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First Art Exhibit at Moraga Country Club

By Sophie Braccini



Teresa Onoda painting in the hills of Moraga.
Photo provided

Because Moraga Country Club includes about 25 percent of the town's population, MCC Executive Director Frank Melon initiates or supports actions that foster synergy between the town and the club, including the idea of displaying local art in the new Country Club House. "This exhibition falls right into our core values," says Melon. "Presenting scenes of Moraga made by a local artists signifies our commitment to being part of and supporting this community."

"We have such a beautiful new building, we wanted to display art here that would complement it," adds House Committee Chair Ginger Bagai. The ongoing project will feature local artists who will display about a dozen pieces of art for several months. The first invited painter is Moraga resident Teresa Onoda.

"I organize art sales in wineries and have worked with Teresa at Walt Wines in Sonoma," says MCC resident and exhibition curator Cindy Raleigh. "When Ginger started talking to me about this project at the end of last year, I immediately thought of [Teresa]. I was always very impressed by her art, and I thought she would be perfect for our first exhibition with a Moraga natural beauty theme." Onoda was excited about the project. "It is literally a dream come true," says Onoda. "I remember when this building was finished, the thought crossed my mind: Wouldn't it be perfect to display my art there? I brushed off the thought and didn't think about it again, until I got the call from Cindy."

Since January Onoda has been working every day on the 12 large paintings she and Raleigh talked about for the exhibit. "It is a bit unusual for an artist to paint such large canvasses outside," said Onoda. "I always go out with weights and tie the canvass down; otherwise, with such a

large surface, it would be like a sail and fly away."

Residents stopped by while Onoda was painting at some of the locations. "I love it when people share with me their love of the beauty of our town, and when children see an artist at work," she said.

Onoda painted some of her favorite Moraga locations. Most of the paintings are portraits of nature including views of Mulholland Ridge, Mount Diablo and daffodils. Onoda and Raleigh also wanted to add paintings related to the country club, so some of Onoda's paintings include golfers and one is of a giant golf club bag that will be hung by the pro shop.

"Most of the paintings will be upstairs, in the bar and restaurant," said Bagai.

Organizing the display itself was an ongoing discussion between Raleigh and Onoda. MCC has some gorgeous views that needed to be taken into account by the curator and the artist. "The light, the colors, everything has to work together to carry the observer's eye across; it is a real composition," explained Raleigh.

Onoda's paintings will be for sale but will stay in the club until the next artist's exhibit begins. "We do not know yet who it will be," said Bagai, "someone local, but with a different style."

There is a public reception scheduled from 6 to 8 p.m. April 25. The \$25 cost covers food from MCC chef Kevin Ables and wine from local wineries. Reservations are required. For information, call the MCC front desk at (925) 376-2200. Those interested in viewing the exhibit following the reception, and who do not have a MCC member to escort them, can call Raleigh for an appointment at (925) 247-4067.

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