

Claremont artist really rocks

By **DIANA SHOLLEY**
STAFF WRITER

Photos courtesy
DAWN GRIMES

Some people kick them down roads, some people skim them across lakes and some naughty kids throw them at others. Dawn Grimes paints on them.

They're rocks.
In some cases, stones are used in architectural structures for strength and design, but Grimes uses them to create three-dimensional replicas of buildings.

She paints private homes, civic buildings, train stations and various historic and interesting structures. Most of her art she paints by commission.

"If it's a structure that means something to you, I'd love to capture it on stone," said Grimes, a Claremont resident.

Anyone interested is seeing Grimes' amazing work can view about 25 of her favorite pieces today through Oct. 10 at the Claremont Forum.

The show is "Sketched in Stone," same as her rock art painting business. Most of the exhibit is not for sale. They are actual commissions the owners have let her borrow for the show.

There will be about five pieces of such local landmarks as Union Station in Los Angeles, Claremont's Memorial Park and Guasti Winery in Rancho Cucamonga available for purchase. Grimes will be on site all three days accepting commissions.

Grimes started painting structures

on stone about six years ago when on a walk near her Claremont home she found a rock that look like a building.

"I went with my instinct and painted a building on that rock," she said. "Then I painted about 30 more. I took them to the Upland Street Fair and they sold out in 10 minutes. From that day on, I never looked back."

Grimes has a bachelor's degree in fine arts from the UCLA School of Design.

"A professor once told me that I had an aptitude for architecture," Grimes said. "He asked if I would consider going to architectural school. I did love buildings, their structure and their beauty, but at the time I said no. It's funny how all these years later architecture has been brought back into my life."

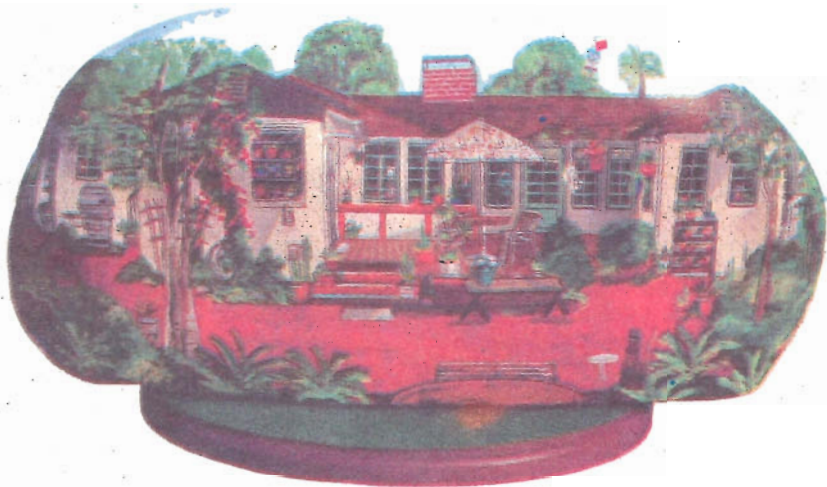
It may have been just by chance that Grimes found that first rock, but when she did she found a calling that coupled her passions and focused her dreams. "I always knew I would be an artist, there was never a doubt in my mind," she said. "It makes sense to me now that my pallet would end up being stone, I never thought much about it before, but I just was never, 'feeling it' on canvas."

"Feel" is the way Grimes likes to approach art. She always has been a tactile person drawn to sculpture and crafts. It takes her about three weeks from start to finish to complete a commission.

It begins with a call where client and artist talk about the structure and why it's special to the client. Grimes likes to get a feel of the person and why they have reached out to her.



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One of Dawn Grimes' detailed stone paintings. The stones are painted on all sides and mounted on a custom made Lazy Susan.

"Many times it's for a gift," Grimes said. "People move after living in a house 30 years and want to take a reminder of it with them. Or I've done a school for a teacher who's retiring. There are all kinds of reasons people call."

If the commission is local, Grimes visits the house and takes endless amounts of photos front and back. If the commission is out of the area, she depends on the client for the pictures.

She spends a painstaking amount of time and energy searching for the stone that closest resembles the structure.

"I'm very picky about my rocks," she said.

The stones are painted completely including the front, sides and back of the structure. She pays particular attention to detail such as the flowers blooming in the yard, the fountain in the back and what

kind of drapes may be in the window.

Once finished the stones is mounted on a custom lazy-Susan made by Grimes.

Some future goals for Grimes include doing more historical works.

"I love train stations and old diners," she said. "I can see the beauty in all old buildings, I want to help people get turned on about the kind of buildings that exists all around them, to see the beauty in them as I do. And a dream of mine is to someday have one of my stones in the Smithsonian."

A stone painted of the Smithsonian in the Smithsonian perhaps? She would love to. ♥

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