



Island-inspired artwork heads to Chicago

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By Tamara Pigott



An image from acclaimed Chicago artist Judy Ledgerwood, inspired by her stay on Captiva.

Get ready for us, Chicago!

The Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau (VCB) will bring Southwest Florida to the Windy City with an exciting and unprecedented campaign.

It began with an Expo Chicago collaboration, a talented artist and a heavy dose of inspiration on Captiva Island.

Acclaimed Chicago artist Judy Ledgerwood created six

original works while staying in Robert Rauschenberg's beach home on Captiva for a week this summer. Ledgerwood, known for large-scale paintings using rich colors, sought out the natural landscape for inspiration.

Her vision was to bring an enormous postcard back to Chicago — and the VCB will make sure millions of people see it.

Her work will be displayed on eight massive wallscape billboards in downtown Chicago, River North and the Gold Coast beginning Sept. 8. An additional 56 rotating large-scale billboards will display her work along major expressways for four weeks.

The VCB targeted Chicago because it is our top DMA (designated marketing area), which means more visitors come from Chicago to Southwest Florida than from other regions. The fall is the perfect time to remind them to come back.

Art and inspiration go hand in hand with our destination and this campaign will encourage even more visitors to come here. This project is timed specifically to coincide with Expo Chicago, now in its third year as a leading international art fair, which runs from Sept. 18 – 21. It is a four-day art event featuring more than 140 leading international galleries.

Ledgerwood's artwork will be used to transform public spaces into city-wide art installations. Her work will also be featured on Expo Chicago shuttles, transporting visitors along six routes from Navy Pier throughout the City to the gallery district, shopping areas and museums. We estimate the installation will receive 100 million impressions in the four weeks it is on display.

Gardens discount

Everglades Wonder Gardens is celebrating its one-year anniversary under new management by offering Collier and Lee county residents half-price admission through Aug. 31. Highlights include a flamingo pond, alligator pool with 40 gators, duck ponds, turtle and tortoise exhibits, a butterfly house and orchids throughout the park.

It is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 27180 Old 41 Road in Bonita Springs, just north of Bonita Beach Road halfway between U.S. 41 and I-75.

Regular admission is \$12.95 for adults 13-64, \$10.95 for seniors 65 and older, and \$7.95 for children 3-12. Parking is available in front of the main building and in the lot north of the entrance. For more information, call 992-2591 or visit evergladeswondergardens.com.

Sanibel Props

Sanibel Island got some positive exposure in The Huffington Post last week and we always appreciate this kind of publicity.

Here's what the journalist wrote:

"Known for being a swanky-but-not-in-your-face-swanky barrier island, Florida's Sanibel Island is gorgeous and also has pretty awesome sunsets.

"The island's beaches also happen to have more seashells than your average beach, making it the perfect place to go 'shelling' (which is apparently a really big deal down there). It's a famous spot for collecting everything from sand dollars to scallops thanks in part to its east-west orientation. There's even a phrase — the 'Sanibel Stoop' — to describe what people look like while there. So if you finally want to make that DIY shell necklace you saw on Pinterest — or just want to enjoy some really beautiful beaches before summer's over — head on down!"