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An Interview with Sonya Paz on Art Expo New York

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Dianne McGhee, Sonya Paz, and Victor McGhee, at the Art Expo 2004, New York City

February 28, 2004 was an auspicious day for several ebsq artists. Several of us would be meeting for the first time. The occasion was not only to see the Art International Expo in New York City but to support one of our dearest members, Ms Sonya Paz, who was making her debut as an exhibitor at the Expo.

Though there were several other ebsq artists that had met up with Sonya throughout that week, my wife Dianne and I had the opportunity to meet Vicky Knowles, Robyn Henzel, Diana Mae Potts and Diane and Jason Casey. Afterwards, I caught up with Sonya to get some details about her experience....

When you decided to show your work at the Art Expo, what specific things were you trying to accomplish?

I decided that I needed to take the exhibitions status to the next level. I have been exhibiting locally in the Northern California area and surrounding areas for the past 3 years and had an established client base. New York seemed to be the best direction for me to get more international and nationwide exposure. There were many pieces that I had been working on and I felt ready to introduce them to the galleries and representatives.

The amount of preparation that was necessary must have been tremendous. What were some of the biggest hurdles and how did you overcome them?

It really took months to plan, prepare, organize, create and achieve everything up until the day we left for New York City. I believe the biggest challenge was that I have never had to "crate" my artwork for across country transport before. This needed to be transported 4-5 weeks before the show. This was definitely a learning experience, but one of the best especially for future exhibits and showings. I wanted to introduce many new works for the show, pieces that I have been wanting to create but was too busy to set the time aside to create. These were very passionate and personal pieces.

Did the Art Expo staff help you in any way by giving you some instruction and guidelines to follow?

The Expo staff was awesome. They have a great number of guidelines that need to be met, they provide you with huge resources of information, from shipping to hotels. They provide this info in

advance so that the exhibitors are prepared. They have a large staff of folks that are available on site and ready to assist at the show. The show takes months of preparation.

Since your experience was a success, will you be attending Art Expo International 2005?

Absolutely. We are indeed planning on returning next year for 2005. We have learned so much about the show, the exhibitors, the attending audience and the general public. We are confirmed to attend with a 2-3 booth option for 2005.

Is there anything that you would do differently next time?

For our 2004 exhibition we brought 90% original artwork, which was awesome, as there were many gallery representatives and general public that loved seeing so much "original" art work. Most exhibitors had few originals and mostly giclees and other reproductions. I think for next year we will bring a larger assortment of originals, giclees and other Sonya Paz Fine Art works. We will also be returning with a larger booth.

Were any of the other exhibitors helpful to you as a new exhibitor?

There was a large scope of exhibitors that were showing at this event. There were many exhibitors that we met (in our booth area of the expo) that were really wonderful and friendly, many of these exhibitors were also new to Art Expo International too. There are the established galleries, publishers, merchandisers that are standard fixtures at the show some that we spoke to were kind enough to share some advice or experience. Although, did not have a lot of opportunity to visit with them because the show was really busy and I rarely ever got to leave our booth. All in all they were kind.

You had some of your customers and EBSQ members meet at your booth. Who did you meet there?

Yes, I had notified many of my customers from the tri-state area about my attendance at Art Expo International and sent them complimentary passes to the show. Many of them came and we met up. It was wonderful to finally meet "face to face" with these folks who I had met only on-line. When there was an opportunity, we had photos taken with these customers.

We also arranged for EBSQ Artists to meet at my booth on Saturday, February 28th in the afternoon. The folks we were able to meet up with were: Victor and Dianne McGhee, Robyn Henzel, David Hughes Brown, Diana Mae Potts, Vicky Knowles, Eden Folwell, PJ Gorman, and Diane Casey. It was so great to meet up with artists from the group and finally get to have a face to face chat!