



Ana Villaronga-Roman serves as executive director and curator for Katy's newest cultural hot spot, Katy Contemporary Arts Museum

# One Woman's Dream

Art lover Ana Villaronga-Roman harnesses the power of the community to open Katy Contemporary Arts Museum

*Written by Cherri Northcutt | Photography by Fatima Donaldson Photography*

Occupying the historical structure formerly known as Ray Woods Lumber and Supply Company that was originally constructed in 1953, the Katy Contemporary Arts Museum (KCAM) has opened its doors, welcoming art admirers of all ages.

## The Power of a Dream

What began as the dream of Ana Villaronga-Roman, who now serves as executive director and curator for KCAM, finally came to fruition. "It started two and a half years ago with the Katy Cultural Council," she says. "We brainstormed ways to bring a cultural district to Katy."

Villaronga-Roman developed the idea for an arts alliance to represent all of Katy's non-profit art organizations. Thus the

Katy Culture and Arts Alliance (KCAA) was born, which is a combination of area businesses, individuals, and non-profit art organizations. "We held monthly mixers at different venues around town where people could meet and talk to the artists," Villaronga-Roman remembers.

The first mixer had 60 people in attendance. That number grew to 250 people in only a few months. It became apparent that there was a need for a permanent exhibition space.

## What Is Contemporary Art?

These days, contemporary art refers to anything created post World War II. Most people associate the term "contemporary art" with abstract or geometric pieces; however Villaronga-Roman explains that it includes many mediums such

as sculpture, paintings, ceramics, or photography. "Contemporary can mean so much," Villaronga-Roman says. "It used to mean modern art, but then that became a movement."

KCAM exhibits will change periodically throughout the year. Currently on display through January 7 are paintings by nationally renowned artist Ibsen Espada and up-and-coming artist John Irizarry. "We're looking for pieces with cultural significance for our permanent collection," Villaronga-Roman explains. The museum's signature piece, *Window to Heart Mountain* by Pia Trotter, was the first purchase for the KCAM permanent collection.

### School of Photography

Housed within the museum, the KCAM School of Photography is directed by Fatima Donaldson. Classes are offered for anyone from beginners to professional photographers. "My mission is to have a pulse on what the community wants to learn, bring in the best instructors, and provide strong programs that build on individual skills," says Donaldson.

Students will learn a variety of subjects including composition, editing, post production, output, and presentation. "No specific camera is needed, though some workshops are geared toward point and shoot or DSLR," Donaldson adds. The school is even planning a photography workshop trip to Africa this spring for the more adventurous photographers.

### Mix and Mingle

As a resident of Katy for almost 20 years, Villaronga-Roman has noticed Katyites' desire for getting out and about. "Whether it's to the movies, out to eat, or going to a football game, we like to go out," she notes.

With that in mind, KCAM will host a variety of social events. There will be opening receptions for each new exhibit and closing receptions before an exhibit is taken down. "We have free monthly Art HipStory talks to show people that learning about art can be fun," Villaronga-Roman says.

If wine and cheese is your thing, come to the K Scene, held every third Wednesday of the month. A \$10 cover charge includes two glasses of wine, refreshments, and live music. "It's a great way to meet people and network," Villaronga-Roman adds.

### The Dream Continues

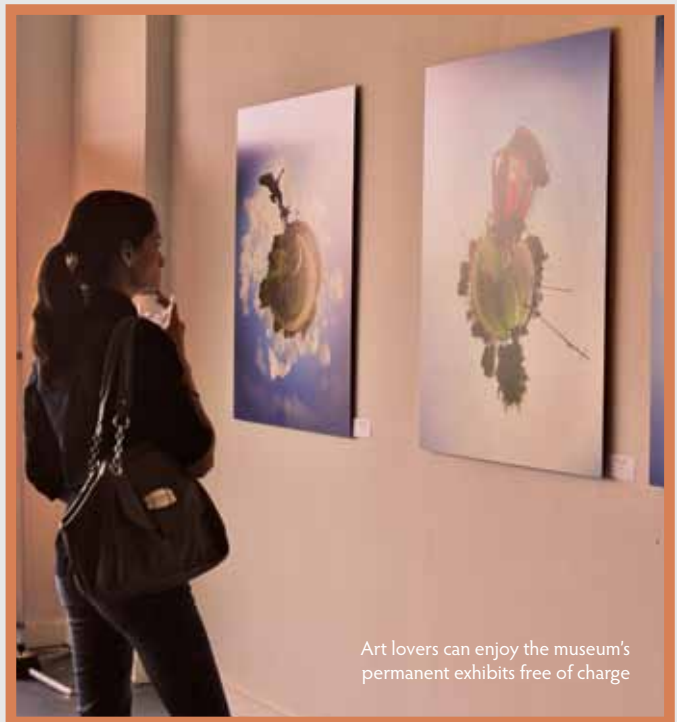
Villaronga-Roman is a true visionary, with plans for a complete museum district in Katy. Her next step is to introduce an additional museum to Katy in the next few years. "The first part of my dream came true when we opened KCAM," Villaronga-Roman shares. "My next dream is to have a museum complex in downtown Katy where people can come and be 'wowed.'" KM



*CHERRI NORTHCUTT is a freelance journalist and long-time resident of Katy. She and her family love visiting Katy's museums.*



Ibsen Espada's artwork was a premier exhibit at KCAM



Art lovers can enjoy the museum's permanent exhibits free of charge



Andy Meyers and Carol Adams attend KCAM's grand opening