



Patricia Ruiz-Healy

Gallery owner sees San Antonio as burgeoning city for contemporary art

BY KATHLEEN PETTY

Few would buy a home after just one glance. That sort of major investment requires days, weeks or months of research. The same approach should apply to collecting art, says Patricia Ruiz-Healy, owner and director at Ruiz-Healy Art. “You have to get informed and educate yourself about the arts,” she says. “Get out of your comfort zone.”

Art Historian

The Sonora, Mexico, native grew up on a ranch as the second youngest of eight children and was always fascinated by the broader world explored in art and history. As a teenager, she moved to London for a year to learn English and discovered she could pursue a career in art without having to become a painter or sculptor. She’s spent the decades since then studying art history, meeting and

learning from artists and art dealers and trying to share her love of art with others.

San Antonio Gallery

In 2004, Ruiz-Healy transitioned from student and consultant to gallery owner with the opening of Ruiz-Healy Art in Olmos Park. At first, it operated by appointment only, but as interest in the contemporary art gallery grew, she added public hours and began exhibiting guest artists. Her collection also expanded, growing from mostly Latin American art to also include San Antonio- and Texas-based artists. “People want to collect from the local person who has that shared reality and brings that universal language to their work,” she says. This month, she’s hosting an exhibition by Johanna Calle, of Colombia, and

after that will feature three guest artists selected by local artist Hill Snyder.

Art Capital

Along with her San Antonio space, Ruiz-Healy runs an appointment-only gallery in New York City. The combination allows her to stay plugged into one of the major art capitals of the world while still being grounded in San Antonio, a budding art hub of its own. Ruiz-Healy is one of only three International Fine Print Dealers Association members in Texas but she sees interest in South Texas continuing to grow worldwide. That’s thanks in part, she says, to the International Artist-in-Residence program at Artpace, where she is a board member. For the local contemporary arts community to continue growing, Ruiz-Healy says people have to be engaged—whether by collecting art or simply viewing it. “It’s just a great way to learn different points of view,” she says. ★

FACT FILE

Age: 53

Education: B.A. University of the Incarnate Word, M.A. (art history) University of Texas at San Antonio, defending her Ph.D. thesis at the University of Texas at Austin this fall

On Display: *Trama* by Johanna Calle, through June 24, ruizhealyart.com