows herself or palm tree bark.

Most of her art depicts flowers, but she made four pieces for this exhibit.

"I've been painting all my life, but I just do it for fun. I'm not a professional," Kurtz said. "I like to use natural material. I like to do something you won't see somewhere else. Something that makes you happy when you look at it."

Rhotenberry said the fourth artist, Susie Monday of Pipe Creek, uses fabrics for her art. Besides her regular work, Monday has a few Day of the Dead altars on display.

"These aren't what you would think of as altars," Rhotenberry said. "They celebrate things that bring her deeper into spirituality."

The gallery opened one year ago and promotes art and music from those within 100 miles of Cuero. Exhibits change about every two months. Visit www.courtyardgalleryofcuero.com for more information.

Pamela Bond is a reporter for the Advocate. Contact her at 361-580-6578 or pbond@vicad.com, or comment on this story at www.VictoriaAdvocate.com.