

Arts and Craft (Beer)

Dawn Reyes' 'Taotaomo'na' series find a new home at Guam Brewery and Tap House

By Johanna Salinas

Dawn Reyes' paintings titled "The Taotaomo'na Series" display a moment in the artist's life when her view was clouded with uncertainty for the unknown. "The first painting, the Goddess, was one of those odd situations where it was just an automatic painting. I don't want to say I was in a trance when I did it because that would be ridiculous, but I really felt like I was losing time and I had no plan," said Reyes.

That's not how she normally does things. Usually, she has designs. "Even though I had an initial sketch on pencil, I had no plan on how this was going to be executed. I started with paint. I painted with my fingers. I walked on it. I add other styles to it. It just happened. I had no idea what my end result should be. With most of my paintings I have an expectation already in mind, this one I had none," Reyes said.

The ancient CHamorus regarded the taotaomo'na as protectors of the land. Being a non-CHamoru, Reyes was unsure about taotaomo'na. It wasn't until she started painting the then unnamed series, personal issues in life led her to a surahanu, who examined her works. They weren't goddesses, rather taotaomo'na trying to talk to her, the surahanu told her. "These started out as being little goddesses and I was corrected by a local healer," Reyes said. "What's important to me about this series is that another person who is very Chamoru came in and interpreted my work in a way I never would have. His interpretations added a lot of depth to the work for me and changed the way I approach cultural things after. I've done a lot of cultural painting on Guam for a lot of



different reasons, so that understanding that a local person will apply their lens to my work makes a big difference in how I approach art now rather than just thinking of it in my own perspective."

Her dream-like images tell stories of femininity and strength in tropical settings. From a puppet-like bird calling the sun, to a Sirena skinny dipping in the sea, Reyes' paintings create a new mythology.

This series represent a very spiritual and emotional awakening for Reyes, and she is ready to let the works find a new home. "This is very personal work for me — this whole grouping," she said. "I did these in 2002-2003 and it's taking me years to feel like I can put price tags on it."

The Taotaomo'na Series were on



display at the Guam Brewery and Tap House, the newest bar-restaurant in Tumon, which opened in February. "I thought it'd be nice to have the spirits here blessing this new place because I want the Guam Brewery to succeed," Reyes said. "I chose these works be-

cause I had a lot of wall space to fill. This is a full series, so the variety of

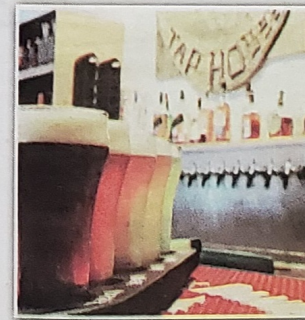
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colors would be great for this particular area."

Guam Brewery and Tap House will be more than just a place for music and drinking. "We're also a restaurant with a full menu," said Mark Stotts, general manager. "Our food is infused with local flavors. Like gollai hagun suni dip, tinaktak dumplings, kelaguen, and sashimi. We have a variety of burgers infused with beer. Our chicken wings are infused in five different ways, each of the sauces infused with one of the beers."

The Tap House has locally brewed beer, ranging from light to dark and varies from sweetness to bitterness, Stotts said. "The brewery has the freshest, most unique beer on island. We offer flavors no has tried anywhere else before. We have an award-winning brewmaster from the Pacific Northwest and he'll use his expertise to infuse island flavors into the different varieties of beers we'll be brewing."



Stotts said the Tap House may also serve as a meeting place for local organizations. It has cushy chairs and tables full of board games. And the paintings on the wall certainly help create an atmosphere of vibrance and ease. "Walking into a restaurant in Tumon, you expect to see decorations on the wall," said Reyes. "The setting always makes a difference in how people appreciate the art, but I think that these paintings are strong enough that they can stand anywhere, and they will be well appreciated. I don't even think people need to know what they're about in order for them to appreciate it on whatever level they appreciate art — whether they like the colors, or they like the characters, or they like the composition, or whatever their reason is."