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'PALM TREE PENCIL' MAKES A COMEBACK

REFURBISHED McINTOSH SCULPTURE SHOWS AT STUDIOS



■ *Left: Sculptor Craig Gray will be working and restoring the "Palm Tree Pencil" at the Studios of Key West. HAYS BLINCKMANN/Keys Weekly. Right: Jon McIntosh's original '#2 Tree' at Ft. Zachary during 2011 Sculpture Key West, Photo courtesy Florida Keys Council of the Arts.*

The beauty of an artist's life is they live on long after they are gone. Jon "Tosh" McIntosh passed away in March 2018 but will again shine a bright light on Key West with his soon-to-be-refurbished sculpture "#2 Tree." Thanks to the efforts of Craig Gray, local artist/sculptor, and Jed Dodds, director of the Studios of Key West, the sculpture has been saved from oblivion and will be on view Thursday, Aug. 15 from 6 to 8 p.m. at The Studios of Key West. Gray will be talking to patrons and showing how the sculpture will be restored on site.

Created for Sculpture in Key West in 2011, the piece was photographed and hailed by many as being innovative, funny and a valid symbol of Key West. McIntosh, using steel and wood, created a giant pencil that appears to be a palm tree or a palm tree that seems to be a pencil. Referred to as "Palm Tree Pencil," it was a cheeky commentary on McIntosh's creativity and life as an illustrator/painter/artist in the tropics. Fifteen feet high, the sculpture speaks to many for its nod and reverence for arts in the Keys. Also, "#2 Tree" served as the basis for The Studios of Key West's first logo.

Last spring Gray, a friend of McIntosh's, noticed the sculpture decaying outside the former Lucky Street Gallery on Greene Street and went to Dodds to concoct a plan to save the piece.

Dodds has been working

closely with Liz Young, executive director of the Florida Keys Council of the Arts, to secure the sculpture's best future.

"I was thinking about applying for an arts council grant and this fit perfectly," said Dodds. He hails it as "a tribute to a major figure in the firmament of Key West's cultural history."

Dodds contacted McIntosh's family, who were thrilled at the community's commitment to his memory. Securing the grant for materials and volunteering man hours, Gray was able to start repair of the termite damage inside the sculpture. The goal is that "#2 Tree" will eventually find a permanent public home in Key West.

Gray will be making adjustments to the piece to secure its longevity. "It's in the spirit of Tosh. He always wanted more money for public arts. What better way to remember him than keep the sculpture public?"

Also on exhibit will be a selection of small-format watercolors by students of Susan Sugar's Summer Solstice workshop, including works by Elizabeth Chamberlain, Cricket Desmarais, Natalia Duke, Elizabeth Hanes, Frances Lee Larkin, Kathy Letarte, Colleen McIntyre, Marcy Moyer, Morgan Ridler, Robin Robinson, Susan Seroskie, Emma Starr and Rita Troxel. Both shows will remain on view at The Studios of Key West, 533 Eaton Street, through Sept. For more information, visit www.tskw.org.