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Triton's Golden Gala Celebrates Museum's 50th Anniversary

By Melissa McKenzie



It's not too often art collectors can purchase the missing pieces in their collections for a steal while helping a worthy cause, but that's exactly what happens at the Triton Museum of Art's annual gala.

For the cost of admission, guests at the museum's Golden Gala, held on May 2, dined on bites provided by Catered Too! that included wild mushroom ragout served over penne pasta and balsamic glazed lamb kabobs atop caramelized leek quinoa pilaf while perusing the walls for the perfect work of art.

Not only were there submissions by nowretired museum director George Rivera and his wife Kristen Rivera, but from artists who have recently had solo shows like Katherine Meyer, Kathryn Arnold and Holly Van Hart. A piece by Ron Dell'Aquila who won the museum's 2013 Statewide Photography Exhibition and had his own show at the Triton in 2014 "Pastel Diners: Two Children," incited a bidding war, with art collector, Ray Ashley, paying the photograph's full retail value of \$600. Likewise, an iron and concrete sculpture by Mission College instructor Lynne Todaro, "Tool Chest," also had bidders upping the ante as the retail value of the piece was \$700, but it sold for \$1,200.

Given that this year's gala was also celebrating the museum's 50th year, there were three extra special items up for auction, including a tapestry by Consuelo Jimenez-Underwood, "20042015, Forgotten Rebozo," which had a starting bid of \$10,000.

Unbeknown to most partygoers was that Jimenez-



Underwood actually donated two pieces to the event, but, thanks to an anonymous donor, one piece was purchased for \$2,000 over the initial asking price and immediately given back to the museum for its permanent collection, according to Chief Curator Preston Metcalf.

Not only were gala goers able to bid on oneofakind works of art, there were also experience items up for auction, including baskets that were related to visual arts, like a package containing the Tomorrow's Master Series book on Walter and Margaret Keane along with a copy of Big Eyes on DVD; performing arts, like tickets to SCU Presents alongside gift certificates to Kobe Japanese Restaurant, La Paloma and The Fish Market; and sports, like a package with tickets to the San Jose Earthquakes versus Los Angeles Galaxy game on June 27, Earthquakes items, Sharks Ice skating rental, signed hockey puck and gift certificate to The Counter.



The event was truly a success. With over 180 people in attendance, initial estimates are that the gala, which contained less pieces than last year's MadArt event, raised nearly \$56,000 more than \$5,500 more than last year for the museum's educational programs.

"We are grateful for everyone who came out to support us during our 50th Golden Anniversary Gala," said Executive Director Jill Meyers.

The Triton will open shows by Ron Guzman (May 8) and its 50 and Looking Forward exhibit featuring emerging artists to watch (May 16). Visit www.tritonmuseum.org for more information.

<http://hollyvanhart.com>