

Art by the Sea: Ed Massey's Fine Art Exhibit at Hotel Casa Del Mar

Ed Massey and the Portraits of Hope presents a fine art exhibit at the Hotel Casa Del Mar.

By Taylor Van Arsdale | August 23, 2010

Last week, the Hotel Casa Del Mar, one of Santa Monica's premiere beachside hotels, held a reception for fine artist Ed Massey, and his "Summer of Color" exhibit.

Massey—the driving force behind the engaging and colorful coastal transformation of 156 lifeguard towers from Palos Verdes to Malibu; a public art and civic initiative—said the inspiration for the LA County Lifeguard Towers came to him "during a dog walk."

"You cannot beat the iconic images of the lifeguard towers. I looked up at the towers I grew up seeing that were continually monolithic gray and said, 'This is our next project.'"

Massey, who is originally from Santa Monica and who co-founded Portraits of Hope in 1995 with his brother Bernie Massey, hopes that the towers will foster awareness

for their unique, all-inclusive creative therapy program for hospitalized children. The program has benefited thousands of children and adults coping with illness and adversity by their participation in one-of-a-kind artistic collaborations that transform cityscapes and interior settings.

He credits his combined interest in works of charity and art to his family roots. Massey's mother is a social worker from Mexico and his father is from France. Thus he was exposed to the visual arts, particularly Mexican muralists, and

involved in community projects, at a very young age. "Being brought up in that atmosphere, seeing the vibrant colors of the muralists and learning the plights of different individuals had a profound effect on me and I would get inspired," said Massey.

"Portraits of Hope works on large scale public projects, providing creative therapy for children in hospitals, getting them involved in very high profile one-of-a-kind projects to which they would they not otherwise have access," explained Massey. The company has been known to take walls of a building down, sections of airplanes, blimps, and in this case sections of lifeguard towers, in order to get the materials to the children.



Massey's Lifeguard Tower Replica



Ed Massey's Wedding Gown

Massey and his team even go as far to design and provide special brushes for the children's mouths, shoe brushes for children who have limited mobility, and work with a multitude of hospitals including; Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center in Downey, UCLA Medical Center, Cedars Sinai and several Shriner's Hospitals. "These artistic activities let the children enjoy and take pride in themselves during the course of their medical care and/or rehabilitative treatments," explained Massey.

Massey's been involved with projects such as the "Summer of Color" for quite some time. In fact, long time Los Angelenos will recognize Massey's first project; the "Tower of Hope;" a 165-foot floral tower—originally built as an oil-structure—covered with brightly painted panels at the Century City border. "Thousands of seriously ill children and many communities joined together to create that structure."

Today, LA's legendary beach towers have come to life in vivid designs and colors—transforming the nation's most recognized coastline—and capturing the attention of and engaging millions of Angelenos, visitors, tourists, and viewers.

"The tower artwork was created on temporary, professionally installed, soft-material, and flex thin-board panels that have been applied onto the outer surface of the tower structure." Installation will remain through the end of September 2010.

But if you can't make it to the beach—for whatever reason—the Hotel Casa del Mar is showing a sampling of the artist's body of work. From surfboards to ties to fish

tanks, along with Massey's "The Wedding" which includes a stunning, welded-steel, 170-pound floral wedding dress that Massey's wife wore at their ceremony. "The dress has wheels and she had to be rolled down the aisle!" quipped Massey. Guests, art enthusiasts and intrigued spectators are invited to view this more personal collection in the welcoming lobby of the hotel.

For those of you wanting a bit more...the Hotel Casa del Mar is offering a "Summer of Color" package that will engage guests in an exclusive exploration of Ed Massey's Portraits of Hope's Lifeguard Towers Transformation, LA's most colorful and philanthropic endeavor. The package is available until August 30 and includes: Five nights in an Ocean View Penthouse; a private tour of the Ed Massey fine art exhibit at Hotel Casa del Mar; two pool deck cabana massages from Sea Wellness Spa, a cardio workout with a private trainer, and a candlelit private dinner for two on the bow of the pool deck overlooking Santa Monica Bay. Guests will receive one of the 180 limited edition L.A. County Lifeguard Tower "Summer of Color" prints.

All art is for sale, with a percentage going to the Portraits of Hope foundation. Exhibit runs until August 31. Don't miss it!