## Artist of the Month Carmen Sotolongo Kelley



Cuban-born Artist of the Month Carmen Sotolongo Kelley, is an award winning artist, successful businesswoman, Monroe County schoolteacher, wife, and proud mother. Her high level of Growing up money was intelligence, and survival skills

are likely the keys to her success. With only the clothes on their backs, Kelley's family fled Cuba when she was a young child. In Cuba, Kelly's father was a doctor, and her mother a teacher with a Ph.D in pedagogy, but both were stripped of their degrees when

they arrived in the states.

They had to hunt for work to support their family. It took them seven years to recreate their careers, going to school while working and raising their

scarce, but Kelley would entertain herself by drawing and creating her own paper dolls. She took every art class available to her and in college she majored in social science and art. Later, she entered the field of science focusing on oceanography.

"My art depicts a combination of my two cultures, my love for the



environment, the colors of the marine life in the coral reefs, mangroves and places I have visited," explains Kelley. "Happy, vibrant colors, the blue-greens of the waters surrounding us, the royal palms of my past, the guayaberadressed men, cigars and domino tables all mix together in my art to represent my life."

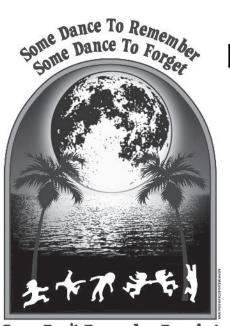
Vibrant they are! This writer is in awe of Kelley's ability to paint motion as illustrated in her paintings of women dancing (see above). If you look closely at the joyous. beautiful faces you will see they are actually self-portraits form of great art!

of Kelley.

The Coconut Telegraph visits Kelley's Key Largo Art Gallery often and also enjoys bringing out-of-town quests there. What could be a better souvenir for a visitor than a Carmen Sotolongo Kelley original art piece?

The Key Largo Art Gallery located in Central Plaza at mile marker 103.2, bayside is home to many award winning artists including: Dan Lawler, Carmen Sotolongo Kelley, Teresa Kelley, Jackie Campa, and Elena Ortega. Visiting Key Largo? Take home memories in the





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The mission of MARC is to provide clients with dignified, compassionate, professional care in a family environment for the

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duration of their needs.

The organization is a nonprofit agency that serves adult clients within Monroe

County who have developmental disabilities that

> include mental retardation (I.Q. 69 or below), cerebral palsy, spina bifida, Prader-Willi Syndrome, and traumatic brain injury sustained prior to age 18.

Please help MARC care for those who cannot care for themselves, and make a donation Coral Isle Church located next to to their thrift store or stop by and make a

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For more information about MARC services in the Upper Keys call 305-852-3282.



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