

Many acclaimed artists calling Plainfield home

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An image of a work by Maria Mijares featured in the Netherwood Heights Neighbors' 2014 calendar.

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PLAINFIELD — Is the Queen City a mecca for artists?

Harold Spingarn isn't sure. But he knows that he and the Netherwood Heights Neighbors had little trouble finding 12 accomplished artists living in the city to feature in the nonprofit community organization's 2014 fundraising calendar.

"We were absolutely astounded at the wealth of talent that is in our city. It's amazing," Spingarn said.

The calendar features each of the artists along with a sample of their work each month. QR codes included in the calendar allow readers to use smartphone or tablet devices to see more information about the artists.

This is the seventh calendar published by the historic neighborhood homeowners group.

The Netherwood Heights, including its 100-home historic district, lies between East Seventh Street and Woodland, Leland and Watchung avenues. The Heights is part of the Netherwood section in the city's northernmost end.

Spingarn, the group's treasurer and calendar designer, said the committee working on the calendar found the artists by reaching out to the Plainfield Public Library, which displays work by some of the artists. The rest were found by word of mouth.

The collection of artists is diverse. A few were born and raised in Plainfield. Several others were born overseas.

Alonzo Adams, born in Harlem, often depicts the African-American experience in his work, which has been featured at Howard University and the Russell Senate Building in Washington, D.C., as well as the homes of Bill Cosby, Maya Angelou and former U.S. Sen. Bill Bradley.

The work of Indira Bailey, a Fulbright scholar, often presents vivid and colorful portrayal of African-American and African life.

Mel Holsten, a city resident since 1993, is known for finely detailed pen-and-ink drawings of African themes and traditions. His work has been displayed at the Jersey City Museum, Rochester Museum and Science Center, and the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry.

Art teacher Jorge Larrea was born in Quito, Ecuador, and moved to the United States in 1990. He moved to Plainfield in 2005.

Ivan K. Lo was born in I-Lan, Taiwan, and is a professional illustrator and graphic designer. He's lived in Plainfield since 2005.

Maria Mijares's realist paintings have been exhibited internationally. Her four large porcelain enamel murals are on display at the Bergenline Avenue Station Plaza in Union City, while her painting, "Across the Street," is hanging at Drumthwacket, the state governor's residence in Princeton.

Joseph Padiar is a former designer and art director for major U.S. publishing companies.

Paul Xiknawi Otzelotl Pinkman has been exhibiting work for more than 30 years and frequently lectures about social media.

Raul Poveda was born in Ecuador. His work in watercolor, acrylics, pastels and oil and tends to illustrate cultural scenes.

J. Brian Townsend is a muralist and a founder of Classical Arts Studio in Jackson.

Nancy Depew was born and raised in Plainfield and has taught and lectured on art.

Gerry Heydt has taught oil painting classes and art workshops at The Visual Art Center of New Jersey and the former Somerset Art Association.

The calendars are sold at netherwoodheights.com or by calling 908-668-0388.